



Griffith Heritage Study

A community-based Heritage
Study for Griffith City Council
and NSW Heritage Office

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Griffith City Council and NSW Heritage Office in March 2004

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1

Executive summary

This report is the result of a community-based heritage study, in accordance with the NSW Heritage Office guidelines. The study revealed that Griffith retains rich physical heritage that reflects many of the key phases and themes associated with the history of New South Wales. This study has identified and assessed over a hundred and fifty places and precincts. Some of these are recommended for entry in the Heritage Schedule of the Local Environmental Plan (LEP), with a small number being recommended for nomination to the State Heritage Register.

Precincts recommended for entry in both the Heritage Schedule of the LEP and the State Heritage Register are:

- ◆ Scenic Hill
- ◆ Pioneer Park
- ◆ Civic Precinct, Griffith
- ◆ Public Open Space Corridor
- ◆ Yenda Town Centre
- ◆ Banna Avenue Heritage Area

While groups of items or precincts have been identified, arguably the whole local government area should be managed for its heritage values and associated character.

Recommended places are diverse in character and include archaeological sites, caves, contemporary buildings, old Commission houses, public edifices, parks, cemeteries, bridges, railway structures, moveable artefacts and cultural landscapes.

During the course of the study it became apparent that heritage is generally valued by the community, although some concern was raised at the implications arising from formal listing. Particular concerns were with the additional cost and paperwork when applying for works approval, and possible restrictions on further development of properties. The report emphasises the need for Council to work in a positive manner with the community, and to minimise any impost on private property owners.

Heritage places enhance the character and appeal of an area, translating into economic benefit for owners through increased tourism, local commercial opportunities and property resale values. Heritage places attract funding through grants offered by the NSW Heritage Office. Additionally, carefully managed heritage enhances community identity and has the capacity to promote social and cultural cohesion. Good planning management - such as freeing up restrictions on dual occupancy development on heritage listed properties - can provide further economic incentive for owners to nominate their own heritage properties for listing.

The heritage of the Griffith City Local Government Area is vulnerable to poorly managed development, particularly on properties that have the potential to impact on the physical setting of historic structures. The report encourages Council to require developers to take into account the impact of their proposals on heritage places when submitting development applications.

The report contains a series of recommendations arising from the study.

2

Introduction

2.1 Background

This study has been prepared for Griffith City Council with assistance from the NSW Heritage Office. It was undertaken between September 2003 and March 2004, and focuses on the whole Shire rather than only on Griffith City.

2.2 The study area

The study includes the whole of Griffith City and extends to the edge of the Shire boundaries as shown on the map below used by Council's GIS mapping staff.

2.3 The structure of the study

The heritage study is presented in three parts.

Part 1	Comprises the report. It includes an introduction, summary list of locally significant places and precincts (heritage places), and recommendations arising from the study. Its structure is based on recent heritage studies (eg Giovanelli and McCann 2002).
Part 2	Is a thematic history. It locates the heritage places in an historical framework. Its structure draws directly on national and State themes listed in the NSW Heritage Office web site at www.nsw.heritage.gov.au .
Part 3	Comprises the Places Inventory, which is a heritage assessment of each place. It is organised as a database, available at the Griffith City Library and will become included in a searchable database at the NSW Heritage Office web site. (A copy is has been printed as a separately bound appendix).

2.4 The brief

The brief for this study drew directly on the model brief that is included in the NSW Heritage Office guidelines for Community Based Heritage Studies, which requires the consultant to base the study on those guidelines.

2.5 Purpose

This purposes of the study are to:

- ◆ Identify a list of places which represent the history and heritage of the Shire,
- ◆ Recommend to Council which of the identified places should be entered on the heritage schedule of the Local Environmental Plan,
- ◆ Identify if any places are likely to be of sufficient significance to nominate listing on the State Heritage Register,
- ◆ Make other recommendations on the management or otherwise of identified places, and
- ◆ Recommend any further studies or work on the Shire's heritage that became apparent during the project.

2.6 Methods used

This heritage study drew on the methods set out in the NSW Heritage Office Community Based Heritage Studies Guide, and followed the steps below.

- ◆ A working group of local volunteers was established to assist in the identification of historic themes, and in the collection of historical information.
- ◆ A draft thematic history that noted places of historic significance was prepared
- ◆ A local person (Griffith City Library History librarian Margaret King) was appointed as the local study coordinator, as a continuous contact for inquiries during the duration of the study.
- ◆ Members of the working group suggested a draft list of significant places in their area
- ◆ Additional places were identified in other databases, heritage reports and local histories.
- ◆ An individual set of inventory forms was prepared for each place and completed by members of the

working group.

- ◆ Public announcements through a regular series of articles in *The Area News* and local radio interview outlined the background to the study. It also provided an opportunity for owners to discuss the significance of places and implications of listing with either Council staff, the study coordinator, or with the local study coordinator at the Griffith City Library.
- ◆ Owners were advised that it was not Council's intention to list places without owner consent.
- ◆ The draft list was amended, referred back to the working group for final comment and presented to Council with recommendations.

2.7 Constraints and opportunities

During the course of the study it became apparent that there are more places of potential heritage significance than can be addressed within the scope of this project. These include pre-European archaeological sites, particularly stone artefact surface scatters, in uncultivated areas such as the Binya Hills. These are the management responsibility of National Parks and Wildlife Service in consultation with local Aboriginal communities. Others are the many examples of early irrigation farm sheds and cottages on privately owned irrigated farms. State Heritage Inventory database entries have been completed for purposes of producing an informed heritage assessment and recommendations. As research documents, they are necessarily incomplete, as they reflect the state of knowledge available about each place at the time of writing. There clearly was an opportunity to periodically add details to the database. So it is now set up at the Griffith City Library as an active research document, so that the History Librarian could update the entries, as historical detail and documents come to light. Because of the large number of sites identified, it was not possible to undertake a detailed assessment of the significance of each place, such as identifying the intrinsic elements or curtilage boundary. Places recommended for entry in the LEP may therefore include significant landscape elements such as tree plantings. Detailed place analysis is best done at the time when changes are proposed and the place's current condition can be assessed.

2.8 Abbreviations and terms

- ◆ LEP: Local Environmental Plan.
- ◆ LHR: Local Heritage Register (list of places entered on the LEP).
- ◆ DCP: Development Control Plan (guideline for managing places).
- ◆ RNE: Register of the National Estate (government-held heritage places)
- ◆ SHR: State Heritage Register (list of places of state significance)
- ◆ SHI: State Heritage Inventory (database of local or state significant places).
- ◆ Burra Charter: Standard for conservation of places of cultural significance.
- ◆ Conservation. Looking after a place, as defined by the Burra Charter.

2.9 Authorship

The study was coordinated by Dr Peter Kabaila, architect and archaeologist, who undertook much of the fieldwork, and by Margaret King, librarian, who was the contact for the local working group.

2.10 Acknowledgements

The consultant is very grateful to all those who assisted with the research, identification and assessment of the Shire's heritage including:

- ◆ The working group assisting the study
- ◆ Shire councillors and staff who participated in the study
- ◆ Local historians and consultants who have kindly shared their knowledge
- ◆ The property owners - all owners contacted were hospitable and welcoming

3

Assessing significance

3.1 Assessing significance

When assessing the significance of a heritage item, place or site, four criteria are commonly used by heritage consultants and agencies in NSW. The criteria are derived from definitions in the Heritage Act 1977, encompass values in the Australian ICOMOS Burra Charter, and have been standardised by the NSW Heritage Office and Department of Urban Affairs and Planning. These criteria are: historical, aesthetic, social and scientific significance.

Further refining an assessment of significance, the degree of significance reflects the rarity, representativeness and integrity of an item or site. The level of significance is defined by whether an item or site is held to be significant in a state or local historical, geographical or community context.

It should be noted that some items or sites may also be of national significance.

Table 3.1 NSW heritage assessment criteria

(gazetted following amendments to the Heritage Act in April 1999).

Criterion (a)	An item is important in the course, or pattern, of NSW cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
Criterion (b)	An item has strong or special association with the life or works of a person, or group of persons, of importance in NSW cultural or natural history (or the cultural or natural history of the local area).
Criterion (c)	An item is important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics and/or a high degree of creative or technical achievement in NSW (or the local area).
Criterion (d)	An item has strong or special association with a particular community or cultural group in NSW (or the local area) for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
Criterion (e)	An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of cultural or natural history of NSW or the local area.
Criterion (f)	An item possesses uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of cultural or natural history of NSW or the local area.
Criterion (g)	An item is important in demonstrating the principal characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places or cultural or natural environments of NSW or the local area.

The SHI data base contains a heading and field for each assessment criterion, with a space to summarise each one. A simplified explanation of these "heritage yardsticks" for significance is set out below.

	Heritage Value	Heritage criterion
1	Historical	Important in the course or pattern of cultural or natural history.
2	Association	Associated with the life or works of a person or group of importance in history.
3	Aesthetic/technical	Important in demonstrating aesthetic characteristics or a high degree of creative or technical achievement.
4	Social	Associated with a particular community or cultural group for social, cultural or spiritual reasons.
5	Research	An item has potential to yield information that will contribute to an understanding of cultural or natural history.
6	Rarity	Part of an uncommon, rare or endangered aspect of cultural or natural history.
7	Representative	Demonstrates the main characteristics of a class of cultural or natural places.
8	Integrity	Degree of preservation or intactness.

3.2 Gradings of significance

For ranking a large number, say over a hundred, places of heritage significance, some sort of grading system is useful (otherwise each place would have to be uniquely graded on its own merits). Within a local context, a place can be assigned one of three ranks, depending on whether it has a positive or negative effect on its context:

- ◆ "Contributing"
- ◆ "Neutral"
- ◆ "Detracting"

Table 3.2 Gradings of significance

A more elaborate system is necessary when a heritage item consists of many layers of alteration, some of higher heritage significance than others.

Grading	Justification
Exceptional	Rare or outstanding element directly contributing to an item's local and state significance.
High	High degree of original fabric. Demonstrates a key element of the item's significance. Alterations do not detract from significance.
Moderate	Altered or modified elements. Elements with little heritage value, but which contribute to the overall significance of the item.
Little	Alterations detract from significance. Difficult to interpret.
Intrusive	Damaging to the item's heritage significance

4

Recommendations for Local Environmental Plan

4.1 Recommendations for Local Environmental Plan

The following places contribute to an understanding and appreciation of Griffith's heritage. Most of these places are recommended for entry into the heritage schedule of the Local Environmental Plan. Inventory sheets for each place appear in the appendix (separately bound). The precincts identified in the table are addressed in more detail in 4.2 below.

Key to Precincts	
B = Banna Avenue Heritage Conservation Area	R = Railway Station Group
C = Civic Precinct, Griffith	S = Sacred Heart Precinct
E = Edon Street Precinct	H = Scenic Hill
K = Kookora Street Precinct	Y = Yenda Town Centre
P = Public Open Space Corridor	G = Binya Street Precinct
M = Pioneer Park	Z = Railway Cottage Group

Table 4.1 Recommended Places

No.	Place	Precinct	Database record	Recommended Register	
				LHR	SHR
1	Italian Cultural Museum	H	1670088	✓	✓
2	Hermit's cave	H	1670089	✓	✓
3	Sir Dudley Dechair Lookout	H	1670090	X	X
4	Residence, 97 Binya St	G	1670201	X	X
5	Weeroona	X	1670200	✓	X
6	Loreley, 101 Binya St	G	1670199	X	X
7	Methodist Church, Yenda	Y	1670031	X	X
8	Railway Cottage 249 Wakaden	Z	1670198	X	X
9	Anglican Church of St Alban the Martyr	X	1670046	✓	X
10	Railway Station Group	R	1670040	✓	X
11	St Anthony's Catholic Church and Hall, Hanwood	X	1670004	✓	X
12	St Therese Catholic Church and Hall, Yenda	X	1670033	X	X
13	De Bortoli residence, De Bortoli family winery	X	1670002	✓	✓
14	Rossetto winery wine tanks and sheds	X	1670025	✓	X
15	McWilliams winery, Yenda, main building	X	1670037	✓	X
16	McWilliams winery, Yenda, yard area	X	1670047	✓	X
17	War Memorial Hall and Gallery	B	1670054	X	X
18	Penfolds winery	X	1670007	✓	X
19	Miranda winery, portions of original building	X	1670027	✓	X
20	Robinson House	X	1670058	✓	X
21	Griffith Infants School	X	1670052	✓	X
22	Railway Cottage, 241 Wakaden	Z	1670196	X	X
23	Binya Street Precinct	G	1670205	✓	X
24	Millionaire's Club	X	1670032	X	X
25	Three-Ways Bridge	X	1670006	X	X
26	Producer's Offices	X	1670009	✓	X
27	Town Water Reservoir (Old) & Pump Station	X	1670024	X	X
28	Peppercorn trees, Macarthur Street	X	1670003	X	X
29	Native Pines Trees, Enticknap Park	X	1670026	✓	X
30	Cottage, 37 Carathool Street	X	1670048	✓	X
31	Hanwood Hall	X	1670062	X	X
32	Cotswold Cottage and Garden	X	1670049	✓	X
33	Lyceum Theatre, Banna Avenue	B	1670001	X	X
34	Commonwealth Bank, Banna Ave	B	1670022	X	X
35	Victoria Hotel	B	1670051	X	X

36	Griffith High School	X	1670056	✓	✓
37	Sacred Heart Precinct	S	1670005	✓	X
38	Sacred Heart Catholic Church	S	1670044	X	X
39	Sacred Heart Church Hall	S	1670039	X	X
40	Sacred Heart Convent of Mercy	S	1670053	X	X
41	Cheese factory	X	1670008	✓	X
42	Bagtown Cemetery	X	1670010	✓	X
43	Woodside Hall	X	1670011	✓	X
44	Fruit Inspector's residence	X	1670012	✓	X
45	Public Open Space Corridor	P	1670093	✓	✓
46	Scalabrini Village Chapel	X	1670094	✓	X
47	Police Station, Banna Ave	B	1670095	X	X
48	Courthouse, Banna Ave	B	1670043	X	X
49	Mechanics and fruit packing shed (former)	B	1670096	X	X
50	Three-Ways Aboriginal mission	X	1670097	X	X
51	Civic Precinct, Griffith	C	1670098	✓	✓
52	McWilliams winery Hanwood	X	1670099	✓	X
53	CWA Building	B	1670100	X	X
54	Olympia Shops	B	1670101	X	X
55	Railway Cottage Group	Z	1670213	✓	X
56	Pioneer Park Museum	H	1670103	✓	✓
57	Weatherboard Cottage, 33 Carrathool Street	X	1670104	X	X
58	Fibro Cottage and Garden, 41 Carrathool Street	X	1670105	✓	X
59	Catholic Club (Entrance)	X	1670106	✓	X
60	Fibro cottage, Hanwood	X	1670107	✓	X
61	Fairey Firefly Memorial to Airmen	B	1670034	X	X
62	Cenotaph	B	1670041	X	X
63	Memorial Gardens	B	1670108	X	X
64	Griffith City Library	B	1670050	X	X
65	Battaglia Family Shops	B	1670212	X	X
66	Ceccato Stove	H	1670183	X	X
67	Westpac Bank	B	1670110	X	X
68	Doradillo Vine	X	1670036	✓	X
69	Base Hospital, portions of older buildings	X	1670038	✓	X
70	Edon Street precinct, Yoogali	E	1670111	✓	X
71	Yoogali Store	E	1670112	X	X
72	St Mary's Hall, Yoogali	E	1670060	X	X
73	Coronation Hall, Yoogali	E	1670113	X	X
74	Our Lady of Pompeii Church, Yoogali	E	1670061	X	✓
75	Yoogali Catholic Presbytery	E	1670114	X	X
76	Griffith Centre for Irrigated Agriculture	X	1670035	X	X
77	Kookora Street Precinct	K	1670115	✓	X
78	Cottage, 101 Kookora St	K	1670116	X	X
79	Cottage, 103 Kookora St	K	1670117	X	X
80	Cottage, 105 Kookora St	K	1670118	X	X
81	Yenda Town Centre precinct	Y	1670014	✓	✓
82	Stockton's Bakery	Y	1670119	X	X
83	Police station and residence, Yenda	Y	1670120	X	X
84	Pioneer Butchery	Y	1670121	X	X
85	Yenda Garage	Y	1670122	X	X
86	Oliver's Newsagency	Y	1670123	X	X
87	Tennis court	Y	1670124	X	X
88	Yenda Café	Y	1670125	X	X
89	Bank of New South Wales, Yenda	Y	1670126	X	X
90	Lyceum Theatre and Café	Y	1670127	X	X
91	Produce shops	Y	1670128	X	X
92	Horse yard	Y	1670129	X	X
93	Yenda Memorial Hall	Y	1670130	X	X
94	Masonic Lodge	Y	1670131	X	X
95	Yenda Fruit and Case Supply	Y	1670132	X	X
96	Garage and Service Station (Old)	Y	1670133	X	X
97	Second CWA Hall, Yenda	Y	1670134	X	X
98	Hotel Yenda	Y	1670045	X	X
99	Billiard Room	Y	1670135	X	X
100	Keys Furniture Store	Y	1670136	X	X
101	Blackmans Store	Y	1670137	X	X
102	Farmers and Settlers Store	Y	1670138	X	X

103	Police Station, Yenda	Y	1670139	X	X
104	ABC Bank, Yenda	Y	1670140	X	X
105	WCIC Office	Y	1670141	X	X
106	Post Office residence, Yenda	Y	1670142	X	X
107	Post Office, Yenda	Y	1670143	X	X
108	McLeans General Store, Yenda	Y	1670144	X	X
109	Central Park, Yenda	Y	1670145	X	X
110	St George's Anglican Church	Y	1670146	X	X
111	First CWA Hall	Y	1670147	X	X
112	Myalbangera Homestead	X	1670148	✓	X
113	Baker, cnr Bingar and West Ave, Yenda	Y	1670149	X	X
114	Our Lady of Loretto Statue	X	1670214	✓	X
115	Canal Bridge, Griffin Ave	P	1670151	X	X
116	Canal Bridge, Willandra Avenue	P	1670152	X	X
117	Canal Bridge, Murrumbidgee Ave	P	1670153	X	X
118	Canal Bridge, Walla Ave	P	1670154	X	X
119	Kotku Mosque	C	1670155	X	X
120	Railway Turntable	R	1670156	X	X
121	Area Hotel	B	1670157	X	X
122	Murrumbidgee Irrigation Office (Entrance)	B	1670158	X	X
123	Ambulance Station and residence	B	1670159	X	X
124	Area News	X	1670161	✓	X
125	Railway Cottage, 235 Wakaden	Z	1670197	X	X
126	Fishing Club Board	B	1670162	X	X
127	Club Signboards	X	1670163	✓	X
128	Masonic Lodge, Griffith	C	1670164	X	X
129	Salvation Army Hall	X	1670165	✓	X
130	Residence, 99 Binya St	G	1670166	X	X
131	Residence, 95 Binya St	G	1670167	X	X
132	Methodist Church, Griffith	X	1670168	✓	X
133	Cottage, 99 Kookora St	K	1670169	X	X
134	Yoogali Garage	E	1670170	X	X
135	Farm Cottage, Hanwood	X	1670171	✓	X
136	Soldier settler's memorial	B	1670172	✓	X
137	Peppercorn trees, Railway Parade, Yenda	Y	1670173	X	X
138	Hospital, Cnr West Ave and Park St, Yenda	Y	1670174	X	X
139	Family Vaults	X	1670175	✓	X
140	Cemetery, Yenda	X	1670176	✓	X
141	Capella Della Pieta	X	1670215	✓	X
142	Griffith Centre for Irrigated Agriculture	X	1670035	X	X
143	Banna Avenue Heritage Conservation Area	B	1670013	✓	X
144	Yenda Catholic School	Y	1670057	X	X
145	Scenic Hill	H	1670177	✓	✓
146	Bilbul Store	X	1670178	✓	X
147	Ceccato Residence	X	1670179	✓	X
148	Hanwood Village store	X	1670180	✓	X
149	Women Settlers Memorial	C	1670181	✓	X
150	Fontana	E	1670206	X	X
151	Bromfield's soldier settler hut	M	1670184	X	X
152	Fairview	M	1670185	X	X
153	Sulky wheel chair	M	1670186	X	X
154	Bynya homestead	M	1670187	X	X
155	Groongal coach house	M	1670188	X	X
156	Myall Park hall	M	1670189	X	X
157	Wumbulgal school	M	1670190	X	X
158	Dumossa Inn	M	1670191	X	X
159	Davy Paxman	M	1670192	X	X
160	Condo Lane	X	1670193	X	X
161	Glasshouse	X	1670207	✓	X
162	Fibro Cottage, 27 Carathool Street	X	1670208	✓	X
163	Horse trough, Yenda	Y	1670209	X	X
164	Boundary Rider's Hut	X	1670210	✓	X
165	Rural Bank Residence	X	1670211	✓	X
166	Yoogali Club (Entrance)	X	1670203	✓	X
167	100 Binya Street	G	1670216	X	X
168	Quarry	H	1670217	X	X
169	Berry's Brickworks	H	1670218	X	X

170	Scenic Hill Reserve	H	1670219	X	X
171	Hanwood Cloth	M	1670220	X	X
172	Area Builders	M	1670221	X	X
173	Bagtown Gaol	M	1670222	X	X
174	First Hospital	M	1670223	X	X
175	First Griffith Police Station	C	1670224	X	X
176	Bagtown site	X	1670225	✓	X

Table 4.2 Recommended Precincts

During the study, it became apparent that some places shared particularly strong thematic and streetscape characteristics, and that their heritage significance could be better understood if the places were considered as part of a group or precinct. The proposed precincts are:

Database record	Precinct	Significance
1670103	Pioneer Park	Outstanding, intact example of the type of display village built in the 1970s. Very high social significance, as it taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche, symbolising the life struggles of the pre- and post-irrigation white pioneers. Some collection items are of possible state or national significance. Built by a core of people who had their roots in the pre-irrigation period, and were themselves irrigation pioneers, a lot of the work has its own high integrity.
1670205	Binya Street Precinct	Buildings and grounds historically associated with housing for the prosperous in early Griffith, which make an important contribution to a "garden city" character street from Burley Griffin's town plan.
1670013	Banna Avenue Heritage Area	The layout of the city centre is dominated by the wide boulevard of Banna Avenue, which contains the commercial centre. The existing street trees are a significant heritage component, creating a rare sense of enclosure and protection in the midst of a busy traffic zone. Contains most of the intact examples of interwar period architecture in Griffith, including most of the important early public buildings
1670098	Civic Precinct, Griffith	Walter Burley Griffin's city plan, of local and possibly national significance, is dominated by wide boulevards with central medians, generating a grand statement that is rare amongst rural centres throughout the state. The footprint of Walter Burley Griffin's layout is still evident in the street pattern of the Civic Precinct, although the commercial focus has shifted to Banna Avenue. There are opportunities for long-term planning to reinforce the streetscape.
1670111	Edon Street Precinct	Well maintained, highly intact street group, consisting of the old buildings of Yoogali village: Catholic Church property, general store/post office, and garage. Important contributions to streetscape and to the identity of Yoogali, as a location in its own right.
1670115	Kookora Street Precinct	Compact group of cottages of high aesthetic value. Good examples of post second world war migrant-built houses, also of the housing move from tin and fibrous cement, into brick and brick-veneer after the mid-twentieth century. The group is noted for its period style and manicured gardens. It is also thought to contain the first house in Griffith to be built in brick veneer.
1670093	Public Open Space Corridor	Important landscape feature of Griffin's original town plan which documents concern for a beautiful city. Influenced by the Garden City Movement, it incorporates parklands along the main canal that skirts the civic centre. Careful long-term planning could be used to consolidate these parklands to promote tourism and lifestyle.
1670040	Railway Station Group	Important civic group of structures in the city which include railway lines, the station building, side building, signal box, railway turntable and branch lines. Cultural landscape features that define the edges of the city centre.
1670213	Railway Cottage Group	Cottages which represent some of the earliest use of "fibro" in Australia. They have distinctive character, aesthetic value, and make a contribution to the street.
1670005	Sacred Heart Precinct	Exemplar of the evolution of Catholic buildings in the early twentieth century. The coherent grouping makes an important contribution to the streetscape and enhances significance.
1670177	Scenic Hill	As the only hill in Griffith, Scenic Hill is itself a local icon. The wide range of heritage items further enhances the natural values of the area. Considered together, these items are of high social and aesthetic significance.
1670014	Yenda Town	Yenda town centre echoes the nearby Walter Burley Griffin towns in miniature with its

	Centre	characteristic radial design, tree-lined streets, ring road and park. Yenda is unique as both a soldier settler town and major outpost for construction workers of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Its outstanding level of intactness of original architecture documents an early 1920s building boom, which saw the construction of most of Yenda town centre. Slow population growth after the 1930s ensured preservation of a remarkably wide range of community buildings. The town centre has retained its community importance, recognised for its high integrity and aesthetic values. The streetscape is highly distinctive due to flat topography, four branching avenues, and richness of its 1920s/1930s architecture. Very high social significance, as it taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche, symbolising the life struggles of the pre- and post-irrigation white pioneers.
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4.3 Managing precincts

Precincts often comprise places of varying degrees of significance: from significant, to contributory, to little or no heritage value. As their significance varies, the precinct may need a set of management guidelines, or Development Control Plan (DCP). The DCP may also apply to footpaths, gutters, and verges, street furniture, vegetation and signage. Places in precincts are generally managed for their external values only, i.e. their impact on the public realm. Redevelopment by dual occupancy, adaptive reuse and infill are often appropriate, providing they are consistent with the precinct's values.

An Urban Conservation Area is a place that through its fabric, setting, use, associations and meanings is considered significant enough to be placed on either the SHR or RNE. Listing on these registers must meet set criteria and any development within the Area requires development consent from Council. If Council did not include the Area within the Schedule of the LEP then the approval body is the NSW Heritage Office, and all development would be 'integrated development'. However, Council can maintain control if the Area is listed within the schedule of the LEP. Heritage Office would usually delegate approval responsibility to Council, by virtue of the Heritage Act.

A Character Area is an area of identified character including streetscapes, architecture, landscaping and building fabric. Character Areas may be uneven, but may contain good examples (such as heritage listed items) of desired character. It is expected that a DCP would identify ways of preserving character. Any new development will need to be sensitive to preserving such character.

5

Recommendations for State Heritage Register

5.1 Recommendations for State Heritage Register

The following places were assessed to have potentially outstanding heritage values and are recommended to Council for nomination to the State Heritage Register.

Database Record	Place	Significance
1670177	Scenic Hill	As the only hill in Griffith, Scenic Hill is a local icon. The wide range of heritage items present enhances the natural values of the area. Considered together, these items are of high social and aesthetic significance.
1670103	Pioneer Park	Outstanding, intact example of the type of display village built in the 1970s. It has very high social significance, as it taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche, symbolising the life struggles of the pre- and post-irrigation white pioneers. Some collection items are of possible state or national significance. Built by a core of people who had their roots in the pre-irrigation period, and were themselves irrigation pioneers, a lot of the work has its own high integrity.
1670088	Italian Cultural Museum	Well-maintained building of architectural and aesthetic merit, highly significant to the Italian community. It represents community pride and cooperation within the Italian community of Griffith. It embodies many symbolic meanings, including the passion felt by Italian descendants of Griffith that their early migration memories and experiences - pre Second World War - be recognised, and preserved for posterity.
1670013	Banna Avenue Heritage Area	This wide boulevard contains the commercial centre and dominates the layout of the city centre. The existing street trees are a significant heritage component, creating a rare sense of enclosure and protection in the midst of a busy traffic zone. Contains most of the intact examples of interwar period architecture in Griffith, including most of the important early public buildings
1670089	Hermit's Cave	One of very few known hermit dwellings in New South Wales. Outstanding example of a twentieth century archaeological site, suitable for further research.
1670098	Civic Precinct, Griffith	Walter Burley Griffin's city plan, of local and possibly national significance, is dominated by wide boulevards with central medians, generating a grand statement that is rare amongst rural centres throughout the state. The footprint of Walter Burley Griffin's layout is still evident in the street pattern of the Civic Precinct, although the commercial focus has shifted to Banna Avenue. There are opportunities for long-term planning to reinforce the streetscape.
1670093	Public Open Space Corridor	Important landscape feature of Griffin's original town plan which documents concern for a beautiful city. Influenced by the Garden City Movement, it incorporates parklands along the main canal that skirts the civic centre. Careful long-term planning could consolidate these parklands to promote tourism and lifestyle.
1670014	Yenda Town Centre	Yenda town centre echoes the nearby Walter Burley Griffin towns in miniature with its characteristic radial design, tree-lined streets, ring road and park. Yenda is unique as both a soldier settler town and major outpost for construction workers of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. The outstanding level of intactness of original architecture documents an early 1920s building boom, which saw the construction of most of Yenda town centre. Slow population growth after the 1930s ensured preservation of a remarkably wide range of community buildings. The town centre has retained its community importance, recognised for its high integrity and aesthetic values. The streetscape is highly distinctive due to flat topography, four branching avenues, and richness of its 1920s/1930s architecture. It has very high social significance, as it taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche, symbolising the life struggles of the pre- and post-irrigation white pioneers.
1670002	De Bortoli Residence, Bilbul	The De Bortoli winery founding family's modest brick cottage, recently renovated with echoes of Italy, speaks of Italian migration; a hard start; and later prosperity. The renovation is not old, but is of great significance, as it symbolises Italian migration themes. Its combination of old and new is representative of much of Griffith's heritage. Landmark and ethnic nostalgic value.
1670061	Our Lady of Pompeii Church,	Our Lady of Pompeii Roman Catholic Church is historically significant as possibly the oldest church constructed by, and for the sole use of, an Italian community in New South Wales. It is a good example of vernacular church design and construction of the Veneto region, transplanted in memory to

	Yoogali	the Australian setting. The church played a seminal role in the development of self-esteem by this community at a difficult period in inter-ethnic relations during the late 1930s and has an ongoing association with the Griffith Italian community.
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6

Recommendations arising from the study

6.1 Listing

*It is recommended that all of the places in Table 4.1 **Table of recommended places**, be entered as heritage items, and that all the places in Table 4.2 **Table of recommended precincts**, be entered as heritage conservation areas, in the Heritage Schedule of Griffith Shire's Local Environmental Plan (LEP).*

6.2 Curtilage definition

For most locally significant places it will be sufficient merely to name the significant item, without needing to provide a specified boundary.

Where it is necessary to define the boundary of the proposed item to satisfy owner concerns, or if the place is likely to be State listed or subdivided, then the boundary should include an appropriate curtilage around the significant item, or group of items. The curtilage is the space around an item that contributes to its significance. It is typically defined as the garden and landscape setting for most dwellings, although significant views to surrounding features such as a river or tree-lined driveway may also be considered.

In urban settings, such as Griffith City, the extent of listing will usually extend to the legal boundary of the block, as this will include the curtilage and constitutes a legally defined parcel of land. Items of significance within this listed area can be specifically noted as components of heritage significance. Likewise, non-contributory items that are within a listed boundary can also be noted. Council's assessment of Development Applications should take into account the need for good visual access to listed items, and the preservation of their contribution to the street.

In rural landscapes, the listing may refer to a building only, but this will generally also include associated significant structures and their landscape setting.

For the purpose of the local Heritage Schedule, it is recommended that a heritage boundary or identification of intrinsic features not be defined, unless mapped in the Places Inventory, or specifically requested by the owner.

6.3 Management of interiors

Whilst many buildings retain significant elements of the original interiors, which are of obvious heritage value, development control plans for privately owned locally significant places should focus on the exteriors of places, as it is the exterior that contributes to the public realm.

Listing of original interiors is relevant in the case of publicly owned places, house museums, or places of such significance that they would warrant listing at the State level. The value of historic interiors should be the focus of occasional articles in the media, and information on preserving interiors should be available through the Heritage Adviser, and suitable literature held in the public library.

Only a small number of interiors were inspected during this study.

It is recommended that where interiors are considered to be of sufficient significance to warrant development control, these should be defined and agreed at the time of listing.

6.4 Heritage advice to consider owner's circumstances

Management of a heritage property will inevitably be affected by a variety of factors, of which heritage significance is only a part. Condition, cost, statutory requirements, user needs all contribute to the management strategy adopted for a particular place. These will change over time and are often best resolved prior to proposed work. To this extent the Heritage Adviser will have a key role to play in assisting owners who are preparing to work on their place.

Where work might impact on significance, the Heritage Adviser should review the proposal and possibly inspect the site to assist the owner to find a heritage solution that meets their needs.

6.5 Contributory items and infill

Some places near a heritage item may not be individually significant, but may contribute to a precinct's character. In a similar vein, new development near a heritage item should be treated as "infill", that is,

development that is considerate of the neighbourhood. Exterior work within a heritage conservation area should be referred to the Heritage Adviser as part of the assessment.

Any changes to a place that contributes to a heritage precinct should, whether it is individually significant or not, take into account the impact on the overall significance of the precinct.

6.6 Listing as a positive measure

Entry of places in the Heritage Schedule of the LEP is intended as recognition of the Shire's heritage, not as a means to impose additional constraints on property owners.

It is recommended that the council work cooperatively with owners to assist them to find solutions that are sympathetic to heritage values, while enabling them to achieve their own goals.

6.7 Private owners not to be penalised

Private owners of places entered in the Heritage Schedule of the LEP should not be subjected to additional costs or bureaucratic burdens as a result of listing.

It is recommended that procedures for approving proposed changes to listed places should involve minimal time and cost for property owners.

6.8 Dual occupancy benefits for listed property owners

During the course of the fieldwork, owners of older dwellings asked if listing would prevent them from building a more modern and commodious dwelling on their property. Some Councils allow only one residence on some blocks, requiring the construction of a new dwelling to de-service or demolish the older dwelling. Obviously this would be a threat to the Shire's heritage and a disincentive to good conservation practice.

It is recommended that council allow owners of heritage listed properties the right to apply to retain the heritage listed dwelling in good functional condition, in addition to constructing a new dwelling (i.e dual occupancy).

6.9 Economic benefit to listed property owners

The study found that many areas in Griffith Shire have a rich historic character that appears to be valued by residents. It is likely that this historic character contributes to property market values and represents a clear economic benefit. Sympathetic management of heritage is likely to contribute to the notion that Griffith Shire is an attractive place in which to settle, and consequently be of long term economic benefit to the whole community. Owners who agree to have their property heritage listed should achieve recognition of their contribution to the history of the community, by financial incentives offered through the many types of available heritage funds.

It is recommended that Council foster good heritage management, by providing high quality heritage advice free to the community, and by supporting a local heritage fund. Council should also "lead by example" and undertake high quality conservation work where the opportunity arises.

6.10 Waiving of application fees for heritage-related work

During the course of this study, owners have asked whether Council permission would be required for heritage-related work on a listed property or property in a heritage conservation area, and whether application fees would be charged for such work.

It is recommended that for exterior refurbishment work, that if the owner of any heritage listed place or in a heritage conservation areas makes an application and acts in accordance with the Heritage Adviser, then Council waives the requirement for a Development Application assessment or fee.

6.11 Further research

During the course of this study, it became clear that there is considerable scope for further research to be undertaken that will improve understanding and conservation of the Shire's extensive heritage. It is particularly recommended that the State Heritage Inventory database is regularly updated with detail about individually listed places, other places of possible significance, oral histories and village histories.

It is recommended that Council encourage further research into places of possible significance by funding yearly updates of the State Heritage Inventory database of the Griffith City Local Government Area.

7

Recommended strategy

9. Recommended strategy

The recommended strategy for successfully managing the Shire's heritage is as follows:

1	Council votes to adopt the places recommended in Table 4.1 of this report as constituting the identified heritage places within the Shire.
2	Council follows the necessary processes to have the list of places entered in the Heritage schedule of the Local environmental Plan.
3	Council supports the nomination to the State Heritage Register of places identified at section 5 of this report.
4	Council prepares development control plans for heritage listed precincts and for heritage listed places in general.
5	Council supports the appointment of a heritage adviser and to fund the local heritage fund.
6	Council promotes heritage management as part of the core business of development.
7	Council facilitates good heritage conservation by others, and leads by example in conserving places under its management.

It is recommended that Council adopt the above strategy.

A copy of this report should be readily available to the community

A Thematic History of Griffith

The history of Griffith can be divided into three distinct phases: Aboriginal prehistory; the sparsely settled pastoral period of the nineteenth century; and post-irrigation, with the establishment of larger towns and intensive farming patterns. While irrigation settlers have come from many parts of the world, it is the high proportion of Italian settlers who have given Griffith its most distinctive cultural flavour.

The story of this ethnically rich and diverse community starts with the Wiradjuri people, whose occupation of the region as hunter-gatherers goes back into the mists of time. Rather than scattering information about how the Aboriginal people fared at different times, (say in separate chapters about pre-European occupation, pastoral and urban settlement), I have integrated all of the Aboriginal accounts into a single first chapter.

The arrival of Anglo-Celtic explorers in the early nineteenth century marked the beginning of non-indigenous settlement, sparsely laid out across the region in the large pastoral stations and small settlements – mainly along rivers and highways. The dominant settlers – whether station owners, drovers or bullockies – were mostly of British origin, but they were supported by other groups such as Chinese labourers and Afghan hawkers. Aboriginal groups whose lands had been incorporated into the stations found work as station hands, became fringe dwellers in the towns, or were collected into mission stations. The site of modern Griffith was part of the thousand square kilometre area of Kooba Station. There were no towns on what was to become the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

Intensive settlement was prompted by a period of severe drought. Intensive settlement began distinctly and dramatically, with legislation providing for the damming of the river; construction of a canal system; resumption of pastoral land for the establishment of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area; and establishment of two Burley Griffin designed commercial centres, at Griffith and Leeton. The new scheme was specifically set up to establish a large number of small farms for settlers of modest means. It was initially intended to attract settlers from Britain or of British origins - and after the First World War – specifically soldier settlers.

Other settlers came from Spain, Germany and other parts of the world. But it was the settlers from the Veneto region of North Italy who adapted most successfully to the harsh conditions of the early years, and who, through a chain migration pattern, built up the most distinctive group within the new Griffith community. After the Second World War, there was a fresh wave of migration from South Italy. When Italian migration waned in the 1960s, new chain migrations have seen the growth of the Sikh Indian and South Sea Island communities. Aboriginal people from other areas were also attracted to the new towns, firstly as itinerant fringe dwellers, factory and farm workers, and eventually as permanent town dwellers.

To show the place of heritage items in the development of Griffith, this work is arranged into historical themes, sorted into three levels:

Chapter headings. Adapted from national historical themes (compiled by the Australian Heritage Commission).

Main headings. These represent state heritage themes (as listed by the NSW Heritage Council).

Section headings. These describe local themes suggested by the author. They are intended to show more detail than the chapter or main headings.

Each heritage place or item was entered into the state Heritage Inventory (SHI) database. This is a searchable database available through the NSW Heritage Office's web-site at www.nsw.heritage.gov.au. Some studies use bold type to mark the location of each heritage place in the text.

A note on the sources

This study brings together evidence from a great variety of sources, never before combined. The range of written references is listed at the back, and includes original research which I carried out in the area in the early 1990s to record some of the local Aboriginal settlements.

All the local people of Griffith listed on the cover page made important contributions, often providing information on a specific heritage item. The study relied on, and is certainly not intended to replace, the

definitive Shire history written by local historian Bryan Kelly *From wilderness to Eden: a history of the city of Griffith, its region and its people* (1988).

Robyn Oliver very kindly provided her series of weekly newspaper articles, written during her term as Curator of Pioneer Park Museum. Much of Robyn's work was original community-based research, which proved very useful for this study.

Margaret King was the local contact person for the heritage study, also providing materials from the Griffith City Library. Library staff kindly allowed me to invade their tidy workplace and use their facilities, and as a sign of gratitude, I assigned copyright of all my photographs of Griffith to the Library. Jan Morrison generously provided her four-wheel drive as a transport service.

One source that requires special mention is James Ronaldson's historical notes. Mr Ronaldson (1890-1953) was a New Zealander who, after returning from the First World War with many injuries, took up a farm, but had to give it up due to poor health. The Masons in Yenda built him a tin hut attached to the back of the Yenda Masonic Lodge. He lived there for the rest of his life. Local history was his hobby, and so we have a legacy of diaries that form the core of research for buildings in Yenda. Long standing residents of Yenda, particularly Edna Wakely and Enid Atkinson, contributed many details about Yenda and other places.

Council staff Satwinder Sandhu and Ben Zillman, and councillors Helen Brayne and Peter Taylor provided both information and moral support for persevering with this study. I am particularly grateful to Robyn Oliver who kindly edited the text, greatly improving its clarity of expression. Alison Neville and her father read through the text, particularly checking the spelling of local families and places. All of this above work was voluntary, and added rich detail to the study.

The natural heritage of Griffith

The landscape around Griffith is situated in the riverine plain on the northern side of the Murrumbidgee River. This plain had its origin in the Cainozoic era, tens of millions of years ago.

At the time of European arrival its rich red soil was stable and free of erosion, covered with semi-arid woodlands of mallee and native pine. The first sheep runs were very large and the landscape is thought to have had little alteration compared to the present day highly altered landscape. Nevertheless, even at this early, sparsely settled stage, fodder trees such as Boree and Belah were cut down, and overgrazing reduced grasses such as kangaroo grass (once common, now rare) and saltbush. Recollections of the early days of settlement described the character of the landscape at this time:

To the young people of our present generation, who see huge plains converted into wheat paddocks by wire and netting fences, no doubt it just runs through their minds that these were always plains, and probably some might almost think that the fences grew there naturally, but if they could be transplanted back to 1850-1870 they would not know they were in the same land.

In place of waving wheat fields extending in places for miles at a stretch, broken only by narrow belts of timber left as fire or shelter belts, or along the edge of some road, they would see great forests of huge gums, pine, oak and belah, while on what we now call the "boree country", the boree trees grew in profusion, their limbs weeping and bending almost to the ground something after the style of a weeping willow. These boree tree forests were a pretty sight. They are almost extinct now, for no better fodder trees exist; though perhaps it is equalled only by the Currajong. Their good fodder qualities were their undoing as in later years they were ruthlessly destroyed for food for stock in dry times, so that the odd miserable trees left alive today do not convey to our minds what a forest of these beautiful trees looked like.

Later on, when the country was first stocked with cattle, prior to sheep being introduced, they trimmed these trees so evenly at the bottom, up to a distance of six to seven feet, that they looked like large umbrellas and you could see quite a distance underneath them.

The gums and pines were not as we see them today, they grew tall and clean of limb. Old bushmen tell me that in some of the forests you could see a good distance as you rode alone. Some parts of course, had a good deal of undergrowth.

There was very little natural water except in wintertime. The country teemed with opossums, kangaroo rats, paddy melons and bilbies. Nardoo, the seed from which the natives made their bread, grew in profusion. I have endeavoured to give you an idea of this silent unoccupied land as it was to about 1850 (Gow & Gow January 1924, edited).

There was much more clearing by selectors who created a partitioned landscape of small blocks. Now largely forgotten are the huge teams of itinerant Chinese labourers of the late nineteenth century. No longer able to work the exhausted gold mining areas, they moved about in community camps that sometimes numbered hundreds of men, clearing native forest for station owners. The loss of forests through ringbarking created a range of problems described in this account from the 1920s:

From about 1850, men who had stock runs on the Murrumbidgee River began to bring cattle out this way in the winter months, and gradually the country was applied for in what was called blocks or holdings. These early pioneers were men of great courage: nothing daunted them. Here in the winter they camped on the best natural holes they could find, tending their stock by day and camping in bark huts at night. They had few luxuries in the way of food. The fare principally was salt meat, damper, brown treacle sugar, currants and raisins in very limited quantities, but they had plenty of hard work and fresh air and seemed to thrive on it. If they met with an accident it meant perhaps 150 miles to the nearest doctor.

Gradually they began to find more use for the country. Odd wells were sunk, dams put down, and small dams made with drays, sometimes wheelbarrows. However it was found that with water and regular stocking that more grass was required and contracts were let to ring bark large areas of the forest country. The result far exceeded the anticipation of the early settlers. The country released from the strain of carrying large gum and pine trees responded on the ringbarked portions to a wonderful extent.

Fencing was now required to hold the increasing stock. Wire was very little known and was expensive, but plenty of timber was available for post and rail, chock and log, or dogleg and trestle fences. The gallant pioneers now thought their struggles were getting towards an end, but, alas, fresh ones awaited them. Disastrous fires swept the improved ringbarked country which now grew grass, wet seasons followed, one might think this was going to aid them, but it had just the opposite result. On the ringbarked country, millions of seeds had fallen and remained dormant for years. The influence of their parents was too great to permit them to germinate, but the soil being released from the robbing influence of these giants, as they died from ringbarking, and the seeds being first scorched and cracked by the bush fires (which is what most native seeds need), and then soaked by the winter rains, they responded just as the grass had done, after the first ringbarking, and millions of trees appeared. Thus in a few years the last state was worse than the first; for instead of open forests through which you could in many places ride at a gallop, dense scrubs, mostly of pine, appeared; and it grew so dense as to become difficult to ride through (Gow & Gow January 1924, edited).

But it was not until irrigation works were commenced in the early twentieth century that massive woodland clearance was undertaken. The landscape was totally transformed by irrigation. A range of animals that were observed by the selectors became locally extinct. These include the Bilby, Easter Hare Wallaby, Brindled Nailtail Wallaby ("Flash Jack"), Brush-tailed Bettong, Burrowing Bettong, Western Quoll and Koala (source: Mammals of Australia). Flat open plains, to be criss-crossed with canals, replaced the pre-European woodland. Imported vegetation types became dominant: well-watered wheat crops and dairy pasture grasses, rice, grapes, citrus and stone fruit. Massive dust storms were a feature of Griffith life in the early twentieth century, until irrigation crops became established.

Remnants of pre-European landscapes now exist in isolated patches, scattered along road reserves, at Binya Hills, mallee along the sides of Quarry Road, Scenic Hill in Griffith City and other parts of the McPherson Range.

Scenic Hill Reserve

Scenic Hill forms part of the McPherson Range. It comprises a Crown reserve of approximately 650ha, which is managed by Griffith City Council. The area commonly known as Scenic Hill however extends beyond the actual reserve area. Scenic Hill comprises the southernmost part of the McPherson Range, which is a formation of the Upper Devonian period. The Griffith area is largely flat; the east-west slopes of the McPherson and Tabbita Ranges affording the only relief. Scenic Hill acts as a visual backdrop to the Griffith urban area and is significant in terms of its landscape and visual qualities.

Scenic Hill comprises Reserve No 56353, which incorporates about 465.8ha. There have been various acquisitions and resumption's over the Crown since it was first gazetted on 31st August 1923 and Wade Council made trustee on 13th May 1949.

Scenic Hill comprises vacant Crown land of which Griffith City Council is Trustee. As trustee, Council has the responsibility to manage the hill in view of its reservation. There are additional areas of land included in this management plan of which Council is not trustee. These include areas owned by various utilities and other Crown land, which have been left undeveloped.

Scenic Hill is significant to the development of Griffith. Over the years it has been subject to severe fires and was thought to be almost entirely denuded prior to the Great War, due to rabbit plagues and human

intervention. There were huts on the hill and settlers cleared it for fire, while carriers used the hill to source gravel. The hill vegetation as described in Griffith and District Pioneers was similar to that of Cocoparra National Park.

Descriptions by early explorers and settlers suggest that woodlands in the region had a grassy understorey. These conditions have changed as a result of heavy grazing pressure, soil compaction caused by hard-hoofed animals, ring barking, scrub clearing and the depredation of rabbits. Another impact is the changed fire frequency due to the prevention of frequent grass fires. Longer periods between fires have enabled the development of shrubs and seed setting. It is reasonable to assume therefore that the development of the shrubby understorey of woody weeds present on the hill is a post-European development. The hill, however, remains essentially, one of the few local examples of remnant vegetation prior to European settlement. The hill's predisposition for fire events and extent of disturbed areas means that there is a somewhat altered vegetation regime.

Generally the vegetation on Scenic Hill can be classified as open woodland of Bimble Box (*Eucalyptus populnea*) and White Cypress Pine (*Callitris columellaris*) association. Scenic Hill is a relatively harsh environment for plants, due to the shallow and rocky nature of the terrain and high soil permeability and foliage cover is less than 10%. The rare and endangered plant Irongrass (*Lomandra patens*) is represented extensively on the hill. A botanical survey has produced a descriptive breakdown of the various vegetation communities present on Scenic Hill. It is recorded in Appendix 3 of the Plan of Management (2000).

The local community has been concerned about the management of Scenic Hill for about thirty years and various protective groups have been formed as a result, including the 'Friends of Scenic Hill'. This group has been trying for almost thirty years to influence the Crown to add significant adjoining areas to the reserve, without success.

The protection of items of environmental heritage such as Hermit's cave and associated places has also been an ongoing community concern in which the East Griffith Apex Club has been strongly involved.

Alongside fire, another concern, is the long term risk of fragmentation as a result of indiscriminate resumption, and acquisitions, inappropriate land use approvals, subdivision and development of utility infrastructure which has the potential to adversely impact on the ecological and aesthetic values of the hill. The need to maintain the integrity of the hill as a natural system and its function as a wildlife and native vegetation corridor and so preserve its visual and scenic qualities is a responsibility and challenge for Griffith City Council.

Among the animals to be found at Scenic Hill are several species of marsupials and a very wide range of birds and reptiles. Faunal lists have been compiled and appear in Appendix 5 of the Plan of Management (2000).

Over the years there have been various additions, acquisitions and resumptions to the reserve. One major threats to the proper management of the hill competing policies of the two major stakeholders: Griffith City Council and the Crown. While the actual reserve area remains relatively secure, the significant Crown areas around the reserve can be disposed of. Various local groups such as Grazing occurred on Scenic Hill from settlement up until the 1940's. This grazing may have removed a whole age group of pines and the effects of fire have exacerbated this situation. Over the years, grazing has been permitted to reduce fuel loads on the reserve. Because of the native grasses and scarcity of vegetation the hill is not suitable for cattle or horses. Grazing has had a significant adverse impact on native plant species and has accelerated the spread and consolidation of weeds. Weeds on the hill include Prickly Pear (*Opuntia stricta*), olive trees, cedar trees, peppercorn trees, kikuyu, paspalum and oxalis. Feral animals that occur on the hill include the fox, feral cats, rabbits and goats.

Vehicular access is currently achieved via the sealed roads of Wyangan Avenue, Remembrance Drive and Scenic Drive. Unsealed access is achieved by an existing haphazard system of fire trail roads. There is also an informal access at the rear of existing residences

The cultural heritage of Griffith

Griffith Shire has had a short but rich history, underscored by the planned nature of the City. Walter Burley Griffin's plan has both local and national significance, which is not always recognisable in the subsequent development of the city. Aside from Griffin's plan, a range of other artefacts, buildings and precincts reflecting the history of Griffith remain in various states of repair and visual significance throughout the city. The most prominent and valued of these features are a number of buildings that quite rightly gain stature as the key links to Griffith's history. These include a number of public buildings, banks, hotels, offices, shops and monuments.

Many less obvious heritage items also exist, which gained little recognition until this study was carried out. These include a rich local assortment of interwar architectural examples and many items of "ethnic nostalgia". A general community comment when this study was commenced was that there "isn't anything of heritage value in Griffith". This highlights a disturbing, underlying, world-view in the community: that the local area has very little history worthy of note (beyond the prominent features mentioned earlier). On the contrary, Griffith has a remarkable background. Increased public appreciation is required in order that greater respect is placed on all of Griffith's early relics and significant community assets (Clouston 1993, edited excerpts).

The broad range of architectural heritage in the city and villages should be recognised, and enhanced, through development control, streetscape design, heritage funding and a good heritage advisory service. The NSW Heritage Office already offers funding for such programs. Though not vast in number, some hundred and sixty selected heritage items help to tell the story of Griffith. They should form part of a comprehensive tourism program to promote the city's natural, historic and cultural record. Heritage infrastructure such as interpretation, preservation, plaques, walking trails and funding may later be put in place. It is not intended for the heritage study to create such infrastructure. The study is designed to serve only as a foundation document.

The changing map of Griffith

A city design study of Griffith (Clouston 1993:38) found that Griffith's unique character is enjoyed by residents, and is important in tourism promotion. This unique character is expressed in four themes, reflected in heritage places found in the city:

- ◆ Griffin - extending his concern for community and the 'city beautiful'
- ◆ Water - enriching land and lifestyle.
- ◆ Railways - giving structure and service to the city.
- ◆ Streets - vital places for culture and commerce.

Although sometimes taken for granted, these unique qualities did not appear instantly or as 'ready-mades'. They developed over time. Stages of Griffith's development are marked by places of significance to local people - heritage places - which can be traced from an early time before human arrival, right up to the present day. The development of Griffith may thus be imagined as a changing map.

The prehistoric map of Griffith and surrounding country was a mental map carried in the head of each mobile Aborigine. In such a map points could be camping places, initiation sites, places marked by creation stories or inhabited by mythological beings, and so on.

To master a landscape, and to create such an agreed mental map, is impossible without agreed names for the features in it. We know that Aborigines throughout Australia had elaborately named and mythologised their landscapes. Clans travelled out of home territory for large distances in order to participate in ceremonies, such as initiations, at "Dreamtime" places, which focused beliefs through creation stories.

The mental map carried by prehistoric hunter-gatherers differed in at least one major way from that which is embodied in modern printed maps. This is because of the technology and concepts behind the British system of land tenure. Where Aborigines thought mainly in terms of key points in the landscape, British surveyors measured and quantified the entire area of the land so as to divide and enclose it by boundaries.

The British system of land tenure also laid out invisible lines across the landscape, but the process was completely different. Surveyed land boundaries are in one sense a legal fiction. The essence of this system of land tenure is that the landscape becomes defined as boundaries, rather than a circuit of movement through places. In theory, it grants exclusive title to one owner, who can, unlike a hunter-gatherer, totally exclude others from land, or can even 'dispose' of land. This alien system of land tenure had a sudden effect on hunter-gatherers in the early period of European settlement, because settlers took up the best-watered land. But its most far-reaching impact occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, with legislated close settlement, fencing, roads and railways, towns. The town and irrigation came later, but also owe their origins to the system of land subdivision.

The large pastoral properties were opened up for small selectors in the 1860s, and within a decade Darlington Point was a busy river port with a regular steamer trade. This kind of settlement growth made Aboriginal hunter-gathering an obsolete mode of subsistence. But the map changed radically when Griffith, Leeton and Coleambally were built as deliberate creations of the irrigation schemes of the twentieth century. The American architect, Walter Burley Griffin was fresh from his success in winning the competition to design the new federal capital. He was invited in 1913 to plan two new towns, Leeton and Griffith. The layout of these two towns demonstrated on a reduced scale both the road system and the aesthetics that created the planned city of Canberra. Much of this town planning has been preserved.

Griffin's design did not simply produce a planned town. Shopkeepers shunned the three concentric circles he laid down for the city centre and set up premises along the present main street, largely due to the fact that these blocks were cheaper and closer to the railway station. A technical college and the shire offices are now in the hub with an industrial area in the circles. The town was proclaimed in 1916, the year the railway arrived, and named after Arthur Griffith, then state minister of public works.

In hindsight, the several hundred years of white settlement with its changing technology and land tenure had radically altered the map. But the hunter-gatherers also changed. They formed camps on the template of European settlement. In the early nineteenth century these were the pastoral stations. Later, when these open stations came to be fenced off and subdivided, Aborigines formed communities on government missions. The hunter-gatherer world changed into a settled or urbanised world, and the map changed with it, with new places of seasonal employment, Aboriginal reserves and 'fringe' camps associated with the white towns.

Surprisingly for visitors to the area, the development of Griffith involved a progression of temporary worker's camps and shanty settlements. These are remembered in stark contrast to the planned and permanent nature of the present-day city. Griffith is not only a city of rich property developers and agricultural producers. The city has a rich heritage of railway fletcher camps, irrigation worker settlements, soldier settler barracks, chain migration farmer huts, seasonal fruit picker camps and Aboriginal settlements. Their story is of a melting pot of people of widely differing ethnic background, which streamed into the area, for work and a place to stay. The changing map is sprinkled with expressions of this ethnic heritage; documented in local community life, land tenure, and structures. This story of development and ethnic diversity provides the backbone for a history of Griffith.

1

The Aborigines

Fragments of a heritage

On the peaceful Murrumbidgee River there are two places with names hinting at a bloody past. One is Poisoned Waterholes Creek and the other is Massacre Island. The traditions of these places have been passed down across the generations. In the 1990s Ossie Ingram recalled an account given to him by an old man in the 1930s of what had happened there a century before.

Near Buckingbong homestead several groups of Aboriginal families used to camp. The station owner poured drums of poison into a big waterhole called Green Swamp and many people died. Other families heard about this and cleared out to a place called Duck Bend. They camped on the island but a boundary rider spotted smoke from the kangaroo grass there and reported it to the boss. The station boss got the men together and they rode to the bend of the river where the island was, and they shot the whole group except for one man.

The one survivor got a reed into his mouth and used it to breathe while he swam down the river with it. He bypassed all the places that he knew and finally collapsed at Benerembah station. The station owner's daughter cared for him until he recovered, fell in love with him and married him.

Too romantic to be believed? Strange things happened on the frontiers of settlement.

Neville Lyons of Narrandera gives another version of the same tale about Poisoned Waterholes Creek. No contemporary record has come to light, but the Aboriginal oral tradition is very strong. In the NSW Riverina the 1830s was a period of frontier violence and Aboriginal resistance called "The Wiradjuri War".

Late nineteenth century newspaper editors always reported the demise of the "last full-blood" in a local town. By the mid-twentieth century, many townspeople in central NSW came to believe that the Aborigines were extinct in the local area, or else had never been there.

Hunter-gatherer groups that spoke the Wiradjuri group of dialects covered a very large territory before European arrival. At the start of irrigation in the early twentieth century, their descendants still lived in the region, though clustered in Aboriginal reserves which had no direct connection with the newly forming settlements of Griffith and Leeton. As the labour requirements increased at these places, some Aboriginal households - and later whole communities - moved from the camps at places such as Darlington Point and Condobolin into Griffith. Griffith City has therefore both an old and a new Aboriginal history.

The myth of the disappeared Aborigines

During the nineteenth century, Aborigines in New South Wales suffered a great decrease in numbers due to disease, settler violence and loss of livelihood. But in early twentieth century towns they seemed to disappear from the written record. Once the objects of European life had been incorporated into their material culture, there seems to have been less attention paid to them. Concern for remnant communities has only grown at the last quarter of the twentieth century.

Aboriginal oral accounts, such as the massacre account above, provide data for much of the region, and the linear time scale has had to give way to this river of experience.

The region mainly has two forms of archaeological site: surface stone artefact scatters and oven mounds, which are thought to represent camping areas. Two less common site types are burials and stone arrangements; the latter thought to represent ceremonial, "sacred" places. There are no archaeological data for layout of pre-European shelters, camps or settlements as no area excavation has been carried out. Archaeological and historical interpretation, using data with imagination, can provide an informed reconstruction of past events, either directly or indirectly inferred. The main historical materials available to us are the writings of the European newcomers (the best known being Howitt and Matthews) as who were

outsiders to the Wiradjuri world. The main tool available is the imagination.

Written accounts by Europeans of Wiradjuri have been coloured by their context. Pioneering ethnographers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries dwelt in detail on Wiradjuri religion, initiation ceremony and "rules" of social organisation, yet considered almost nothing of everyday life. Late twentieth century accounts of Wiradjuri hunter-gatherers were also skewed. Written in a climate of revisionism and possibly in an attempt to compensate for past colonialism, these accounts tend to typecast them with exaggerated levels of environmentalism, spirituality, and political organisation.

Wiradjuri as Hunter/Gatherers

The Wiradjuri as hunter-gatherers had to know their country intimately in order to prosper. They tended to be mobile, and it follows that their most important survival mechanism was their knowledge, rather than their equipment. The daily life of people had routines, although it also included highlights, which were marked by practice of their religion and by ceremony, orchestrated by the most knowledgeable seniors in the community.

Although the long-term survival of hunter-gathering over the last few million years is popularised as "environmentalism", it is better seen as "adaptive stability". There was no buffer between the hunter-gatherer and the natural environment. The resulting human relationship to the natural rate of replenishment in the land was intimate, and created a conservative society, which resisted change. Lee and DeVore (1968) further commented that hunter-gatherers of the past knew their habitats as routine and reliable food sources, before the arrival of peoples with more aggressive social systems, which pushed out remnant hunter-gatherer groups into unattractive environments, which posed problems of survival.

Lee and De Vore's characterisation of hunter-gatherer life explains much of the operation of Wiradjuri communities and sheds light on difficulties experienced by these communities in their move into towns. Hunter-gatherer life is portrayed as a pattern of living in small groups, which move around. The group operate from a camp with a pattern of sharing out collected food. Whilst the women and children are based around the camp, men travel further to hunt. The food supply generally maintains local foraging group ("band") size at about 25 to 50, which tend to be spread out as sparse populations, around 1 person per square mile (approx. 260 hectares), and in the range of 1 to 25 persons per 100 square miles (approx. 2,600 hectares). The group moves around in order to hunt and gather, and so personal property is at a very low level, and is maintained at a minimum by a generally egalitarian system. Groups come together on a seasonal basis, which divides the year into times of fusion into large groups ("public" periods) and fission into separate household camps ("private" periods). Larger groups, sometimes called "tribes", were of about 500 people, the manageable size for everyone to know everyone else. Neither were hunter-gatherer bands bound by any necessity of maintaining property. Groups do not generally maintain exclusive rights to any parcel of land because they frequently visit other groups. The hosts of one season become the guests of another, so that reciprocal obligations are built up between groups. In this way the population was kept circulating between permeable and shifting band territories. These aspects of small community life were continued in altered form in Aboriginal settlements to recent years.

Social organisation

In common with other Aboriginal and hunter-gatherer groups, Wiradjuri social organisation is thought to have been based on the band. The band was a kin-based family group: mobile and egalitarian. Status in the band was by age, where elders played an important leadership role. The band hunted and gathered together over a range that probably included riverine and hinterland country. At times, bands must have joined to form large gatherings of several hundred people to participate in ceremonies, initiation and trade.

Traditional settlement

The hunter-gatherer household camp and shelter was an older pattern of life, which continued after European settlement. There appear to have been two types of settlement, small camps of extended households or bands, and larger, village-like, community camps.

A small Aboriginal camp on the Yass Plains (Bennett 1834) consisted of simple stringy bark wind-shelters: "The natives had just arrived in the paddock, and established their temporary village or encampment; their habitations were merely sheets of bark, stripped from trees in the vicinity, and supported by props, the sheet of bark being placed to windward, and shifted as might be required, the fire for cooking purposes, etc., being made in front". Such shelters with large sheets of bark sheets in simple lean-to structures framed by a single or several forked poles, appear to have been a widely occurring hut type in south-eastern Australia.

A small type of bough shelter appears to have been widely used by households while travelling. It was a

simple frame constructed by placing a few young boughs or saplings tightly in the ground in a semi-circular form, the upper parts of which were woven or tied together, then covered with bark, leaves or grass. Dawson (1881), though writing of Victorian riverine people, described it in detail, stating that the women erected these small temporary camp shelters. Small saplings were bent into a dome shape and covered with grass or bark, with an open side often facing the morning sun or a sheltering rock. A small fire burned in this entry. Camps of several related households clustered a number of dome shelters facing a common fire, which was mainly used for heating. A separate fire outside the cluster was used for cooking. In fine warm weather, the shelter was not built and a few green bushes placed in a half-circle to windward of the fire.

Sturt (1833) described the larger community camps. There were permanent pathways following the rivers and leading to camps. He observed that "The paths of the natives on either side [of the river] were like well trodden roads". Despite most groups appearing to be highly mobile bands, Sturt encountered signs of village-like communities on several occasions. For example, following the Macquarie River, he found a group of 70 huts, each large enough to hold 12-15 men. They all had the "same compass orientation", and one particular hut was found to contain two large nets, about 90 yards in length.

Distribution of the various hut/shelter types is unknown, but appears to have depended on the weather, size of household and duration of stay. They may be summarised as four types: (1) Circular bush screen as a wind-break in warm and fine weather; (2) Forked pole bark lean-to as a shade overnight rain-shelter; (3) Small covered bough shelter for camps of short duration; (4) Large covered bough shelter for seasonal camps. Use of outside cooking fires and versions of bough shelters continued in use at recent Aboriginal settlements.

Based on such accounts, a hypothetical model for the pre-European Wiradjuri household cluster, and community camp might be as follows. A typical household cluster would have contained several shelters for very windy or rainy conditions. Each shelter had its own hearth. Outside, another hearth was used for cooking. Beyond the swept area around the shelter was a household refuse zone. Some groups would gather for short periods for ceremony or to share during seasons of plenty in larger community camps. Community camps contained within them numerous household clusters, but were also connected to nearby resources, such as reliable sources of water and food, spiritual sources such as dreaming places, and established pathways. These patterns were later re-created in twentieth century Wiradjuri settlements.

Material culture

Wiradjuri material culture was one of stone, fibre, wood, bark, bone, and shell. Mussel shells were sometimes used as scrapers. Nets were made from plant fibre cord. The range of tools and weaponry included spear throwers, parrying shields, broad shields, clubs, shovels, axes and varieties of throwing sticks. Much of the early description of Aborigines centred on such technology. Bennett (1834) described in detail the making of skin cloaks, which were worn reversed (with the fur turned inwards) during winter. The skins were pegged and scraped in ornamental patterns with a mussel shell scraper, and stitched together with finely divided kangaroo tail sinew thread using a bone awl.

Wiradjuri adult men at this time had front upper teeth voids from their initiation, and wore red and yellow ochre face paint, possum skin cloaks, a stick or bone nose septa, and net headpieces. A Wiradjuri man's hand weapons included a club, boomerang, woomera and an array of spears, but his minimal essential, carried in the teeth when crossing a river or climbing after a possum, was the stone hatchet, *galengar* or *mogo*. At camp, the women carried babies in their possum skin cloaks. Their articles of equipment seen at camp were several fishing spears ("lances"), shields, clubs, "chisels", and "workbags" with items such as paint and feathers, head nets, teeth necklaces and sinew for sewing the possum skin cloaks in which they carried their infants.

The hair net worn by both men and women was made by tendons from a kangaroo tail separated into threads. The cord made up by two of these threads being rolled on the thigh, with additional thread added from time to time to make up several metres of fine cord. Nets were often coloured with ochre and the sinew cord was valued by early white stockmen for whiplash making.

Short spears were about 1.8m. long and were made of reed pointed with hard wood. Long 3.6 m. spears were made from a single shaft of hardwood with a sharpened point. With triple pronged spears of about 3.6 to 4.2 m., Wiradjuri spent times on the river in bark canoes, returning with fish or platypus. Some of the shields had patterns carved with a kangaroo incisor tooth.

Aborigines at Wellington carried a special hooked tool for retrieving grubs from tree bark which would be chopped out with a hatchet, and wooden paddles for digging up grubs and vegetable roots.

Medicine

Wiradjuri used a range of treatment techniques for common illnesses. As well as the eucalyptus steam-pits already noted they used wattle tan-water for burns, the carrying of particular plant gums to treat diarrhoea, and the binding of wounds with gum leaf bandaging or a clean clay pack. Similarly Cunningham (1827) who was an English surgeon noted that some of the acacia gum was diluted to treat "affections of the urinary organs, and dysentery". He also saw a man with a deeply wounded foot bury it into soft earth as a poultice, although he judged it to be a "sorry substitute for a poultice".

Mary Gilmore, daughter of the manager of Cowabbee station in the 1870s, described two areas set aside for special uses in Wiradjuri camps. The first were oven mounds that represented communal locations for food preparation at camps, or places of treatment for respiratory illness. Some ovens were constructed as eucalyptus steam-pits for rheumatism and respiratory infections. A special area of the camp was also set aside for the instruction of women and delivery of babies. Babies were born in camps under the supervision of Aboriginal midwives. The expectant mother was relieved of arduous tasks by the other women at camp, procuring only sufficient food for her. At a time when white doctors in Wagga Wagga donned their oldest coats, (kept stiff with dried blood as a mark of their trade), Aboriginal midwives carefully wiped their hands with the antiseptic from bruised gum leaves. Wiradjuri men knew to stay away from the women's instruction and separation area of the camp. This was a small area, big enough to hold several women and girls at a time, hidden from view and camouflaged by bushes. Small non-Aboriginal camps were distinguishable from these by their bedding, made from an indiscriminate range of nearby plants, and with leafy branches tossed down in random fashion to form a bed. By contrast, the Wiradjuri women's area had a carefully prepared floor clear of grass tussocks and roots, and then swept clean bare. A birthing bed was then laid with fresh and soft eucalyptus leaves, in overlapping layers like shingles on a roof, to create a continuous carpet. The eucalyptus oil exuded by the branches was a precaution against infection. A cauterised cut was made through the umbilical cord with a firestick, or the newborn was dusted down with carefully prepared white ash. The baby was dried with grass and the afterbirth was buried, and later burned.

Religion

Wiradjuri religion was expressed through the agency of spiritual experts, training of youths by initiation ceremonies, and burial practices.

In cases of illness where spiritual agency was suspected, the group's spiritual expert would be consulted. Healing by sorcery and suggestion would then be used. In 1830s Tumut, when the Aboriginal tribesman, Golong, was wounded with a spear, the magic man of his group, named Baramumbup, channelled magic through a quartz crystal to heal the wound. In a book devoted to Aboriginal medicine men (*karadji*), Elkin (1944) presented a picture of men that were "normal", but attained through higher degrees of training the specialist spiritual skills that other band members also shared, but to a less developed degree. In this sense the *karadji* were ordinary individuals in the camp who led ordinary lives. Wiradjuri people included in their midst the outstanding individuals of a strongly reflective turn of mind, or who led in aspects of community life but shared the egalitarian Aboriginal outlook on life, in which no one was able to dictate to anyone else.

Burials encountered by Sturt included an eight grave cemetery with conical grave mounds. At about the same time a visitor to Wellington, Backhouse (1835), described this common type of burial. The dead person's legs were bound up to bring the knees to the chin and the body was placed in a round hole which was covered with leaves and boughs, and mounded with earth into a conical shape. A small trench was cut into the ground part of the way around the mound, and surrounding trees were carved.

A chapter on pre-European Aboriginal life might try to divide it into logical themes, providing a summary of each, though this would not re-create, on paper, the hunter-gatherer world. But there is one highlight that might provide a small window, a fleeting glimpse, into this past world: the *burbung*. This most important ceremony, to confirm and test knowledge, marked initiation into adulthood. Hundreds of people would gather from Wiradjuri country and beyond. At the last great *burbung* of Wiradjuri country, held near Darlington Point in about 1878 (near what was later the Warangesda Mission), were built large earthworks and mounds, carved and decorated posts, a large bough yard to house the initiates, and a kilometre of cleared and marked ground. Boys underwent three or four *burbung* over several years, each ceremony stepping them closer to maturity, before they attained full adulthood. It was also a chance for a council of elders to meet and make decisions.

Initiation was both a symbolic and physical transformation from boyhood to manhood. It was a trial, which required unflinching bravery on the part of the boys. It required boys and young men to place all their trust in their elders and to be guided by their authority. It included long periods of instruction by the elders. And the deeper levels of meaning were then, and remain today, the secret of the initiated. The last initiations remembered in the Wiradjuri region were conducted in the 1920s, in government settlement environments

such as Brungle Station.

The following reconstruction of a late nineteenth century *burbung* ceremony has been sketched mainly from two sources in the public record, Howitt 1904 and Mathews 1897. It is necessarily a composite because many of the gaps in description must be filled in with detail from the ceremony undertaken in neighbouring regions. Similar ceremonies were known as *Purra* in Wongaibon, *Bora* in Kamilaroi, and *Bunan* or *Kuringal* in the Yuin language. These could be broadly separated, as a group, from the initiation ceremonies to the west, which involved circumcision. Participants were well versed in the lessons and meanings of the ceremonies. It will always be impossible for outsiders to gain the full appreciation of the ceremony. In addition, portions of the ceremonies remained secret and so there is no written record of them.

Such ceremonies formed a link across different language groups and may have been an important inter-regional link before European arrival. Howitt (1904) concluded that men initiated under this ceremonial community had inter-tribal recognition: "One thing is clear to me, namely that a man who has been initiated in the ceremonies either of the *kuringal* [and *bunan*], the *burbung*, or the *bora*, would be accepted as one of the initiated by any one of them". Mathews (1896) was told by old men on the Shoalhaven River that they attended the *burbung* on the Tumut River, and Wiradjuri people around Yass told him that they had attended a *bunan* ceremony at Queanbeyan or Braidwood. He concluded that Wiradjuri and the coastal peoples attended one another's initiation ceremonies. Cameron (1830-1908) described the meeting of various clans and peoples on the Willandra Billabong, in Wongaibon country, which included Wiradjuri, Barkandji, Watta Watta, Barinji, Tati Tati and Muthi Muthi. It is therefore clear that Wiradjuri were part of a much larger "ritual community", that extended into southern Queensland, Victoria, and along the south east Australian coast.

Wiradjuri clansman Murri-kangaroo related the ceremony to Alfred Howitt (1830-1908) who described it in his book *Native Tribes of South-East Australia* (1904), recently republished by AIATSIS. The *burbung* was an elaborately orchestrated process, involving whole Aboriginal communities. Probably the most complete record of a Wiradjuri *burbung* is the account prepared by R. H. Mathews in 1897. Yet this also was a reconstructed account, pieced together by Mathews some 25 years after the last large inter-group *burbung* had been held near the Warangesda Mission site, some time shortly before the missionary John Gribble arrived there. Mathews was a licensed surveyor and he prepared a detailed account of the location and arrangement of the ground. But even here, with the aid of local Wiradjuri men who had personally attended the *burbung* helping Mathews in the reconstruction, there were gaps. Such gaps can be partly filled from the records of ceremonies in neighbouring areas.

Once there are enough boys ready for initiation a clan leader sends out the message to gather various clans together. The message is passed between men related by the same animal totem (*mudji*), and therefore, in Wiradjuri belief, of the same spirit (*jir*) and flesh. So if the clan leader is say of the glider-possum totem, his messenger will also have been initiated under the same totem and so will the men who receive the message. The messenger carries not only the words, but is also given physical symbols of the message by the sender: He takes with him a bull-roarer, a man's kilt made of kangaroo-rat skin, a head string, a white head-band, and a message stick.

At each place the messenger is sent to, he gives the message to the clan leader, who then gathers the initiated men at the council-place (*ngooloobul*). At this elders' council, the messenger shows the bullroarer and delivers a long message, which is impressed on his memory by markings cut on the message stick or by strands woven into the kilt. The assembled elders then make it known to their fellow tribesmen, and in this way the message travels through each whole community by means of one totem. Distant groups may also be invited to a *burbung* by relaying a message through neighbouring groups.

Having reached the limit of Wiradjuri country, the messenger begins his return journey, accompanied by the tribes-people who join the party on its way back to the initiation ground. The ceremonial meeting having been called, that part of the community which took the initiative to invite others to the ceremony prepares the ground and selects a public camp site with a good supply of food and water. As the various groups have arrived, each contingent camps on the side nearest to its own country. The hosts prepare the initiation ground by excavating a large ring of mounded earthwork (*burbung*) and a long cleared pathway (*dharambil* or *mooroo*), which serves as a conduit into a small sacred enclosure (*goombo*), also an earth mound.

There are lawful ways for the initiation ground and ceremonies to be discussed in the public camp or near women or the uninitiated. North of the Wiradjuri area, the change from boy to man through initiation was explained to children (and probably to white people) as a death and dismantling of the boy by an ancestral being, who then restores the boy to his new life as a man while also knocking out a tooth. Deeper and more secret aspects of the ceremonies are discussed only between initiates.

Ceremonies commence with the men carrying tree branches from the council place and running to each of

their separate camps to gather the women and children together. The whole community gathers at the initiation ground where the boys are seated on the circular mound, each with his sponsor or guardian behind him. The women elders, who participate in the ceremony but are supposed not to see the initiation, crouch together in a bough shelter completely covered with skin blankets. They participate by chanting *burbung* songs during dances, such as the "tooth song" which is intended to cause the novice's tooth to come out easily.

The clan spiritual expert (medicine man) leads the younger initiated men into the initiation ground. They run up from a concealed place in the bush several hundred metres away. The medicine man sounds the bullroarer (*mudjeegang*) as loudly as possible, which receives power from the quartz crystals the medicine man carries. The young initiated men then raise a great shout and beat the ground with strips of bark to mask the sound of the bullroarer from the women. The boys are tense and fearful. They do not know what will happen to them.

Their guardians begin to instruct the boys in their duties not only as initiates but also as men. To behave themselves as men should, not to take notice of anything that is done to them. Not to betray surprise or any fear. They are taken along the path and shown the emblems and magical substances, which relate the story of *Daramulun*, son of the sky creator. It is during this state of prolonged tension, fear, apprehension and relief, that the most important laws of behaviour and spiritual lessons of manhood are branded into the boys' minds. Medicine men, coated black with charcoal, perform dances and songs, producing magical objects such as crystals from inside their bodies. Later, the boys may have a crystal inserted in their mouths to promote healing of their wound.

At the crucial time and place where front teeth are knocked out, the boy is repainted in red ochre and ornamented with feathers by his female relatives, then dressed in men's clothing (a belt with tails, headband, and armlet) by the men. The women and girls return to camp, only the women elders and infants remaining, concealed in a bough shelter which is covered with skins. The boy is placed with his feet in two holes. One guardian stands behind him to hold the boy's arms, the other to the right so the boy's head is held back and his eyes look upwards and cannot see what will happen. A stick may be used to prevent the boy's mouth from closing. Men perform a dance near the initiates as a medicine man pushes the gums back and jerks the front teeth out by a sudden levering action of his own lower jaw. If the tooth will not come out at this first jerk, then the boy has spent too much time with the women. The tooth must then be punched out with a wood or stone handle (*wallung*). This part of the ceremonies completed, the boys are warned that *Daramulun* will punish them if they reveal the secrets that have been taught.

This is followed by a series of story-telling dances which contain knowledge and lessons for the young, such as the one in which the medicine man disappears and later returns from the camp of *Baiame*, the sky creator, clothed in bunches and tufts of grass. Some of the dances represent different animals, others tell humorous stories. They are then led off to wash off the ochre and be body painted and dressed as men.

The women have formed a separate camp several kilometres away from the public camp and prepare a bough shelter and fire. A symbolic return to and rejection by the mother then takes place. The newly made man is led by his guardians to the women's camp where his mother and sisters stand. They look at him as if he were a stranger and symbolically strike him with branches so he would run away, with his guardians. Or they chant doleful songs because their sons will not be allowed to camp with them any more, but must now stay with the single men.

After three or four days the novices return and, carried on the shoulders of their guardians, are shown on a long embankment built of logs and bark. This is the final showing of the novices to their mothers before they are led away for a long period of post-initiation trial and instruction. They remain away for as long as twelve months, not allowed to approach the camp or to come near a woman. During this period of probation they live under strict rules, observe food prohibitions, and are instructed by the elders. They are not allowed to talk or laugh loudly until they develop the voice of a man. They are allowed to live near the main camp and may come within sight of the women, but must not speak to them. Eventually they return by stages into the camp, and live among the single men. Then they live as men.

Food economy

Wiradjuri food economy was centred on the river corridors and their hinterlands. For convenience, it divides into four broad environmental zones, although any or all of these may have been in use at the one time. These zones were river, swamp, plain and forest.

Wiradjuri food economy		
Food	Activity	Details

Economy		
River economy	Canoe fishing	Sturt (1833) recorded Aboriginal fishing. People navigated the river in simple canoes made from a square of bark with clay sealed at the ends, using their 3m. spears as poles and paddles. On one occasion, groups fished with short spears tapered to a point and caught fine fish, which they gave to the whites. They themselves preferred to sit down to a meal of "muscles" [sic]. His impression was that Aboriginal groups on the river preferred tortoise meat to the fish that they so easily speared along the river.
	River and land nets	One net seen by Sturt had mesh for river fishing, and the other had a large mesh, probably for catching large game on land such as kangaroos. Once Sturt's boat was almost stopped by a net across the river. The fishing nets had stone weights and were stretched in a semicircle across the river.
	Stocking water courses	Mary Gilmore (1934) recollected Wiradjuri awareness of the limits to natural replenishment of vegetation and game. They replanted fruit seeds and medicinal shrubs, and restocked watercourses with breeding fish and crayfish carried in coolamons. They also carried out "harvest rotation" by alternating their campsites so as to enable species to recover locally.
	Fish traps	Fish traps were laid in watercourses. Gilmore remembered that these began with a large tree, undermined on the riverbank, so that a year later it could be manoeuvred in position by hand to bridge the watercourse. A dam of interlaced brush or saplings was then constructed below the tree to allow small fish to pass through but keep the larger fish within particular waterholes.
	Log traps	In major billabongs such as the Edwards at Deniliquin, Pregaran Pregaran and Wollundry at Wagga Wagga, log barriers were constructed. Places for large gatherings were selected partly on the basis of a good food supply, so that a sufficient quantity of food, near at hand, would be available to feed the large numbers of people. Some seasons prior to inter-group ceremonial gatherings such as burbungs, the waters would be examined for the availability of fish. Then at least a year before the gathering, the trap would be closed sufficiently to impound large fish in a pool.
	Mussels	River mussels were another commonly collected food. The early surveyor Thomas Mitchell (1838) described them as the chief food at Lake Cargelligo. As creeks and billabong waters receded, brush dams trapped the fish, mussels were collected and edible plants such as the bulrush (Typha) were gathered. These were part of a hugely varied hunter-gatherer diet, as put by Bennett: "they may be said to devour 'every living thing that runs upon the surface of the earth, or in the waters beneath'".
	Bulrush	
Swamp Economy	Harvest rotation	Mary Gilmore (1934) recalled that certain areas of swamp country were known as bird-nesting "sanctuaries" set aside by the Aborigines to ensure continued supply. Wiradjuri only hunted or fished such areas in alternate seasons. Natural lakes such as Lake Cowal and Lake Cargelligo, were fished or stalked on one side only in any season. Such rotation ceased when the sanctuaries became overrun with people from the expanding townships of the late 19th century.
Plains Economy	Grass seeds	Grass seeds were one of many Wiradjuri foods. Being a women's activity, grass seed collecting, milling, and baking into small dampers (cakes) was little reported by early European recorders, most of whom were men. However, grindstones and nutting anvils found at the Warangesda and Bulgandramine mission sites attest to the processing of vegetables and grinding of grass seeds.
Forest Economy	Possum	Wiradjuri hunted a large range of animal species, but possums were probably the most commonly reported portion of the diet, being remembered as "the great standby" for local Aborigines around Wagga Wagga in the 1870s. In the wooded eastern part of the region, possums probably provided a year-round availability of meat.
	Honey	When Mitchell (1839) followed Goobang creek into the Bogan River his party traded a steel tomahawk and was fed honey by local Aborigines. He described the technique of gluing a tiny feather-down weight to a captured bee with gum. The bee was then followed to the nest, the honeycomb being chopped out with a hatchet and taken away on bark sheets.
	Koalas	Koalas were a highly regarded game meat. Another tree dweller was the possum which could be smoked out.
	Large game	Larger game species, such as wombats, bustards ("plains turkeys"), goannas, emus, kangaroos and dingoes, would all have been hunted. Some may have been protected by their identity as a clan totem to some groups, or

		limited by food restrictions. Even in the 1990s, the food restrictions on emu meat were remembered at Murrin Bridge.
	Fire control	Wiradjuri land use included back burning to fight large fires and reseeded the ground after a fire to promote recovery of vegetation. It also included intentional firing to flush out game. Following a fire, game returned to an area, attracted by young shoots of regrowth. Some forests in the eastern lands were probably kept open for easier hunting as they were described as being "park-like" by some early settlers.
	Re-planting edible fruit	Once the ground was cool enough to walk on, Gilmore (1934) saw how Wiradjuri walked through the burnt area, examining the vegetation, testing to see which seed pods had opened. The women gathered fresh seeds and replanted them in the more severely burnt out areas. The children were instructed to damp down the planted seed. Quandong trees were valued as an edible fruit and Wiradjuri people paired the male and female trees when they were replanted. They also carried branches from a flowering grove to fertilise other trees, leaving the branches under trees to show that the work had been done and did not need to be repeated.

Wiradjuri subsistence was varied and tuned to the four environmental zones. The wide range of foods was subject to seasonality, typically requiring movement through the landscape. Backhouse (1835) described a widely ranging diet of "almost all kinds of living things they can catch". On the rivers in good seasons, fish was in such super-abundance that people were indifferent to it, and did not eat it when other food could be procured. In the lower and drier western lands there was greater seasonal fluctuation in the available foods. Periods of hardship were the very dry seasons and extensive floods on the plains. Wet stormy winters were a time of hardship particularly in the south and in the high country, where the winters were longer. Sturt (1833) found groups who were starving and noted his impression that they were dying fast from scarcity of food during the drought. In this situation, he found the shallow grave of a woman who had been covered with leaves, which the party reburied in the "proper" way.

Wiradjuri occupation was thus centred on the major river basins of the region, with seasonal use of the drier river hinterlands, plains, and forests. While Wiradjuri came to become known as "river people" because of family encampments that occupied the river corridors all year round, it is likely that many other bands camped for considerable periods of time in the nearby creeks and swamplands, as well as relying on water soakage in the plains. Once drier seasons returned they probably relied on the river, all the groups beating a gradual retreat to the river corridor in times of scarcity.

Government response to Aborigines

Government legislation came to be the main factor in setting the position of Aborigines in white society. Governor Phillip's main objective with respect to Aborigines was to guard their civil rights, as he saw them, and avoid the slavery that had occurred in the American plantations. Similar protection, and conversely, control, was set out in Governor Macquarie's Proclamation of 1816 that declared Aborigines subject to the protection of white law, while infractions were liable to render them outlawed. This was an expression of a principle that the Aborigines ought to be treated as British subjects under white law. The later proclamation of martial law indicated that settlers in the colony were at odds with this official view of the British administration.

Land legislation may be seen as marking out steps in the occupation of the region as land was progressively claimed and fenced out from Wiradjuri. Aboriginal groups such as Wiradjuri were not viewed as having any land rights (the *Terra nullius* doctrine). Their economy was wrecked as their land was taken over. The first fences came in 1846 with the formalisation of squatting: graziers were able to purchase 1 square mile around improvements, usually a dwelling. The home paddock then became fenced. Squatters tried to purchase the land with water, because the drier crown land was still accessible. Reserves were also carefully used to provide continuing access to water and to lock out other graziers.

After the Robertson Land Acts of 1861 there was a filling of the landscape through legislation for small, closely spaced farms. The whole period of "barbed wire occupation", or fenced European occupation, can be divided into two phases: the mainly unfenced period prior to 1861 and the post-Robertson period.

The other great change in the post-Robertson Act period was that the region experienced a wave of town foundation. Prior to 1850 the main town in the region was Gundagai, a government town on the Great South Road set up in the 1830s. After 1850 there was a wave of town foundation in the region. Some of this urban growth was driven by government creation of towns such as Tumut. Other small towns had sprung up at creeks and crossings at which pubs had been built, such as Murrumburrah and Wagga. These had provided for travellers, but became urban facilities for the growing population. After the 1850s gold rushes came

mining towns such as Young, Forbes, Temora, Grenfell, Lake Cargelligo and Adelong. Railway towns appeared at large railway junctions, such as Junee and Wyalong, and at railway construction and maintenance points, such as at The Rock and Grong Grong. European occupation of the region was therefore only truly consolidated in the 1870s, followed by the creation of a system of Aboriginal reserves. Between 1871 and 1879, New South Wales fences lengthened from 32,000 to 1,207,500 kilometres. The period in which every back-block came to be fenced was 1884-1920. Roberts (1968) dubbed it "the period of closer settlement". This is why the hunter-gatherers observed by Sturt in 1830 were no longer in existence in 1870.

To summarise, in terms of land occupation the region was colonised twice. First, graziers fenced land and water sources out, with Wiradjuri living a riverside life on residue land in community camps. Second, the region filled up with closely spaced towns with Wiradjuri gathered at the edges, later moving into the towns.

The Australian Constitution had symbolically excluded Aborigines by exclusion from census counts and from federal responsibility. Aborigines, defined as people of the "aboriginal race in any State", were omitted from being counted in the census, and omitted from people for whom the Australian Parliament might make "special laws".

Protection was the two most constant theme of government legislation in Aboriginal affairs. In the early years of the colony of New South Wales, government protectors were appointed to perform a dual role as protectors and controllers of Aborigines. "Protectors" operated until the mid-nineteenth century and after a lapse were replaced by the Aborigines Protection Board of New South Wales (later re-named the Aborigines Welfare Board of New South Wales, and referred to in this text as the Board) in 1883. It ran a reservation system for managing Aboriginal people. In the late nineteenth and through most of the twentieth century it was instrumental in changes of government policy on Aboriginal affairs between segregation on reserves and absorption into towns.

It was popularly believed that Aborigines could not legally cast a vote, buy land, or buy alcohol. While legally incorrect, in practice this was the case. Technically, Aborigines had the right to vote at State elections in New South Wales and therefore could have voted at Federal level. Some did vote, especially those living on managed government settlements. However, it was widely known that the Constitution excluded "Aboriginal natives" from voting at the Federal elections. Most Aboriginal people living in community camps would not have envisaged entering the often-hostile white sector of the nearby township to cast their vote. The importance of the 1967 referendum lies in the wide public perception of it giving a "fair go" to Aborigines and giving them long overdue "full citizen's rights". The 1967 referendum did not greatly change the legal position, but it marked a turning point into the land rights era.

Emergence of the land rights era

By the 1970s the general population was ready to regard the Aborigines as a distinctive people, a potential nation to whom land and a degree of self-government was owed. An era of indigenous renewal - termed the "land rights era" for convenience - has been implemented for thirty years. Vocal Aboriginal dissatisfaction with government was symbolically expressed through the setting up of the Aboriginal tent embassy on the lawns of Parliament House in 1972. Government responded with creation of the Commonwealth Department of Aboriginal Affairs during the term of Labor government (1972-1975).

During the 1970s the Family Resettlement Scheme operated, providing employment, housing and educational incentives for people to leave areas of high unemployment such as the communities in western New South Wales and move into areas of economic growth. As with previous systems of assimilation this policy consistently underestimated the importance to Aboriginal people of maintaining extended family ties.

The post-1975 land rights era may be seen as culminating in Wiradjuri urbanisation and "white" housing. In the 1870 to 1920 period Aboriginal people built their own slab or bark huts, put up tents, or used traditional Aboriginal shelters (called *goundjis*, *goondies*, or *gunyahs*). Government housing began during the 1920-1950 period, with the introduction of the small tin hut, although self-built huts continued to be constructed and occupied up to the 1970s.

The period after the Second World War saw a renewal of housing fabric, and 1950 to 1980 saw mainly timber weatherboard and "fibro" (asbestos cement sheeted) cottages. In 1983, government programs to house Aboriginal communities finally took full effect, handing reserves and finances over to Aboriginal Housing Corporations to buy their own rental houses. This consolidated urban life for Aboriginal communities, and began the present phase of brick veneer housing.

The land rights era has also been accompanied by changes in Aboriginal response to white expectations of their "culture". Previously, young Aboriginal people absorbed changing Aboriginal cultural knowledge from elders in their community. Increasingly, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people are seeing Aboriginal culture as a fixed, classical body of knowledge, able to be recorded, taught in schools, and brought back from

local extinction by fusion with knowledge from other Aboriginal peoples.

The land rights era has had an impact on the way Aboriginal people perceive land. While in the past they spoke feelingly about country, the process of land claims, incentives to explain attachment to land, and western influences have caused them to see land in economic terms.

Aboriginal/European interaction and the problem of survival

During the period of pastoral expansion into the Wiradjuri region in the 1830s, cattle and sheep graziers moved rapidly down the river corridors. Large stations took up the best-watered land on which the Wiradjuri hunter-gatherer population was based. As an ethnic group colonised by a foreign system of land management, the Aboriginal people were forced to depend on station properties, but this initial pastoralism did not totally restrict the Aborigines. The open character of stations still allowed continuing mobility for Aboriginal groups, with the opportunity not only to camp on some of the stations but also to move across the back country connecting them.

There was, however, competition for land, which lasted for a decade or more along this moving frontier. Incidents of Wiradjuri armed resistance were followed by reprisals from settlers, such as the massacres during the Black War of Bathurst in 1823-4 and at Massacre Island on the Murrumbidgee River in 1841. Frontier murders and massacres probably occurred wherever there was a settlement frontier, but are difficult to verify. Most are known only from oral sources.

During the period of pastoral expansion there were still some bands of Wiradjuri people who had survived introduced diseases and frontier violence and seldom frequented the European stations and settlements. Some settlers maintained good relations with "domesticated" Aboriginal contacts who helped them keep away the "wild" blacks. Such "reliable" Aborigines acted as intermediaries between whites and camp inhabitants. Station employers took advantage of the existing divisions between those of mixed descent and "full-bloods". Other trusted intermediaries were often awarded metal breast plates ("king plates") and distinguished themselves from bush blacks who knew less about station life. By the 1850s there was already an established generation of adult Aborigines of part-European descent who remained on stations as housemaids and stockmen. Clearly, some Aborigines had begun to internalise certain white values. The gold rushes of the 1850s brought a new population into rural areas. After the gold discoveries, some Aboriginal groups split up to join the rushes. Others found work on stations that had lost employees to the rushes.

During early decades of European settlement, European foods and goods were obtained from European settlers out of fear, charity, or in return for short-term labour or sexual services. Some white station owners fed and protected "their" blacks in return for their labour. Twenty-first century Australia has been bothered by the station owner's paternalism to black employees, and particularly bothered by the sexual exchange for goods.

With the formation of Aboriginal reserve communities came a range of Wiradjuri settlements. Once the landscape had ceased to be dominated by the big open pastoral stations, Wiradjuri settlements, although patterned onto areas of pre-European movement, became adapted to the network of towns. Aboriginal people used towns as social, economic and subsistence resources. Towns contained concentrations of people, employment and food supply. Within this broad framework of settlement location there existed a wide variety of settlements which may be broadly placed into two classes. Firstly, those built by government, drawing directly on welfare, called "government settlements". Secondly, those offering an alternative way of life for Aboriginal communities, called "camps"; including large community camps and small household camps.

These settlements became tied to wide questions of contemporary Wiradjuri survival. How to be close to kin, water, tucker? How to maintain extended family support? How much to interact with, or be absorbed into white towns, i.e. questions of urbanisation? How much to maintain Aboriginal identity at the expense of white incorporation?

The appearance of Aboriginal reserve communities in the late nineteenth century became tied to survival under white systems of land management. What have come to be thought of as "missions" only appeared in the 1870s. The early founding missions of the 1820s and 1830s were not followed up. A gap followed because during the squatting stage of settlement, only the best country on the river frontages was alienated. Wiradjuri were able to retreat to the back blocks. It was only much later, following the Robertson Land Acts of the 1860s, with the filling in of the landscape by smaller sized white properties, that the final alienation of the Aboriginal people from their land took place. The white solution to this was first to create a variety of reserves and to introduce church missions; and then replace them with government settlements. This helps explain why Wiradjuri communities appear so late in the historical record, with new kinds of communities emerging in about thirty locations through central NSW, almost a whole century after European arrival.

From Cowra and Darlington Point Aboriginal families provided labour for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area at the new irrigation towns of Griffith and Leeton, where there was both fruit picking and cannery work. The various fruit and vegetable harvests were followed on a seasonal basis. The New South Wales coast to the east of the region contained even more intensively forested and farmed land, with opportunities for fairly constant employment in sleeper cutting, saw milling and picking.

In the government's Aborigines Protection Board-run institutions, such as Cootamundra Girls' Home, light-skinned Aboriginal children learnt to "think like whites", but were not accepted by whites as equals. Few of the children reared in these institutions are thankful for the Board's former actions in its role as adopted guardian.

This era of camps and government settlements, with its mixture of government policies of welfare, containment, exploitation, and assimilation of Aboriginal people, ended with the resettlement of Aboriginal people into suburban housing schemes during the 1960s, '70s and '80s. The 1870-1970 century of Aboriginal settlement varied from place to place in the region, although there are themes shared by much of the region.

Each decade had brought increases in settlement: in the 1850s gold-diggers filled the townships, free selectors took over small pastoral holdings in the 1860s; Chinese labourers left the mines to work on stations in the 1870s; railway towns sprang up in the 1880s. Within several generations of European arrival, many parts of the Wiradjuri region were densely settled and the interaction of Aboriginal and European ways of life that had developed on the big stations was becoming a thing of the past.

After European arrival, Aboriginal life was not stationary. People continued to live the travelling mode of life, spending their formative years foot-walking and riding their country. The small community, and particularly the family network, was the key to survival in twentieth century Aboriginal camp and mission life. Aboriginal family networks became the "new tribes" of the Wiradjuri region. Ten characteristics that summarise the importance of these present day Wiradjuri family networks are:

	Characteristic	Details
1	Concern for kin	From an outsider's point of view, Wiradjuri primarily want to remain in close proximity with their relatives. Much of the fairly constant travelling, visiting, attendance at funerals, and more recently, committee meetings, can be appreciated in this context. For any individual, people are divided into two categories: those who are kin (family or relations), and those who are not kin. In camp communities there was not much differentiation between kin: being a relative is more important to Wiradjuri than defining what sort of kin one is. Such non-differentiation of obligations has also been reported among Pintupi by Myers (1986) as well as among hunter-gatherer groups.
2	Surnames are used to identify family networks	Families operate as an extended kinship network and are identified by a surname. Other-surnamed, but related, family networks, provide a wide net across the region and beyond.
3	Family networks are defended	Argued by Bell (1961) to be a self-perpetuating group in which new members are recruited when they are born. Recruitment into a family is compulsory and automatic. Children adopted from other Aboriginal or white households and reared by the family are not recruited. Members leave the group if they die or emigrate. Yet the family network, as observed by Inglis (1964) does not have exclusive boundaries as it includes members who migrated to the city, as well as members who do not keep regular contact with relations and may pass as whites in the non-Aboriginal community.
4	Ties of blood are extremely important.	Descent is traced cognatically, that is through either or both parents. A child therefore acquires kinship connections through both his/her parents. Everyone is aware of their mixed ancestry. There is little stratification based on either gradations of skin colour, material wealth or religious denomination.
5	Kin terms have wide application.	Children are taught to use kin terms as courtesy titles, "uncle" or "aunty" for distant older community members, "sis" and "coz" for ones of similar age. In conversation, men call each other "brother" to signal similarity of status, also acknowledging a white man as a kind of honorary Aborigine, at least for the duration of the conversation. Such kin terms therefore have wide application when compared with non-Aboriginal usage. The "thumbs-up" Koori handshake is also occasionally used between men. There are also inclusive, group terms in local slang. In the Wellington district, a group of Aboriginal children will be a mob of booris, and a group of young black and white friends will be a mob of koorimartas (from local Aboriginal slang for a white—marta). Terms vary locally: the honorific buboo used at Brungle for senior men, and known along the Murrumbidgee towns, was unknown to Joyce Williams at Wellington.
6	Genealogical	Two community seniors meeting for the first time will probably have family

	knowledge is deep	tree knowledge extensive enough to locate a connection at some point, and establish that they are related. As with some other groups, many can trace their ancestry as far back as the first generation "half-castes" who married in the mid-19th century, or even to a "full-blood" ancestor who married a white settler.
7	There is a willingness to share the house with kin.	Families tend to take in Aboriginal relatives, for example relatives of the wife if she has a white husband, irrespective of the capacity of the house. Ties with suburban neighbours tend to be superficial. Ties with geographically distant kin are reinforced, by sudden and frequent visits for mutual support, to spend time with each other, or to attend funerals. As Barwick (1962) observed in a study of Victorian families, the activities of kin are the main topic of gossip.
8	Strong women rule their families	A social survey of New South Wales Aboriginal reserve communities by Long (1970) saw that for many Aboriginal children raised in "fatherless" families, that is those in which the father was absent for much of the time in itinerant work, the focal person of the household was the mother, mother-in-law or grandmother. If the father refuses to acknowledge paternity then the mother's surname is taken. The dominant figure of the family, the disciplinarian and decision-maker, tends to be a senior woman, usually the maternal grandmother. For her, growing old carries less fear of being abandoned than among whites, because the community respects the woman with the most grandchildren.
9	Family seniors run organisations.	There is now also a range of formal organisations such as committees, medical centres, land councils, native-title claim groups and elders groups. As observed by Hagen (1996) in the Upper Murray, such organisations are group decision based, and occupy much of the time for participating community seniors, who are commonly called "elders".
	Family networks have a home base	Some families remain relatively undispersed and have retained a territorial base. Even if members have resettled, they may refer back to a particular small home tract of land as their country or their grandparent's country. This home may be the district in which they were born, or the region surrounding the reserves into which great-grandparents were settled in the late 19th to early 20th centuries. By contrast, other families are now widely scattered across the region, some members absorbed into the city or towns. Yet many old people wish to return to spend their last few years in the district in which they were born.

Local Aboriginal settlements

Griffith and Leeton were irrigation towns set up in the early decades of the twentieth century. The planners of these towns, Marion Mahony and Walter Burley Griffin, could not have anticipated that there would be Aboriginal fringe camps connected to the concentric road system. Leeton's small hills each were topped by a water reservoir and in order to contain the spread of cannery workers camps a camping reserve was set aside within walking distance of the factory but on the edge of the small township. During the male labour shortages that coincided with the First World War, Wiradjuri families replaced many of the white campers. The severe labour shortage of the 1940s also meant happy absorption of new Aboriginal families into the camp. The local shire council actively pursued clearance of the camp during the 1960s for conversion of Wattle Hill into suburban housing.

A short distance away, in the low lying and flat land of Griffith township, the multi-ethnic workers camp of Bagtown was resurveyed as planned streets and a network of canals. Calabrians, Spanish and Anglo-Australian seasonal workers camped on the edges of properties. The Aboriginal households that joined them lived in small, temporary camps such as "Condo Lane" adjoining the Hanwood winery. Aboriginal seasonal pickers from Condobolin set up humpies in the narrow strip between the road and canal. Everywhere through Griffith town, little temporary camps lined the network of canals in which people washed, and obtained their barely drinkable water.

By 1950s Griffith had grown and the remnant Aboriginal camp households gathered in a field on the edge of town, loaned to them by a sympathetic farmer. After opposition in the town, a reserve was set aside across the canal. As with all land set up as Aboriginal reserves in New South Wales, Three Ways was handed over to the Aboriginal community in the 1980s and was rebuilt with suburban houses.

A whole system of Aboriginal settlements at Darlington Point was initiated in 1879 when the missionary John Gribble was guided to a place near a former initiation ground to found the Warangesda Mission. It was the only other settlement linked to a place with the practice of traditional ceremony, although it is believed that the last great inter-group *burbung* (initiation) was held there in the 1870s shortly prior to Gribble's arrival (Mathews 1897: 15).

Before long an alternative camp to the mission block had formed on the riverbank, half a kilometre from the mission village. Years later, when Warangesda was run by the government as an Aboriginal Station and had unpopular managers, the whole community would decamp to the river for weeks at a time. After it was

closed in 1925, the refugees spread over a large area, some moving to Darlington Point Reserve. Household camps by the river outside the reserve provided some people with degrees of freedom, though they were not protected from child removal policies of the Board. There is also a report of a ceremonial site near this reserve. During the 1980s the Darlington Point Aboriginal community moved into housing sprinkled through the town.

While only twenty minutes car drive apart, Griffith and Darlington Point remain distinct and contrasting communities. Aboriginal families at Darlington Point are bound into a tightly woven community, largely descended from families that lived at Warangesda Mission and Darlington Point Reserve over at least four generations from 1880 to the 1950s, and extensively intermarried with white families from the "Point" as Darlington Point is locally known. Even when Darlington Point families physically move into Griffith, they retain their Darlington Point identity and retain a primary connection with the Darlington Point community.

By contrast Griffith is an area remembered for its Aboriginal resettlement. As the township grew over the 1920s and succeeding decades, it drew a wide mix of both Warangesda descendants and people from places as far flung as Robinvale, Condobolin, Wilcannia and the NSW south coast. In a sense, the post-war seasonal work drew a "multi-cultural" Aboriginal community.

The largest Aboriginal settlement near Griffith was, and still is, the Three-Ways housing area set up in the 1950s. As in the 1950s, it remains a separate black precinct within a town where white people still predominate in the business and professional classes.

Aboriginal Communities of the Griffith Region

Warangesda: Camp of Mercy or Outback Ghetto?

In the early nineteenth century waves of European farmer settlers swept over Wiradjuri country now known as the New South Wales Riverina. Aboriginal people were decimated by the strange diseases brought by the Europeans, then forced off their lands.

Some Europeans stood against this tide. From 1879 one such missionary, John Gribble, and his family worked beside Aboriginal people, clearing and building huts to create a mission that would be their new and permanent home. By 1884 the Aborigines Protection Association had taken over the operations of the Mission and with its successor the Aborigines Protection Board continued to run Warangesda as an "Aboriginal station".

Yet by 1916, the manager of this mission home, Warangesda or the "Camp of Mercy", was being issued with a pistol and handcuffs. Over the years to follow, many men were expelled from Warangesda and possibly an equal number of children were removed to "welfare" institutions. The population of Warangesda was so reduced by 1924 that the Board was able to close the mission down and hand it back to the Lands Department as a rural lease. Within ten years of the manager being issued with pistol and handcuffs, the people of Warangesda had been expelled, the contents of their mission auctioned off, and the mission site offered to new settlers. By this time most of the mission residents had moved to riverside camps and to the reserve, several kilometres away.

To trace the life of the mission from its origins in the well intentioned hopes of its founder to its climactic end raises questions about the nature of the mission experience for its Aboriginal inhabitants.

Did the period of the mission's existence represent a time of refuge for the Aboriginal people? A golden age during which they were able to successfully conserve traditional Aboriginal knowledge as a continuing substratum, while learning the survival skills of the white man?

Or could the mission community rather be seen as an "outback ghetto", bound by a tightening noose of dependence: a prison-like environment that robbed its inmates of what survived of their culture and independence? This question can partly be answered by examining people's memories of Warangesda and partly by archaeology.

After Warangesda mission was closed down, the profound consequences of resettlement had come to form an important element in older Aboriginal people's consciousness. Mrs Isobel Edwards, who has passed away, was to remember her childhood at the mission life in the mission as a golden age, compared to her later life outside. Excerpts of interviews with her provide one Aboriginal perspectives on what was lost by the closure of Warangesda mission:

Of what I remember, I think it was a very good place, very nice, but I was born there myself. I was born 76 years ago on 26th August 1909 and I grew up there until I was 12 or 13.

My first memory of Warangesda was what a beautiful little village it was, a real little township. There were two streets, the school, and of course they had a teacher for the school, houses on either side of the Church,

and all the houses had fences round them, water laid on, and beautiful gardens with lots of flowers. I always thought old Jack Glass, Paddy's uncle, had the prettiest yard of the lot. Some of them had fruit trees, it was very pretty. Plus there were lots more people living along the river on the property in their own camps, in tents and shacks that they built. It really was a lovely place. Some of the houses had four rooms and some had two rooms. The Government supplied them with everything. They had a copper, a big iron boiler for washing and we were very well off from what I hear of other missions. There was a big pepper tree with a swing on it and all the children used to swing on it.

It had its own school, its church and its manager's house and a dormitory at one time for all the girls that had nobody. It was like a little town. It had a couple of fruit shops and there was a little butcher shop. Shops were mostly on the end of verandahs- the cool drink shops, that is. It had all that and a general store. I can remember about seventeen houses and then apparently they used to have quarters for single men, but that was before I can remember...

They had the Church and the Minister used to come from Whitton. Every Sunday morning the Church was always full and they always had a good collection. When the old organ was played out, they gathered together and collected money to buy a new one themselves. My father bought the old one for thirty shillings and he sold it to his boss Mr. Beaumont when he left the Mission. He had it done up real good and his daughter, Mrs. Margaret Davies, told me it was left to her and she was putting it in the Pioneer Park in Griffith.

My dad (grandfather Stark), used to do a lot of droving, and of course they only had a horse and dray then and he used to be away for months at a time, so his family stayed at the mission...

It was really good. You know, it had all its own machinery, ploughs and things like that. They sowed their own crops and stripped their own crops and sent them away to Sydney. They used to cart the wheat to Willbriggie. Willbriggie was a big siding then. They had their own horses and cattle and everything like that, sheep. They didn't shear at Warangesda though. They used to take the sheep out to Beaumont's shearing shed as there was no shearing shed at the mission. They did their own dipping, and killed their own meat at the butcher's shop. You didn't have to pay for the meat, it was given to you...

We were all given rations: bags of meat, flour, baking powder, sugar, tea, salt, milk, soap, candles, and some had kerosene, the Mission gave them quite a lot of things and all free. They had their own butcher's shop and of course they killed their own beasts and cut them up a couple of times a week and it was given to all the people. Besides the rations, people also worked for pay and the men were paid thirty shillings a week. They would work harvesting wheat, cutting the hay and making haystacks to save the feed for the cattle when there was none. They did shearing, all sorts of jobs. It was very, very good. We'd milk the cows, walk a mile there at ten o'clock every morning. It really was a good place, not like others. When work was scarce at the Mission, the men used to go out and work on the stations for the cockies, shearing in the shearing sheds. Father used to go to Kooba Station every year, shearing mainly. He also worked at Tubbo Station, another big shed. He was a blacksmith too, they had their own little chaff cutter.

Different managers did different things. One of them started a big vegetable garden down near the church. The vegetables were for everybody on the mission- they didn't sell them, they used to give them to us. Of course another manager came along and pulled it out as it was too much extra work for him to see to. I think the managers broke the mission by being nasty and mean...

There was a nice manager's house, a big white house. Different managers, came, and I don't know why but one of them pulled down all the fences round the houses and of course the gardens didn't last long then. Some of them were good to the people, some weren't quite so good. Some wouldn't have young people on the Mission doing nothing and they expelled the young people for no reason.

A couple of old chaps had little shops and sold soft drinks, biscuits and lollies at the end of their verandahs. I used to go to the little shops with a penny and spend up big. One day I went up there to old Dick's and he said "Well young lady, what do you want?" I put the penny on the counter and I said, "I'd like an apple, an orange, a banana, lollies, a drink and some biscuits." And they all burst out laughing and his wife said "Well, give them to her!" So I got all this stuff for a penny and when I got home I got roused on.

About 60 years ago, I think it was, might have even been 65 years ago, it broke up when everybody moved away from it. There was nobody left so they closed it down —Isobel Edwards, Area News, 1985.

Despite the decline and closure of Warangesda, the legacy of Gribble's foundation and the role of Warangesda people is visible in the present-day township of Darlington Point. People of aboriginal and European descent continue to marry and share in the town's social life.

The mission village site occupies about 35 acres of flat land on the Murrumbidgee flood plain, covered with pasture grasses and clumps of pepper trees, marked with several levee banks. There are only four surviving known mission buildings; the ration shed, schoolhouse, teacher's cottage and girls dormitory.

Research by this author into oral history and written records, correlated with surface evidence, has brought to light much more information about former buildings and their likely locations and details (Kabaila 1993).

The site is inside a station property. In 1927, two years after the mission was closed, a young farmer, Stewart King, was granted the mission land by a government-run ballot. The mission buildings became the King farmstead and were adapted to farm use until 1957 when a new homestead and sheds were built beside Waddi Creek about a kilometre away. Afterwards the mission remnants were sometimes rented, but by the 1960s the mission village site had been largely abandoned, and was used mainly for grazing and shed storage. Over some seventy years, three generations of the King family have continued to farm the same land. Today it is protected as an historic site, by listing under the Register of the National Estate.

Darlington Point Reserve

When the Warangesda Mission community was broken up, Aboriginal people camped along the nearby river bank and at Darlington Point Reserve an hour's walk away from the old Warangesda Mission. They were a mixture of refugees who had come together, not only from Warangesda, but also from other reserves and missions closed by the Board in its attempt to take Aboriginal people out of reserves and bring them into the towns.

The huts of Darlington Point Reserve appear in old photographs. Other aspects of life at the Reserve live not in photographs, but in the memories of people and in the artefacts. Light scatters of artefacts remain where the huts used to be. They represent something of the way of life of the people who used them. Personal objects such as the trouser and shirt buttons, medicine bottle and spoon indicate the domestic nature of the collection. Houses and huts are represented in the "fibro" (asbestos cement sheet) cladding fragments, door striker plate and window glass fragments, as well as numerous kerosene tin and corrugated iron scraps. While huts appear in old photographs,.

River mussel shells occur alongside butcher sawn chop bones, as well as turtle bones and fish scales, the archaeologically visible signs of a diet centred on shop-bought foods but supplemented by bush tucker. The mouth organ is a small relic of the importance of music in people's lives, as are the slivers from gramophone records. As a document for research, the artefacts encapsulate in some small tangible way, the details of daily life at the reserve. The artefacts also reaffirm the oral history. Iris Clayton remembered some of these details of daily life as a young child at the reserve. The basis of the artefact assemblage can be seen in her description:

We lived in a kerosene tin house at Bunyip Bend, perched on the edge of the steep riverbank. Our water came from the river by bucket tied to a rope. I was taken to the Police Paddock when I was five, about 1950. The houses were corrugated iron, earth floors... The church there was pretty crowded too. We always had a church service, sometimes two. Beautiful songs you could hear, my mother was in the choir. Even of nighttime there was always singing and then somebody would make a fire outside. When they got together we always had musical instruments: guitars, ukuleles, mouth organs, gum leaves. They were great gum leaf players. You ever heard one? Squeezeboxes, Jew harps. Some of them could pick up any instrument, fiddle about with it for a while and then play it... We had one of those wind-up record players on big spindly legs. I remember climbing up on a chair changing the record over and winding it up.

The men went out to work on stations you know, like Tubbo and all that, land clearing, and fencing, shearing and horse-breaking. My mother's father was a horse-breaker. And the men would stay out particularly at shearing time and come back on weekends. Well when they came in we'd all go down to the riverbank and have a dozen fires and everybody cooking different tucker. So then us kids used to run along from one fire to another. Stew here, someone else big dampers. Like you'd have your bakes, cooking in the camp ovens, dumplings. Beautiful meals! Because the men were working, we ate pretty well. Like they'd bring in a sheep or share a bullock between the mob. And plenty of vegetables. Porridge, lots of porridge. And Weetbix. Weetbix were maltier too! We had cold rice with milk and sugar. A lot of corned beef. Lambs tongue too. Lots of mussels. Mussels were a delicacy. We'd eat lots of turtles, cook them straight on the fire. We'd set rabbit traps all around because the kids knew where they all were. So we'd go and get the rabbit out of the trap, take it home and cook it up. So we was always out in the bush, you know, us kids! I caught my first fish when I was 3 years old. The fishing lines were twine in those days and we knew how to find witchetty grubs (for bait). We'd check everybody else's lines and reset them. That Hughie Foote was a good swimmer, and he used to swim underwater when people were fishing and tug on their lines so they thought it was a fish. Then he'd come up to the surface and laugh at them and they'd abuse him. And of course there was the school in town. I liked it there.

My grandfather Joe later died of tuberculosis. Measles was the thing too; terrible. We had our own medicine, used to grow on the riverbank. People were sick a lot. We also used a lot of Aboriginal words

those days. I remember the first time I saw nuns. I'd never seen a nun before. It was a really hot day and there was this group of nuns who'd stopped to rest under a big old gum tree and had sat down on the ground with their black and white habits all spread out. I was with a friend and was so terrified I screamed -----, which means, "ghost!"

And the old women in our community were very very strict. It was the old women who laid down the laws to the kids; not the mothers. We used to get sticks when we knew the old people were resting and run along the house with these sticks against the corrugated iron. Made a racket (laughter). We'd have all the old people out. If we got caught, we got the biggest flogging. They used baddawais, boomerangs, you know, on the flat part on your legs; or leather straps, not like these days —Iris Clayton, Hall.

Two pepper trees have grown up beside the site of the small church built on the reserve in 1937. The missionary Arnold Long described its construction. Charles Runga was a First World War veteran and helped with the work:

One day he [Charles Runga] met with an accident, breaking three ribs, but he scarcely paused in his work on this account. The framework was made of bush timber and in its construction a lot of work was involved. The walls were made of bags sewn together by the women and afterwards cemented, and the windows with their peaked tops were made from boxes. They had saved what money they could towards the erection of a building, and it was found that they had sufficient to purchase iron for the roof... A platform and pulpit were erected and seats installed in two rows, with an aisle through the centre. Altogether it was a labour of love, and one that showed a great deal of skill and patience

For the church wall behind the platform the women had bought a piece of red curtain. They also wanted a length of coconut matting for the aisle, and just in time obtained a piece exactly the required width and length. It was the last piece left in the local store...During this work the local policeman gave every encouragement to the people (Long 1960: 40).

Clancy Charles also remembered his boyhood at the Reserve before he settled in Griffith township.

I was born in 1932 at a bag hut camp under the Railway Bridge in Cowra. My father came from Cummeragunja and my mother Tilly Williams was born down in Brungle Mission. We lived in Cowra the year the Japanese broke out of the prisoner of war camp. My father was a Baptist preacher and I suppose that's why we came down to the Point and stopped there. He used to go shearing there at Kooba Station. I suppose we stayed at the Point for roughly six years and then came out to Griffith.

My father helped build the church, even carting all the sand on his shoulder from the riverbed on two 4-gallon drums and a yoke. He was the preacher there. They had baptisms there in the river down on the beach. That's where my mother was baptised as an adult and I later took my daughter there to be baptised. There were quite a few families there then. Some of the ones that I can remember were Charlie Runga, Alec Williams, Jim Williams, Roy Kennedy, Hughie Foote, Gerald Carberry. Digger Davis had been in the army and his wife was Jessie Kennedy. Some of them like the Williams came from Cowra and the Kennedys came from Warangesda. I shore out at the old school at Warangesda with Morrie Clark.

My father was one of the preachers there. Alec Williams was also a lay-preacher. And Miss Campbell was the missionary. She originally came from Tasmania and went to Cowra, then lived at the Point and later moved to Griffith. And there was a black Mr Wilson and a white Mr Wilson who were both missionaries and moved between Cowra and Gooloogong.

We lived on the river flat not far from the Kennedys, and our hut was mostly that limed [whitewashed] hessian stuff. We sometimes went to the public school at Darlington Point but in those days nobody cared whether you went to school or not. We had our chores like morning and evening firewood and shop for the old people. These days you can't even get them to ride up to the shop with a bike. We did a terrible lot of fishing and used to talk to the old white people who fished there. You could easily catch a few lobsters there then.

*Hughie Foote was a diver. When people drowned he would be sent into the river to get the body. But he made sure he had a few drinks in him beforehand, because they'd give him a few drinks for free. He never dived; he would just slide into the river. And he always found the body —Clancy Charles, *Three Ways*.*

Clancy's account also touches on one of the ethnic minorities who were assimilated into Aboriginal and white populations, the "Afghans" or people descended from camel drivers of the inland. Mission records of the 1880s and 1890s sometimes mention the Assyrian or Indian hawkers; dark skinned people who travelled gypsy-like, stopping at Aboriginal missions to supply liquor, run some card gambling, or trade a few items. After the large missions closed, some of these outcasts may have eventually found marriage partners, acceptance, and sense of community within Aboriginal camps. John Sheer Khan and Tommy Bell were two such people.

Johnny Swift's real name was John Sheer Khan but he changed it to John Swift. He originally came from

Cummeragunja like my father. There was Tommy Bell, he was a little Indian. Johnny Swift was a blind man. He had a little cart with bike wheels and he had a whole harness on it, sharbs and everything. He was a big man and the harness fitted over his shoulders and chest so he could pull the cart. He was a Christian and would sing the hymns, and he used to play the mouth organ really well. I suppose that singing was the main form of music for the families at the Point. He had an old "butterbox" wireless, homemade and fitted into a wooden packing case carcase, and he was mad on toy aeroplanes. There was always a wind-driven propeller plane mounted on a pole at his hut —Clancy Charles, Three Ways.

Sparse relics of Darlington Point reserve

The Reserve settlement site covers an area of about ten hectares along the banks of the Murrumbidgee River, within easy walking distance, but separate from the nearby Darlington Point town. The Reserve used to be a police horse paddock for the nearby police post. This place today is a bull paddock, raised about ten metres above the river flats.

To obtain an overview of the layout of the settlement, the author carried out a surface survey and study of the artefacts (Kabaila 1993: 21-29). Below the steep banks down to the river flats, there were scattered campsites. Tom Bell's camp may have been typical. Part of his hut was a canvas tent with a small kitchen made of scrap iron built alongside. The flats are thickly vegetated and no sign of these campsites can be seen today. On the raised former Police Paddock, however, the ground surface is clearly visible and some of the changes to the place can be reconstructed from the surface evidence.

The core of the settlement was the small bag-covered church situated on the plateau or sandhill close to the riverbank. Flanking one side of the plateau was the row housing of red painted corrugated ripple-iron huts. Near the church, and facing onto the cleared plateau, was the bough shelter erected for the "conventions" at which people gathered from many districts, bringing together relations who lived scattered over a large area, much as ceremonial gatherings had brought large numbers of Aboriginal people together in pre-European times. Other huts were built, scattered along the wooded river flats that surrounded the plateau.

Today a brick footing and most of the cement church floor remains intact although cement fragments are also scattered in the surrounding area. The spread of household fragments marks the main row of huts on the settlement. A bulldozer blade scar from a firebreak is visible around the perimeter of the paddock. Many fragments have been moved to the sides of its track.

The main row of huts was dismantled and moved. Some were in use at the Three-Ways settlement near Griffith up to the 1980s, and became known as "red huts" because of their paint colour. These were tiny huts that housed large families.

Aboriginal pastor Bob Peters was born on Maloga mission in 1894 and arrived on the Police paddock in 1932. He was so crippled with arthritis that he became known among white missionaries as "the hunchback native pastor" (Long 1960). The hut built for him by the reserve community would have been fairly typical of the kerosene tin huts that families built for themselves in the depression years and into the 1950s. A bush timber frame supported a roof covered in kerosene tins, painstakingly flattened out as roof shingles. Walls were scraps of corrugated or flat iron sheet, nailed onto the frame or jointed together as a patchwork by rivets. Other buildings were clad in small-gauge corrugated iron or "ripple-iron". The huts had earthen floors.

Apart from this cement floor, and the relocated "red huts" the rest of the settlement was bulldozed over the banks. No post-holes remain on the surface of the paddock, but the bulldozed remains of the huts are clearly visible, strewn along the sides of the steep banks.

Pastor Bob Peters died in the same year that his small church was erected. He was 43 years old. The blind gospel singer and preacher, John Swift, took over the role of pastor. John Swift's hut was near the Kennedy family hut on the river flats below the reserve and it had a home-made intruder alarm consisting of cans hung on a string fence surrounding the hut. Children on the reserve used to sneak up and rattle the cans, to watch the old man rush out of the hut and try to catch the intruders (Jean Cliteur, Darlington Point, June 1993). It appears that the first change made to the settlement site by its re-conversion into a paddock was that building relics such as post-holes and wall cladding were cleared away or destroyed, probably during preparation for pasture.

A forensic-style study of these fragments shows up differences between the Warangesda mission and Darlington Point Reserve in the type, range, period and quality of household wares. A sample from both assemblages is stored at the Griffith Pioneer Park Museum. Datable ceramics from the Warangesda mission are mainly from the 1880 to 1920 period and contain a noticeable proportion of "Staffordshire" ceramics from a large range of crockery sets. By contrast, the datable ceramics from Darlington Point are narrower in range, and represent a small number of crockery sets. These date mainly, though not totally, from the 1920-1950 period, which agrees with historical accounts of the Reserve being settled mainly by Warangesda

refugees.

Although separated in time by a decade or so, the reserve settlement had similarities to the European workers settlement of Griffith in the 1920s known as "Bagtown." The row huts of Bagtown were made up of bush timber frames or of reused building materials, generally covered by cement dipped cloth bags, constructed much as the huts and little church had been on the Reserve.

As the site has been cleared of hut remains, no further threat appears likely. The wishes of the Aboriginal community at Darlington Point should be canvassed to determine the directions that any future conservation of the reserve, if any, might take.

Darlington Point reserve is significant as a gathering place for Aboriginal people affected by the closure of Warangesda Mission. Its material evidence includes the riverside location, household refuse scatter, hut cladding fragments, part of the church floor, and parts of the nearby police post. The reserve settlement is well remembered by Aboriginal families in Darlington Point, who have a strong connection with it.

Normal quality town housing for Aboriginal families appeared at Darlington Point in the early 1980s following the formation of a local Aboriginal Housing Cooperative (Corporation) funded under Federal Aboriginal Lands Trust legislation of the mid-1970s. Houses are located through the town rather than concentrated in a single street, and are built or purchased for rental to Aboriginal families. Rents are paid locally to the cooperative, which also arranges and pays for essential repairs on the houses.

Wattle Hill, Leeton

Wattle Hill at Leeton was a cannery worker's settlement which became a predominantly Wiradjuri community camp from about the 1940s to the early 1960s. Before the Leeton cannery was built, the site was cleared farmland and was locally known as Cow Shed Hill. Later a big tank was built on the hill to provide water supply pressure for the town, and wattle trees revegetated the area around the tank, giving the place its present name. It lies 1.8 km due west of the Leeton Cannery, which is on the western edge of the town.

Both Leeton and Griffith were townships planned to service the farms created by the construction of the Murrumbidgee River Irrigation Scheme. The streets were laid out to designs by Walter Burley Griffin, an American architect in the employ of the Australian government, who also provided a town plan based on circles and main "axis" avenues for the town of Canberra.

Work gangs were required for the construction of the irrigation channels, drains and water supply, so that by about 1912 a white worker's tent camp and shanty town had formed near the rock crusher on the gravel quarry, called the "Crusher Camp". The irrigation authority also built a camp of tents laid over timber decking. The present day Leeton cannery was built at the end of the First World War and drew a population of cannery workers to Leeton (Bowmaker 1968: 17-18).

At the start of the Second World War the shortage of labour in the irrigation towns such as Leeton drew a fresh population of seasonal workers. Wattle Hill became a fringe-camp fully occupied by both European and Aboriginal cannery workers over the 1940s. Workers could camp there within walking distance of the cannery, living in self-built huts. By the late 1960s however, town growth had reached Wattle Hill and the Shire Council took over the fringe camp for suburban housing. By 1968 Wattle Hill was cleared of huts and contained newly bulldozed roads laid out for suburban blocks (1968 aerial photo, AUSLIG). It is now a suburb of Leeton.

After the end of the Second World War, Ossie Ingram took his young family to Wattle Hill to work at the Leeton Cannery.

Wattle Hill was a settlement of cannery workers and fruit pickers at Leeton. It was first a white settlement, but after the Second World War a lot of Aboriginal families moved in to live there as well. There would have been four rows of houses, probably about several hundred of them, for both black and white. There was no discrimination. They all lived together much like at the Sandhills (a large community camp near Narrandera). Wattle Hill was just one mile from the cannery. The women used to fight, but the men didn't: they were too tired for that from working all day and all night. The houses were a little more advanced than at the Sandhills because they had corrugated tin roofs and there was a pump up to a reservoir on the hill for water piped down to the houses. There was electricity hooked up there too.

My family was there for a few years. I used to work at night in the cannery then I'd have a sleep, and pick fruit in the afternoon. Then started work at the cannery again at six o'clock. My wife worked in the cannery in the daytime and I worked at the night. The kids went to school and earned extra money doing fruit picking. It wears you down working twelve hours a day, and eventually it can break you down. One day I woke up with these big white walls around me. First I thought I must be in gaol, but it was actually a hospital. I couldn't take more of this so I decided to go back to Narrandera.

That was the only time in my life I ever got on the dole. It was a food order from the police station. The

next day I met up the council engineer in the street and he offered me work right away. I ended up working for the council from that time in 1952 right up until I retired at sixty five in 1984 —Ossie Ingram, Grong Grong, March 1995.

Joyce Ingram left her home in Rawson Street Redfern in the late 1930s and moved about before settling at Wattle Hill. After her children grew up, Joyce returned to Redfern and has stayed there ever since.

I went to Wattle Hill in 1942 where a lot of people were for the fruit picking and the cannery. There was more white people there to begin with, but after a few years it was about half and half.

We built our own place. They used to go to the tip and collect the cannery tins and four gallon tins, and open them out. We got the brown paper cement bags, opened them out and glued them onto corn bags. Then you got paint, whitewash, and that made it solid.

The camp finished up with 4 streets of shacks. And they finished up looking pretty good. You leased the land and paid rates because the blocks were marked out, and you paid sanitary fees. It wasn't a lot, might have been a pound a year or something like that. People would either give their places away, or they'd sell them. You know, ten quid, or five quid. Whatever spare money they had. One mob would just pack up and go and another mob would move in. They'd just keep the houses going and pass them round the family.

Wattle Hill was originally set up for the travellers who went there to work for the cannery and do seasonal work. There were public showers near the water tank at the top of the hill, and there was the travellers' hut down the bottom for people that stayed overnight. Then they started to bring Italians out for ten pounds a head or something, and they were all starting up their own gardens. The blacks then became their labour.

And then when the Council decided they wanted Wattle Hill, and the dairy below wanted to feed the cows on the hill, they tried to push us off the place, but we wouldn't go. We had nowhere else to go. So the Wattle Hill people called a meeting and sent my father William Robinson to Sydney. He came back with a 99 year lease so they couldn't budge us. But there was a loophole in that. They said it was a camping area. They said that as long as it was wired or tied together - it was a camp. But if you drove a nail into wood - it was a house. That's how they got us, because we all had solid houses built. But they couldn't budge us even then. So the minute a family left, they brought the bulldozer in and knocked it straight down. And you had nowhere to come back to. They knocked the houses down behind us and wouldn't let anyone else move in. I'm sure they had people there on the hill who would go and tell the council who was leaving and who wasn't. Even the Apex club went and built a house there for Winnie Morgan and Amos; they even knocked that down.

Then they built Housing Commission places there, and quite nice ones too. But they can't stop the wattle from coming up can they? That's the blacks come back to haunt them. Up through their beautiful lawns and everywhere.

I took my children back to Redfern and stayed here because there's nothing for us to go back to —Joyce Ingram, The Block, Redfern.

Joyce's daughter Norma Morgan was born on Wattle Hill in 1942. Norma recalled the AIM involvement in the camp and the basic services paid through Council rates.

All the men got together and put up the AIM church, and covered it with pine palings from the sawmill at Darlington Point, and a tin roof. That's where we used to have dances. Every Christmas the AIM made a sort of little party with sandwiches and cordial, and they would give each child a cake of soap, hair comb and hankie. Then they'd get the taxi driver to throw in for a big barrel of icecream. We also paid rates on our little humpies, even though they were fairly flimsy and burned easily. After Granny Davis died in the 1940s her house was burned out —Norma Morgan, The Block., Redfern.

Norma vividly remembered the day her family hut was pulled down by the Council, and observed that housing policy repeats itself.

I was about fourteen when they knocked our place down. Mum was away for a couple of weeks and I would take the other kids Ruth and Donny, to Nanny and then go to school. They got the wind that Mum was gone. By the time I came back from school one day they had come with a bulldozer to knock our goundji [shack] down, loaded up the water tank on a truck, and left. All that was left when I got back from school was the tree and a wet patch of ground where the tank had been.

There were lots of people there. You had about 36 six families - permanents, including about 10 white families. Then you had your blow-ins that went to the travellers' hut and camped about. There were drovers coming in with their wagons, camps all round the back and round the tip. Some families were big. The Bamblets had seventeen kids.

And I'll tell you a secret. The Leeton cannery used to dump all this tinned stuff, anything that was dented. Because they wouldn't accept dented tins in the shops. Now the people in the cannery knew all the serial numbers and they'd say "Well, righto, there's peaches coming out of this serial number, there's pears out of this one and so on, come out and get it." We'd load it all up out at the dump with billy carts and prams.

There were people coming in from everywhere! We had a shed full of cans all neatly stacked.

Our goundji had one main room, and all little rooms leaning off that. Some huts burned down, or got blown down during big storms. Nanny Robbo [Norma's grandmother Daisy Robinson] had a big shed out the back for people to camp, all made of tins like the house; but with a curtain made of bags that hung in the entrance instead of a door. It was just a big single room shed with one fireplace. Sometimes families stayed there before moving into huts of their own. Even the coppers used to send them out there. People would arrive and go to the police station for rations, that was their handout in those days. And the coppers would say "Go to Nanny Robbo's out at Wattle Hill and she'll put you up." It's just amazing the people that came through that place and stayed, and then moved on. It was like a refuge. She'd put them up, give them a feed and put them to bed. They used to put the fire in the copper, and that warmed the place up. A lot of people and many a ghost was in that shed.

There was a pit out on the hill where we dug the pipe clay, and you put it in water and soaked it, and you painted the house with it. "Whitewash" they called it, but it was really pipe clay. And you did your fireplaces with it, it came up really white and hard when it was dry.

We got a plague of rats there once. They got stuck into all the paper in the walls. And grandfather got this great idea. He just got the bluestone and mixed it into the flour glue. They never touched it after that. That knocked 'em! [laughter] It was marvellous the things we used to do with little money.

There were other camps around too. It was open slather before the rice farms were put on and brought the dust storms. They camped at places like Boree lane on the stock route, the back road at what they call "Parkview" now. We used to call it "kapok avenue" because there was a lot of goomis [metho drinkers] living over there. We went there when we were kids, and saw all the drunks waking up on their mattresses covered in all this kapok. Kapok on their eyelashes and on their mouths and all in their hair. There were lots of whites along there too. Louis Monty was over in the scrub there in a "dog kennel". It was no higher than this little table we're sitting at. There was Ossie Baxter. He was a white man who was a fettler. Then there was old Alma who got sold to another husband. She went guang guang ["mental"]. She wasn't full quid that means. There was also Dixie Lee and Brucey Lee. Dixie was in that movie called Jeddah. There were just so many people who came and went. Or they'd come as seasonal workers, fall on hard times and stay: they'd say, "Oh we'll just prop here for the winter."

Black people couldn't front up and buy grog at the pub, that's why our people bought metho at the food shops and chemists. Bert Harris lived down with the gubbas [whites] down in Ainsbury. He used to come and visit, and he'd go get the grog and hide it outside in the dark. He'd whistle and say "Am I allowed in?" He was a runner for the grog same as the taxis, and the bloke in the hamburger shop next to the Wade hotel. That shop is where I got my first brew. I was 18 years old. It was a beautiful starlit night and were just strolling with the baby in the pram, beer in our hands. I got a flogging with a broom handle for it. [laughter] Oh that's a long time ago. That was in the sixties.

There was always rivalry too. Different blacks from different towns. Leeton would go to Griffith and look for a fight, or Narrandera would go to Leeton and pick a fight. They were all related. And on Sundays we'd all get on this truck and go to Three Way and play rounders. But the Point [Darlington Point] was always different. They never really mixed. There was a lot of them there that were very fair. They've been there for years and they were very isolated. Abocrats we call them because they don't mix much with outsiders even today —Norma Morgan, Eveleigh St., Redfern.

James Morgan (1943-) recalled many of the families from his childhood on Wattle Hill. His account shows that while there were a few outsiders, there was also a strong contingent of related Wiradjuri families.

Camps such as Wattle Hill had poverty and alcoholism, but they were also home. The results of leaving took years to sink in:

When Jamesey and I think about Wattle Hill, we shake our heads. It makes us angry. Because we can never go back. It's all gone - it's suburban houses now. I think it was about 15 years after we left that it suddenly dawned on me that we had lost Wattle Hill —Norma Morgan, Sydney.

Griffith town camps

European occupation drove Aborigines into pastoral stations and reservations, from which many returned as seasonal fruit pickers. They settled in the new town in the 1940s. The first shanty town in Griffith was a white workers camp built in 1911 called "Bagtown", described in detail later in this work.

Through much of the Wiradjuri region, Aboriginal families doing station work or seasonal picking had travelled and camped along river courses, from where they got their drinking water, and in which they swam and washed clothes. In Griffith, instead of a riverbank, there was a whole series of man-made "rivers" laid out in straight irrigation lines around the township. Each had its own narrow strip of "no-man's land" or

verge, between the canal and its parallel access lane, just wide enough for a small hut.

Griffith City has become rather remarkable for the continuing arrival of different ethnic groups who generally started out as seasonal workers living in bag camps and whose descendants came to regard themselves as the "real" locals and regard the next group to arrive as the "foreigners".

One descendent of local grape growers and Indian families settled in Yenda. He remembered some of the attitudes of townspeople towards the "battlers" of various nationalities who camped in the town in the 1950s and 1960s, including the first Aboriginal families to move out of their own communities.

There were a lot of different groups in Griffith, not just the fruit pickers. Originally they had wagons and moved around pretty continuously. Then many settled along the irrigation canals and built those huts made of flattened fruit tins. There were drovers with Irish Catholic names like "Murphy" or "O'Brien" who brought their Aboriginal women, called gins, who mostly didn't have children with them, and kept house. Usually the drovers had a horse and sulky, and when they settled they got odd jobs like chopping firewood. They were basically alcoholics and drank heavily. I know because my father was a winegrower and used to take their wine to them. A common way of dying in Griffith was to drink too much one night and then fall backwards into a channel and drown. The last one I remember was only 2 years ago.

There were also railway fettlers' camps spaced at pretty regular intervals out along the railway line. Every railway fettlers' camp basically worked pretty continuously on maintaining their own stretch of railway. They included Aboriginal families and built shanties: there's one still standing out at the railway tracks at Yenda.

Then in the sixties we used to see some of the first Aboriginal families who moved into the town, and who didn't mix much with the rest of the Aboriginal community. They were called "whities" because they got around in cars, sent their children to different schools from the other Aboriginal people, and worked in regular jobs. You see in those days if you were Aboriginal and moved into the town it was a no-win situation: you didn't fit in with the other Aboriginal people, and you didn't fit in with the whites.

Even now you still get some strange attitudes in the town, like they say that the Aboriginal people at Three Ways are not "real" Aborigines. It's a striking attitude because all these townspeople who consider themselves to be dinky-di are all descended from British, Italian, or other overseas migrants.

Clancy Charles' parents moved from Darlington Point at the end of the Second World War to follow seasonal work around Griffith, and camped in various places before settling up in Three Ways.

We were quite happy at the Point but on the off-season there wasn't much work there. My father began to get jobs closer to Griffith like got shearing at Hillston and at Tabbita [on the Hillston road]. We first moved to Hanwood [winery village on the outskirts of Griffith] to the Willows for the grape picking. There were camps at places like Hanwood Lane and the Pines down near the rice mill. There were also camps over the hill near the old golf course at the bottom of Scenic Hill, where Wade High School is now, and at the old tip. At that time most of the Aboriginal families were all attached to different farms. Families came here for the orange and grape picking season [October to April], and they'd be living and working at these separate farms mostly all year round and only got together when they went into the town. We stopped at the channel [at the Willows] and built our humpy from any materials we found lying around. There was a game of two-up and card games every week there.

There was also a hut camp down at Condo Lane. That's where the Aboriginal families from Condobolin had their humpies. It wasn't far from McWilliams, where I used to do grape picking as well. McWilliam was a bastard of a boss: he'd blow the starting whistle at 7.30 in the morning and if you weren't there on the dot you were sacked for the day. But I guess families at Condo will tell you about Condo Lane and the grape picking —Clancy Charles, Three Ways.

Laurie Ingram's family stayed for a time at the Pines for the seasonal work.

At Griffith we were with a group of Aboriginal families down at the Pines. There were just tents and little goundjis [humpies] where the Woolworths store is today. Our families like the Charles, Williams, and the Murrys were there and I think there were white people there as well. There was an orange juice factory there where we used to go as kids. Then another year we went down to the flats near Three Ways [Frogs Hollow Marsh] —Laurie Ingram, Narrandera, Sept 1995.

There were a series of small, shifting camps around the edges of Griffith. Most were absorbed and relocated as the town grew, leaving no trace. Only Frogs Hollow became a large community camp. Three Ways became the Aboriginal housing area.

- 1 The Pines. Near Wickham's hill, at the rice mill, between Jensen and Harris streets.
- 2 Old Tip. Present day suburb of Collina. Next to the former council tip at the junction of rifle range road and Clifton Boulevard.
- 3 Golf course. Present day golf course and raceway. From the town centre, over the top of Scenic Hill.

4 Scenic Hill. Between present day McNabb Crescent and Scenic Drive. Foothill slopes on the town side of Scenic Hill.

5 Wakaden Street. Present day Catholic High School oval, between Macarthur Street and Hickey Crescent.

6 Tharbogang. Railway fettlers camp, situated near Tharbogang railway siding.

7 Condo Lane. Present day Leonards Road, off Hanwood village. Alongside an irrigation canal near the McWilliam family's vineyards. Condo Lane families were probably not aware of the nearby Bagtown cemetery.

8 The Willows. Present day entrance to Greenacres property, with extensive avenue replantings of willow trees. The area was reached by the present day canal bridge. Nearby was the former a line of willow trees alongside the Mirool Creek branch canal. The Willows was far removed from Griffith township but within 5 km walking distance of the shop at Hanwood.

9 Frogs Hollow. Formerly a marshy area beside an irrigation canal on the western edge of Griffith township.

10 Three Ways. Located across the Lakeview Branch Canal from Frogs Hollow.

Frogs Hollow Marsh

The Frogs Hollow camp formed over the 1940s. At that time, labour shortages brought about by the Second World War allowed many Wiradjuri families to get vegetable and fruit picking work. The fruit-pickers travelled in a circuit that included several seasons each year at Griffith. Some decided to stay on between picking seasons and over the early 1950s about half a dozen families joined the Carberry household who had settled next to an irrigation canal on the edge of the town (Read 1988: 103).

Clancy Charles moved into Frogs Hollow when he married in the 1950s. He remained there and in 1995 was still living next to Frogs Hollow, at the adjacent site of Three Ways.

Frogs Hollow was all low-lying flats covered in [cypress] pine scrub. There were a few white chaps living in bag camps and tin humpies. I married Ethel [daughter of Tom Goolagong] from Condobolin and we moved into Frogs Hollow. I finished up shearing at Barellan with Kenny Goolagong [father of Evonne Goolagong] for about six years. My missus stayed at Frogs Hollow and I used to come back to Frogs Hollow when I got a break from the shearing.

My wife and I were together for thirty-seven years. When she died and I took it very hard and drank pretty heavily for a while. I'd spent most of my life doing shearing and orange picking, and that was hard work. But even in the late fifties you weren't allowed in the pub unless you had a Dog Tag [exemption certificate] displayed on your coat or if someone brought the booze to you —Clancy Charles, Three Ways.

Frogs Hollow Marsh is on the western edge of the town, flanking the Main Canal and the Lake View Branch Canal. It is the present day playing field and the low-lying flats that now extend into suburban houses bounded by Parkinson and Lawson Crescents.

Any visible hut remains at Frogs Hollow were disposed of when Three Ways housing was being built. The main open ground of Frogs Hollow not already covered by housing is a playing field. The remaining portion of open ground was a privately leased grazing paddock, which has been bulldozed and ploughed, containing some sparse and dispersed domestic refuse.

Three Ways

Three Ways gets its name from the three-way irrigation canal bridge that has to be crossed to reach the site. The area of about 5 acres had originally been set aside as an Aboriginal reserve in 1954.

Over 1948 and 1953, delegations of town residents from Griffith complained to the Board that Aboriginal families living at Frogs Hollow were camping anywhere, their children running wild, and that living conditions for Aboriginal families were a disgrace. The government response was to open Three Ways reserve adjacent to the Frogs Hollow fringe-camp. After the Frogs Hollow shacks were pulled down by the residents and moved across the irrigation channel into Three Ways, the reserve remained under-financed and soon became overcrowded.

A town housing scheme was started in 1959 by a voluntary association of town residents from the growing professional and business class, first called the Aboriginal Assimilation Organisation, later renamed the Aboriginal Advancement Organisation. In an attempt at integration, a few houses were offered in the town as incentive for Aboriginal families to move off the reserve. Like most other town housing schemes of the 1950s and 1960s it was on a tight budget. As a result, it offered housing only to a handful of selected Aboriginal families (Read 1988: 104).

The 1950s has often been characterised as "the decade of conformity"; and the few Aboriginal families

involved in the housing scheme did not fit patterns of quiet town living amongst all-white neighbours. By the 1960s the Association began to see that the attempt to socially integrate Aboriginal families by town housing had failed. It instead began to look at improving Three Ways as an alternative means of raising the living conditions of Aboriginal families, and patching relations between the reserve community and the white sector in the township (Read 1988: 110-111).

The Board had built eight tin houses at Three Ways for Aboriginal families in the early 1960s, and planned for three more. With the Association and the Shire Council working together over the 1960s, facilities such as a baby health centre and community hall were built on the Three Ways reserve. In 1970 the Lions Club organised a beach holiday for the Three Ways children, and the Association obtained a school bus and helped with tutoring children's homework. The Council agreed to carry out sewerage and garbage collections for free but no single government body was willing to be responsible for the cost of bringing a sewer main out to Three Ways. Eventually in 1977 the sewerage connection was built by a joint departmental funding effort. The status of Three Ways as a permanent independent Aboriginal settlement was confirmed when it was transferred as Aboriginal Land to the Local Aboriginal Land Council by legislation in 1983 (Kelly 1988: 150-164). In the late 1980s, the tin houses on Three Ways were redeveloped as a suburban Aboriginal housing estate.

While the recently built houses of Three Ways are of a higher standard than the older "fibro" houses of the nearby suburbs, the most noticeable feature has been the segregated nature of the Aboriginal housing cluster. By the end of the twentieth century the approach into Three Ways from the town centre was still marked by the end of the white housing area at the former Frogs Hollow flats, a change in the road surface from bitumen to gravel, and the three-way canal crossing.

The various Griffith Town Camps, Frogs Hollow Marsh, and Three Ways illustrate the progression of Aboriginal settlements within the Griffith township following the influx of Aboriginal fruit pickers in the 1940s. These places are significant for the major part that they have played in the Wiradjuri resettlement of the Riverina region and as an example of government management policies of assimilation.

Growing up in an Aboriginal community camp

Alice Williams was born in 1940 and recalled the development of Three Ways. Alice has since passed away, but wanted to place on record her community's response to township settlement and government management policies. Alice expressed misgivings about the move from missions and camps into suburban townships over the 1960s to 1980s period.

You see our parents taught us not with books, but through their lives. If they couldn't live it then they couldn't teach it. We had to know things and not fool ourselves. They said this is a white man's world, so learn to live with them. We lost of our language because of it. If we were caught talking in our lingo, we'd be prime suspects to be sent away by the Welfare, and put out on stations to work. That's why we haven't taught our own language. Which is sad because our grandchildren are looking for it today and we can't give it.

And yet my father, [John Charles, who came from Cummeragunja] knew his own language, but wouldn't pass it on to us. I heard him say to an old man one day "No, we don't speak your language, we have the Murray River words", so I don't know what language it was and we weren't taught any of it. We were taught just to live with people, get on with people and work for what we wanted. Don't take handouts if there was no reason for it. If the work was slack, and you couldn't get a job, then to have a handout was all right, but not if there was work around.

We just travelled following the fruit and learning to get to know our relations. Some were in Victoria, and some in New South Wales. We worked as we went. But Mum and Dad finished living in Griffith when I was about ten because there was plenty of work.

There was no schooling because if you went to school and you were given a hard time. It's a bad thing to say but facts are facts. You got picked on in the school ground. Nobody listened to your side of the story, and then you got punished every time. So one day I walked out of the school ground and never returned. Two weeks of schooling I had. Not much, but two weeks.

People used to come from everywhere. People came from Shepparton and Moorabbin where the fruit and canneries were. I thing they all came to Griffith to meet each other. There were many camping grounds around Griffith. There was what we called the Pines, on the other side of town. There was a camping ground way out past the cemetery near the old tip and saleyards. Some lived around the hill and at the train line at the next little siding at Tharbogang. Up here in what they called Frogs Hollow. It is now called Parkinsons Crescent and Lawson Crescent. And then the Council kept telling us to move back, and so we ended up over here. They'd say there were houses to put up and we'd have to move back. So we'd pull down our little tin huts and then we'd move back and build again. Then there was the generosity of one kind old man, Compton

I think his name was. His words were "move into my cattle paddock and let no one move you out. Live there from generation to generation." He must have had a long lease on that land I suppose, I don't know. That's the land that is Frogs Hollow. I was about fourteen then. But as soon as that happened it was revoked, when the government strikes it off, with a pen. I don't understand those things. We were seen as not being able to handle valuables or property.

Then there was a committee called the assimilating and advancement committee or something like that. They built four homes and put four families into them, and I think the AP Board put their hand out with money for those houses. The rest of the families stayed in their tin huts and camps

It is not a very pleasant situation, never was, and probably never will be. Councils are now suspicious because the way they see it, "the big land grab" is on. They say "What are you looking for?" Are they going to come in and take the land?" Probably thinking along those lines.

Most people carted their washing and drinking water from the channel. And every year the channel used to go right down. There used to be green slime on the bottom. The kids would run through there, and being kids, catching fish and killing them. Mum used to go every year and take up a petition amongst the people. She'd say "Sign the petition so we could get drinking water." Some that stayed in the town wouldn't make any waves. They wouldn't sign any of the petitions and would say, "Go away from here, Mary. You'll have our kids taken off us." She used to say to them "If you don't get any decent drinking water, you might not have any children to be taken off you." This happened year after year.

You see people lived in fear of the Child Welfare Services or whatever it's called now. It's always changing its name. A lot of people still carry that fear. They won't stand up to their rights because they are afraid. That fear has come from right back. The Child Welfare would come and take your children. And this was a fact.

I was at a lady's house one day when I was about fourteen. She used to make paper roses and sell them for five bob a dozen to support her children, who lived in a hut with only one bedroom and a front room. The Welfare man went pulling the things back off the bed, to make sure she had clean sheets and that, and said to her, "I want you to build another room on here". She said, "How can I?" He said "I don't care how you can or how you can't. If you don't have it the next time I come back, I'll take your children". So I went and told my dad and he got around with a few men. They got a tin here and a bag there, cut down a few trees, and built a room onto the shack, to stop her children from being taken.

We were pretty much about helping, giving to one another and sharing. But there were those in the community that wouldn't have anything to do with it because they weren't game enough to take that step. Frightened. Living in fear, and it's come right through to today. You see even today a few won't stand up for their rights. They just let people lord over them. Sad it is. You'll find them through the town.

There were always disadvantages in camp life but the simple parts of it were the happy times. Like a few people would go out into the middle of the paddock with a bat and a ball to play rounders. And they'd keep coming out to that before you knew it there was a big game of rounders with all the old people bringing out drums to sit on and watch. Everyone was in it, even the old ladies would bowl and bat. It was a great time. It was a time to be glad.

Then we'd have our dances. Someone would get a guitar and sit alongside a house and start strumming. It was always like a snowball, it started with one, and then two and before you knew it everyone was there dancing. Then they'd carry water from the channel to settle the dust after they'd finished dancing. They were happy times, good times.

The alcohol and violence was there but who wants to remember that? It's still here with us today. It probably always will be. A Koori can't handle his grog and the worst thing that ever happened was to introduce him to alcohol. Now he's free to go into the pubs and spend his days and nights there and take his grog home with him. There is some that drink in moderation. There is some that are alcoholics. But we don't know what caused that person to become an alcoholic. That person never set out to become the world's greatest drunk. Somewhere in life something happened and he started to drink, drowning his sorrows. Although for a time they were forgotten, they were still there when he sobered up. If you were looking for the beginnings of alcoholism, and wanting to know when it's going to end, I can't tell you. You've still got it today. So much hurt, it comes from the past. It's also coming from the present. Who knows how to stop it? That's why when kids talk to me I say "I'd rather talk about the happy times."

The Kooris lived wherever they could camp. They didn't have a mission with the advantages and privileges that places like Brungle had, where they had their own wheat and dairy, where you had only to walk down the hill and you were sitting down to the river fishing.

At Darlington Point they've always got on with each other, blacks and whites. When I got out here, I was called blackie, and I came home and I asked Mum and Dad "Why do they keep calling me blackie?" And

then they told me I was an Aboriginal. The black and white communities were very separate here in Griffith, although some of the young ones are now marrying across their communities.

At the Point, there was none of those feelings. Our people, they had a beautiful thing in the past but they've lost it. They knew how to get on with each other. They shared with each other. They'd have a row but next morning it was over and done with and they'd call you over for a cup of tea. I'd like to see it at Griffith the way it was before at Darlington Point. We lived off the land there. Everyone was welcome in everyone's house. Sad to say but it's not the same now. There is division in the community. You didn't have to be blood relations. Here it was like at the Point, you'd visit your neighbours and you got your community aunts, uncles and grandmothers. Grandmother to all the kids. That's how my father's first cousin became his brother.

Before if men needed to get something off their chests they'd get out and have a fight. And next morning, they'd be sober and the man that lost would come out and shake the other fella's hand and say "You're a better man than I am". And it was over and done with. It wasn't carried on. But today it's carried on. That fight's not over until the other fellow gets him back. And it's just a continuous thing. Cowra was the same as Griffith and the Point. Same community life. But I don't know what happened.

Today an Aboriginal man came and spoke to us and said "The Blackfella never had it, the white man did. Because it was in his genes. His genes got him educated and got him jobs". He was really putting the Koori down, and he's a Koori himself. But I know a boy who's become a Koori Sister [male nurse]. And he's got Koori genes. There's a couple who are lawyers including one that I've watched grow up and I can tell you: he's Koori through to the backbone. You've got to be educated to live in this world. I'd rather live the way I was created. But that's gone out.

I used to say to my child, "What did you do that for? I never did that when I was a kid". And then I woke up to myself one day. I heard myself saying it and stopped because those kids have got more things to fight today than we ever had to in the past. You see we lost a lot. People say "We lost the land", but we lost more than that, like our language. Things that we will never get back.

I was never given the right to give the language up. I would like to be able to sit down and have a conversation in our own language. I hear that today the young people are learning Aboriginal lingo, but it's a lingo that's not theirs. I would have loved to have spoken my father's language, and my mothers.

And the reason why my father didn't teach us his language was that he was protecting us. I was walking down the street with my father and he was blind. And he walked with his hand on my shoulder. The next minute I heard this bloke behind us go on in a lingo that I didn't know. A red-headed bloke, very fair. I thought to myself, he must be an Italian and he's talking to himself. But my father's footsteps started to become slower and then, all of a sudden he stopped. And then a smile broke on his face. And he said "Is that you, Ritchie Owl?" The bloke replied, "Yeah, Jack". And there on the streets of Griffith they held a conversation which I didn't understand because they spoke in a lingo I had never known. I stood there not understanding and looking from one to the other. I came home and thought before about that. I would have been about 18 and never thought that I'd lost something precious, but I felt it. And that's how I feel now. It's something that will never come back. But in the end it's not the land, or the language that makes us Koori. It's community, the love Kooris have for each other —Alice Williams, Three Ways.

2

Squatters and selectors

Passing close to the Griffith area in 1817, Surveyor-General John Oxley described the Murrumbidgee Plains as a "howling wilderness". He was unimpressed with what he saw:

'the soil a light red sand parched with drought, a perfect level plain overrun with acacia scrub...there is a uniformity of barren desolation of this country which wearies one more than I am able to express...I am the first white man to see it and I think I will be undoubtedly the last.' he wrote.

He was wrong. Charles Sturt passed through the area later. But he left similarly negative reports concerning:

'the dreariness of the view ... the plains are open to the horizon, but here and there a stunted gum tree or a gloomy cypress seems placed by Nature as mourners over the surrounding desolation. Neither bird nor beast inhabits this lonely and inhospitable region, over which the silence of the grave seems to reign'. (Chessbrough 1982: 10).

In 1826 the colonial Governor Ralph Darling tried to legislate to contain the size of the colony within governable limits. The older settled areas within administrative reach of Sydney were designated as "limits of location", beyond which land was neither to be sold nor let. Michelago, Yass, and a line following north from Cowra marked the edges of the Limits of Location. Wiradjuri territory lay beyond the Limits of Location i.e. beyond land grants and purchases from government, and was occupied by squatters who moved down the rivers, taking up land and water for their grazing enterprises. Ten years later, Governor Burke conceded that the limits of location had failed, and decided to partially recognise illegal squatting by charging a nominal annual licence. The colony was divided into nine administrative squatting districts, each with its own Commissioner of Crown Lands. The next Governor, Gipps, provided his Commissioners with a small force of mounted constables known as "border police" to protect the settlers.

So it was not surprising that by the time captain Charles Sturt made his famous expedition along the Murrumbidgee River in 1829, he already found the river frontage near Griffith occupied. Several pastoralists had raced ahead of official exploration, and taken up runs that extended over thirty kilometres back from the river.

Following exploration of the inland, the nineteenth century saw the westward movement of settlers who utilised the semi-arid plains. Griffith was part of the pastoral runs of Cuba (now Kooba) and Benerembah stations. By about 1850 settlers had taken up the best watered land all the way down to the junction with the Murray River, and extended into tributaries such as the Edward River, Billabong and Yanco Creeks. These sheep stations were massive. Owners such as Benjamin Boyd and W.C. Wentworth were some of the wealthiest men in the colony. They each held runs in excess of 200,000 acres. They would have been absentee landlords, who placed shepherds on the runs to establish occupation. Little is known of these people, drawn from the convict class and living in a frontier without white women.

An example of an early run was the North Hulong (or Ulong) run, which includes the present day site of Yenda village. Officially taken up in 1855 by Robert Tooth, a Sydney brewer, the North Hulong run comprised some 28,000 acres. These early land speculators had no botanical expertise, and named native trees according to their closest British plant equivalents. Forest covering the Ulong run was described mainly as box, belah, pine and yarran timber. In some places bushwood, boree needlewood, dogwood, oak, hopbush and broom also occurred (Stedinger and McPhee 2003).

Yet despite the huge size of the landholdings and wealth of their landlords, a combination of factors such as low rainfall and poor access to markets caused the stations to change hands frequently. Economic

prospects remained poor for decades. The big change came with the Victorian gold rush of 1851. Between 1851 and 1857 the Victorian population multiplied more than fivefold, providing a ready market for meat. It also brought a new settler population into the colony, which was to pose a challenge to the power of the squatters (Kelly 1988: 27-29, edited excerpts).

Well-preserved landscapes from the squatting era often have widely spaced homesteads, surrounded by large complexes of ancillary buildings, set in gently sloping, river country. Roads in such telltale landscapes may run for great distances in straight lines, following the surveyed boundaries of huge land parcels.

Bynya - Legacy Of Rough Times

Bynya is a good example of a station that provides a "slice" through all the major stages of pastoral land use in the region. Bynya Homestead is a reminder of the great stations that covered this area in the nineteenth century. The Station was located to the north of Kooba Station, on which Griffith is now situated, over the Bynya Hills towards the Cocoparas. In its heyday as a sheep run it covered some 170,000 acres, approximately 11 by 25 miles. The name "Bynya", not "Binya", as it was respelt by the Lands Department, meant "mountain".

Bynya's history is full of colourful incidents and characters, recorded by the last manager, George Gow. Although not the most prosperous of the stations in the area, it was apparently considered the most likeable, possibly because of its attractive location.

The early history is "just a trifle obscure". In the 1850s a couple of brothers may have squatted there, but no-one remembers their names. In the early 1860s a Wagga shopkeeper, John Forsyth, indubitably had claims to the property. He kept on cropping up for a while, but he doesn't appear to have done much.

The first serious owner, still in the early 1860s, was a bloke called "Four-eyed Patterson", an Englishman formerly employed on Yarrabee Station as a book-keeper, and possibly part financed by Yarrabee. Four-eyes built himself a crude log home in dense forest by a coolaman-hole. The surrounding country was a "silent and unoccupied, a sort of No Man's Land" where kangaroos and dingoes were practically undisturbed and wild cattle and horses ran in the low ranges. Although Four-eyes brought in a flock of 300 sheep from Yarrabee, employed some shepherds and built the first well, the wild dogs made short work of the sheep and the Australian Joint Savings Bank foreclosed.

After a couple of interim managers, Beetson and a "debonnair" Englishman called Sharwood who shone at Wagga Balls and later became a police inspector in Queensland, the property was bought in 1868/69 by John Hunter Patterson, no relation to "Four-eyes".

This Patterson was a "man of action....one of the men who helped make Australia, always going further out and licking the rough bushland into shape". He had previously owned Boonooke before the days of the Peppins and Falkiners. With his manager, James Slattery, he rapidly began improving Bynya as a sheep station, building up the flock to 50,000. The Peak Station to the north was added to the property and a new well dug to 315 ft (which, with the primitive methods available at the time, is a saga in itself). Patterson was also responsible for building the Homestead now at Pioneer Park out of round pine logs. Even in the 1920s it was said to be "one of the few old rustic homesteads left, cool in summer and snug in winter".

The 1870s were exciting and often dangerous times at Bynya: a time of bushrangers, cattle thieves and gold rushes. One lot of cattle stolen from Barellan were hidden in yards at the back of Bynya, quite unsuspected by Station staff, the tracks washed away by rain, before being sold at the Grenfell goldfields. Grenfell, with its goldfields and Weddin Mountain strongholds was apparently the origin of a lot of crime in this area at this time.

In 1870 the station employed a smooth young chap called Tom, whose claims to titled relatives were tolerated so long as he did his work! One day he announced that he had struck gold on Bynya. After all the rights had been obtained from Wagga, he sent his workmates off on a fruitless search with a bogus map, while he ran off with the horses, gear and one of their wives. When the furious gold diggers finally caught up with him, they retrieved their horses and left the couple to get to Wagga the best way they could. The aggrieved husband, after the first wave of anguish, decided the lady "could go" after confessing to having acquired her "in the same prehistoric manner himself".

Patterson himself finally succumbed to the dangers of the isolated and rugged lifestyle. Out on his own, chasing some horses, his own horse tripped and rolled on him. In the struggle to get up, he righted a dislocated hip, but his pelvis and ribs were broken. He still managed to get himself to the warm ashes of a recent fire and survived a very cold night before being found the next day. The doctor had to be brought from Wagga with horse relays spread out all along the way. He was eventually transferred to Melbourne, but the accident virtually ended his work at Bynya.

In 1874/5 William Leonard succeeded the injured John Hunter Patterson as owner of Bynya, with a fiery

Scot, Neil McCallum as manager. This was a period of rapid progress. A stud merino flock was established, a second woolshed was built, numerous tanks and dams were sunk, a great deal of fencing was undertaken and cultivation was begun with associated haysheds and a farmhouse.

There are a number of stories about McCallum. When he added a new lathe and plaster house to the front of the old log homestead, the walls were a bit too low. It seems he was in such a hurry to get married that he couldn't wait for them to reach the normal height.

McCallum was so set on clearing the forest that the Crown became worried and declared part of the property a forest reserve. The wily McCallum, however, inspected the fine print and discovered that the trees were only protected from ringbarking. So, he brought in a gang of Chinese and had them chopped down. George Gow commented in the 1920s, "In those days destruction of timber was looked upon as a necessity: today it would be called a wanton crime."

From 1883/4 the station was run by a series of managers for the Station's new owners, Young and Drysdale. They included a burly man called Nicholson, who died of consumption; Charles Wood, a Scot, who died when his horse rolled on him, Mitchell in 1894, Finley McRae and Alex McKay. Around 1894, the property reached its peak, running 100,000 sheep.

In 1906, after a period of decline, a new owner, Mr A.S. Austin of 'Wonganella' and his energetic young manager, Leslie Thompson, began an attempt to revive Bynya. All the boundary fences were rebuilt with the best materials. The second shearing shed was enlarged to cover 3,500 sheep in wet weather, as well as shearing and storage space. Its Wolseley machinery was driven by a huge and temperamental Phoenix oil engine, which on one occasion threw its flywheel in the direction of the shearers, doing immeasurable damage to their nerves!

In spite of their best efforts, however, the productivity of the 1890s was not repeated, possibly due to a combination of drought, rabbit plague and regrowth of scrub.

Small farmers began to select from Crown leases on Bynya from the 1880s, following legislation that gave any person the right to select 40 to 320 acres of Crown land anywhere except urban areas at a fixed price of one pound an acre, provided they lived on the land. The small size of the selections made it difficult for them to survive. Only one selector, James Gullifer, lasted through the 1888-1902 drought. The others either sold their land back to Bynya or walked off.

The end of Bynya came in 1912 when it was bought by a syndicate for subdivision into wheat farms. George Gow, who recorded the history of Bynya, was employed as manager to supervise the subdivision. The value of the subdivision was enhanced by the development of the M.I.A. and the completion of the Barellan to Griffith railway line in 1915. Civilisation was on the doorstep. The break-up sale, advertised as "Good-bye Bynya", began in 1913, and in spite of World War I, was virtually complete by 1917.

By this time the Station Homestead, including the old log Homestead now at Pioneer Park, and a series of extensions, totalled of 17 rooms. The sales prospectus described it as "one of those quaint rambling old places so much more homely and comfortable than the 'brand new house'". George and Annie Gow shared it with their four daughters, the station bookkeeper, a governess, four jackeroos, and probably servants. They also entertained members of the owning syndicate and prospective buyers, since there were no hotels in the district.

The original log homestead must have been the most solid section. All the later additions were demolished some time after 1917, while the old log building remained the home of the Gandy family until it was moved to Pioneer Park in the late 1970s (Robyn Oliver).

Groongal Station

Groongal Station provides a window into a self-sufficient form of remote station life, which has gone from the region. Located some 30 miles southwest of Griffith, it was first established in 1839. By 1865, when it was purchased by three Learmonth brothers, along with adjoining "Bringagee", it had an area of 400,000 acres and a frontage of 20 miles along the Murrumbidgee. It carried between 120,000 and 140,000 head of sheep and 3,000 to 6,000 head of cattle. In shearing season an extra 140 men were employed in addition to a sizeable regular staff.

Between 1868 and 1875 the Learmonth brothers built "Groongal Homestead", now National Trust listed, and a workers' complex regarded as "the pattern for all time". The complex included single and group residences, bakery, dining room, store, meat house, library, school, vegetable garden and orchard. A windmill raised water, used for irrigation and piped to every residence. The resident teacher/clergyman held weekly church services, as well as running the school, and retired workers were provided for on the Station.

"The Town and Country Journal" of 1872 described Groongal as "quite a little township" saying:

"A home feeling is implanted and cherished at Groongal, and this begets respect between master and men;

and you may be sure that the investment made in providing for the men's comfort is well repaid in the long run, for Messrs. Learmonth Brothers have, perhaps, the best staff of men in their employ of any squatters in the colony, or, at any rate, in the Riverina."

The good relationship between the Learmonths and their employees is born out by a story about John Hill, who, despite owning a share in "Fairview", spent his whole working life on Groongal, going with the property as it was subdivided. Their neighbour, the late Mr Ian Campbell, recalled in the Tabbita centennial booklet:

"He [John] was good with horses, and used to ride in the races at Wyvern. The story goes that he used to ride in the steeplechases bareback. In one race John and his boss, Mr Learmonth, were riding. John was way out in front and the Boss was running second, John pulled his horse off the last hurdle and had to turn around to jump it again which let Mr Learmonth get through and win the race with John coming second. When asked afterwards what happened, John just said, 'I couldn't beat the Boss.' After the Learmonths sold Groongal and went back to England they sent John a Christmas present every year."

(Wyvern was originally part of Groongal, created in 1889 when Groongal was divided between the Learmonths. The Learmonths built a racecourse there complete with grandstand, judge's box and refreshment booth.)

Groongal Coach House was one of the station buildings. It is a good example of slab construction. It is built of massive red gum slabs. It has a steeply pitched corrugated iron roof, with an attic room underneath, and an annex on one side. According to Robert Merrylees, it was originally double the size, with an attached blacksmith at the back, which had fallen down before the Coach House was removed to Pioneer Park. By that time it was only used to store bits of Model T Fords, rabbit poisons and remnants of the famous windmill. With changing farm practices - property subdivision, fewer employees and diminished isolation, the worker's complex was in decay, and has now been demolished. Groongal Coach House was donated to Pioneer Park in 1973 by Groongal Station, and was dismantled and re-erected by former Pioneer Park handyman, John Roberts (Robyn Oliver, Griffith Pioneer Park Museum).

Wilga Station and the Boundary Rider's Cottage

The ballad "Saltbush Bill" by "Banjo" Patterson (1864-1941) establishes Wilga as a property of some renown. In the story told by the ballad, Wilga represents one of the well-grassed runs on which drovers would set an overnight camp, so that their sheep would survive the six-mile journey the next day. Paterson was also recording the efforts of drovers on the Overland Track who were obliged to follow the travelling stock route along a dry half-mile track. Also how they would be hurried on by the station manager (representing the squatter) so as to preserve the grazing land for station livestock. A short extract from this long ballad explains the situation:

*Now this is the law of the Overland that all in the West obey -
A man must cover with travelling sheep a six-mile stage a day;
But this is the law which the drovers make, right easily understood,
They travel their stage where the grass is bad, but camp
where the grass is good;
They camp, and they ravage the squatter's grass till never a blade remains;...*

*And he camped one night at the crossing-place on the edge of
the Wilga run;
'We must manage a feed for them here,' he said, 'or half of the mob are done!'
so he spread them out when they left the camp wherever they liked to go,
Till he grew aware of a jackeroo with a station-hand in tow;
And they set to work on the straggling sheep, and with many
a stockwhip crack
They forced them in where the grass was dead in the space of
the half-mile track;...*

*...But the travelling sheep and the Wilga sheep were boxed on
the Old Man Plain.
'Twas a full week's work ere they drafted out and hunted them off again;
With a week's good grass in their wretched hides, with a curse*

*and a stockwhip crack,
They hunted them off on the road once more to starve on the
half-mile track (Ward 1964: 165-168).*

Wilga was an outstation of Kooba Station developed under the ownership of F.W. Hughes in the late 1800's. Sheep were shorn on the property, and the shearing shed is still standing on the original site. All of the other buildings, and there were many, including the homestead, workers cottages, meat house and blacksmith's workshop, were demolished when the Water Conservation & Irrigation Commission resumed the land in 1960 and divided it into irrigation farms. This country, and several thousands of acres south of the Murrumbidgee River are currently run privately as the Coleambally Irrigation Area. It was the last land to be resumed within the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

In June 1947 the Griffith Returned Soldiers League were urging that Kooba Station be resumed for closer settlement. By 1948 Mr. George Weir Minister for Conservation informed the RSL that investigations by the Water Conservation & Irrigation Commission into the proposed resumption of Kooba Station are completed and the report had been forwarded to the Closer Settlement Advisory Board. It was announced in March 1948 that 27,000 acres of Kooba Station was to be resumed. Although it took 12 years, this announcement was the demise of the outstation known as "Wilga".

Mr. Edwin Boyce managed Wilga Station from 1924 until its demise in the early 1960's. The farm income was primarily generated by the sale of fine wool from Merino sheep. This was hauled by horse teams of draught horses to Whitton town some nine miles away, where it was transported by train to Goulburn and Sydney. Periodically, the farm ran a few cattle, and always kept some milking cows.

The railway line divided Wilga from Kooba. To the east, Wilga bordered onto the Leeton road, finishing just north of Whitton. To the west, Wilga bordered onto Benerembah Station. It was divided from the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area by the irrigation canal that ran far north of the property.

Also known as Red Hut and Northwest Cottage, the Boundary Rider's cottage is currently located on a rice/sheep farm, owned by Dick Thompson about 10 km south of Griffith, en route to Darlington point on the Kidman Highway. The building can be seen from the road. It is used as a shearing shed and farm storage shed.

The Boundary Rider's Cottage is one of two remaining buildings of what operated as Wilga Station during the 1890s to 1960s. Kooba still functions as a farm and is owned by the Mormon Church. The cottage was used as the boundary rider's dwelling up until the late 1960's when the land was resumed for irrigation.

It is locally unique, because it was provided to a station employee of special status. The boundary rider had the responsibility of keeping all the stock safe, from not only marauding pests but also theft. Maintaining fences was of utmost importance. The Boundary Rider's cottage, or as it was known by past managers of Wilga, the 'Northwest cottage', is on its original site directly north west of where Wilga homestead once stood. Built in the 1890s, this building is a visible reminder of the century of pre-irrigation farming.

The cottage is timber, with corrugated iron wall and roof cladding, the interior lined with cypress pine boards. Though the building is standing, some of the iron is missing from walls, and part of the verandah has been converted into sheep pens.

From the 1970's on the building has been used as farm storage and shearing shed. Yards have been added to one side, and the loft appears to have been used for hay or grain storage. In the mid-1990's this building was offered to Pioneer Park Museum for relocation to museum grounds, but this offer was not pursued.

The Boyce family knew the cottage as Northwest Cottage and the home of the Brown family. Mr. Brown was responsible for riding the boundaries and checking and maintaining the fences. His children attended Hanwood School and a couple of local people remember visiting the cottage for birthday parties and social gatherings, such as card nights.

Wilga Station was also a place for Griffith and Hanwood residents to trap rabbits to supplement their

income. Rabbits were processed at the freezing works ran by Mr Livanes, situated between Griffith & Hanwood (originally a cheese factory built in 1913). Mr. Boyce's daughter remembered the cottage for its gauzed in sunroom (on the eastern side) - something that their large rambling Wilga Homestead residence did not have – in which the whole Brown family slept (Shirley Norris).

Selectors

The 1860s largely replaced the early colonial phase of squatters who had occupied huge station properties replaced through nineteenth century migration. Mass migration was initially caused by the Victorian gold rush. But it was land subdivision under the Robertson Land Acts that created a new kind of settler: the small selector.

Through closer settlement, the small selectors saw a period of vigorous town growth in NSW during the second half of the nineteenth century. This however had little effect on the semi-arid land of Griffith until the irrigation scheme was constructed.

The idea of transplanting an English settlement pattern of equidistant villages into the colony occurred early. In May 1826 the governor was instructed to divide the whole colony into counties and parishes, a task progressively carried out between 1830 and 1848, by which time the 141 counties existing today were delineated. Pattern-book planned towns and villages were surveyed and gazetted in 1838 through settled areas as far as Yass to the South and Wellington to the north. Most of these planned villages failed. Some have disappeared, existing only as oddly shaped land parcels and road reserves in grazing land, shown on cadastral maps.

Mass migration in the mid-nineteenth century forced the change to closer settlement. The gold rush flooded the countryside with people. The colonial government recognised the pressures for settlement on smaller lots, and legislated for "free selection". Starting in 1861, what became known as the Robertson Land Acts (because they were steered through parliament by the Lands Secretary Sir John Robertson) allowed any person to select between 40 and 320 acres of any Crown lands at a pound an acre (other than town or reserved land).

The squatters fought back by using all the well known means of protecting their monopoly on the land: by peacocking (selecting water sources), dummyming (selecting land in other peoples' names), and by strategic placement of reserves.

But the tide of migration was not to be held back and between 1859 and 1879 in the Riverina, the area under crops expanded more than tenfold to over 76,000 acres. Away from the best-watered land, however, the country could still carry no more than a sheep to four acres, and the population remained sparse.

H. G. McKinney and the McGaw brothers became joint owners of Kooba station. Where Griffith airport now stands the Davies family selected Winderee. At the eastern end of the McPherson range, Albert Driver and his family of nine children settled The Cliffs. Over the course of the 1880s, another dozen or so selectors arrived.

By the end of the 1880s the future looked reasonably secure. That is, until the well-known pattern of economic boom and bust clocked in with the El Nino cycle. A land boom in Melbourne collapsed and was followed by a depression. At nearby Whitton, the Australian Joint Stock Bank closed its doors on depositors trying to withdraw their savings. Surface water dried up and heralded a drought that ran from 1896 to 1899, with temperatures as high as 50 degrees.

The big station owners consolidated their holdings. Where the town of Yenda now stands, Sydney brewer Robert Tooth had taken up a run of 28,000 acres in 1855. It passed to James Flood in 1860 and in 1885, to Kooba Pastoral Holdings in the name of Joseph McGaw.

But drought and low prices combined to make the going too hard for some of the small selectors, who quit and headed for the towns. The 1902 drought was particularly fierce. It was followed by a run of good seasons, until 1912, when the Government stepped in and resumed the land for the new irrigation areas (Kelly 1988: 30-34, edited excerpts).

Small selectors following the Robertson Land Acts sometimes leave a telltale landscape. Many of these small-scale farmers were undercapitalised and lived on land that could not support them. By the 1870s many of these had failed on the poorer lands, but by then the landscape had been permanently fragmented. The resulting "Robertson landscape" typically features small, poor hut ruins, fairly closely spaced, often within sight of each other; a pattern of right-angled and short straight roads which follows small property boundaries; and abandonment because of dry land and agricultural non-viability. Most of the backcountry in New South Wales was subdivided into such small blocks.

The map was totally re-drawn for small selectors in 1912, when the government began resuming land around Griffith for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme. The next government experiments in closer

settlement were the creation of irrigated farmland and the soldier settlement scheme.

Fair view of hard work

Alfred and Elizabeth Hill at Fairview in the Tabbita area were typical selectors of the 1880s. Their homestead is an important relic of the era and a reminder of the life of hard work for pre-irrigation pioneers. Alfred and his wife Elizabeth were English immigrants who arrived to work on Groongal Station around 1870 via Smeaton Station in Victoria. They acquired part of Groongal Station to run sheep around 1880 and Alfred, his elder sons and a carpenter, began to build the house. It was called Fairview, because Alfred once remarked that the place was so thickly timbered that he could see a "fair view of hard work all his lifetime".

Some of this pine timber was used to build a five-roomed drop log house, virtually without nails, using an adze and broadaxe. Split logs were slotted horizontally between slotted upright timbers. The original roof may have been of bark, while the chimneys were of logs and corrugated iron, standing well out from the house. The kitchen and sitting room were combined.

Around 1901 a completely separate kitchen and pantry were built at the back (often done to limit fire damage). The area between was later partially closed in to form an arcade or breezeway where the family sat and dined. A small room was also built in on the front verandah for the Rabbit Inspector.

Fairview was home to ten children, John, Fred, Andrew, William, Eliza, Daniel, Rose, George, Sam and Charles. Only one of the boys married. William and Charles died relatively young, John worked from the age of 12 on Gunbar, and Fred and the girls moved away when they married. The four remaining sons lived at the Cottage until the death of the last of them in 1952, looked after by their niece, Doll Roberts from 1919-1951.

Conveniences at Fairview were few. They continued using kerosene lamps and fuel stoves to the last. Doll Roberts did her washing in tubs out under a peppercorn, with Uncle Andrew swishing away the flies. When a small bathhouse was eventually added, it was fitted only with a cold, hand pumped shower until Doll Roberts persuaded the uncles to buy a concrete bathtub. A friend of the family recalled the lads buying their first Ford car: they drove it halfway home before they took it out of first gear!

The household comprised some interesting characters. John, the eldest, worked at Gunbar Station for over 70 years. The Station Manager described him after his death as a man of striking physique, a magnificent horseman, whose work was his hobby. Money meant little to him and there is a story that when Dr Burrell's private hospital was reluctant to admit him on one occasion, he produced a wheat sack full of pound notes.

Andrew was badly burnt in a bush fire around 1914, trying to rescue his frightened horse which had run itself into a fence. He was "never quite the same" after, but apparently a gentle, well-liked man.

Samuel left home after an argument with the family around the 1910s and lived a couple of miles away trapping rabbits for two years. When eventually enticed to come home, he set himself up in a wooden caravan outside, coming in only for meals.

Fairview Cottage was one of the first buildings acquired by the Pioneer Park in 1969, relocated by Griffith Rotary and Pioneer Park staff. Every log was numbered so that it could be accurately put back together again. It was impossible to move the chimneys, and the kitchen one has been replaced with an Italian bread oven: by no means historically accurate, but an interesting reflection of the changing character of the area! (Robyn Oliver).

Gunbar Farm

Gunbar is another example of a pre-irrigation selection. Samuel Nixon, and other members of the family, selected land fronting Whealbah Road for what was to be Gunbar Farm, in 1882. There were a few hundred acres of open land, but the remainder of the property was covered with dense pine forest.

The family came from Deniliquin. Samuel, his brother, two brothers-in-law and a cousin arrived first to build a house. They had no access to a sawmill but there was no shortage of timber. So the men cut pines from the property, splitting slabs for the walls and pit sawing where sawn timber was required. The house had five rooms and was roofed with iron. Arthur then returned to collect his family, including Arthur's mother, grandmother, aunt and four young ones, the journey of 120 miles taking four days. As the property had been selected in the aunt's name, the house was built on the dividing line between the two selections, so that both could fulfil their residence qualification.

The house may have been built in a hurry because Arthur comments that when his father later built a big shed in the same manner - comprising chaff house, barn, harness room, hayshed and cart shed - the timber was much better planed than that of the house. This building was to have been thatched, but harvest got in the way so his father just piled loose straw on top (Robyn Oliver; Arthur Nixon's memoirs; Mr Neville

Tyson, who lived in Dumossa Homestead in the 1920s; "Corridors of Gold - History of Goolgowi and District").

Dumossa Well

Dumossa appears to be an example of a former squattage or station which was broken up during the free selection era, but survived further subdivision in the twentieth century.

Dumossa was on the back Hillston Road, between Tabbita and Goolgowi - 28 miles from Griffith, 7 miles from Tabbita, 10 miles from Goolgowi. According to the late Jack Carson, it was originally part of "C" block of the huge Bellingerambil Station (later Cowl Cowl), which stretched down from the Lachlan. Dumossa adjoined the north boundaries of Bringagee and Benerembah Stations. The name "Dumossa" was originally given by Cunningham to the Mallee Eucalypt, but later reserved for the species Congoo.

Dumossa was one of two early properties established in the Tabbita-Goolgowi area in the 1880s - Dumossa, by the McInnes family, and Ilkadoon, still owned by the Campbells. At that stage the McInnes's address was Dumossa, via Hay, which was 80 miles away - the other "nearby" settlement being the bullock transit centre of Gunbar, 30 miles closer - giving some idea of the property's isolation.

The homestead on Dumossa was built from timber cut from the property, and a verandah was specially added for the wedding of Christine McInnes to Mr Lugsdin in 1906, the wedding taking place on the specially decorated verandah under a wedding bell. The minister travelled by sulky 80 miles from Hay, with an overnight stay on the way to rest his horse.

In 1926 the property was bought by a young Victorian dentist, Greg Wells, with his father's assistance. Greg had no background in farming, and brought his experienced farming friend, Walter Tyson, with him to help. They cleared the virgin Mallee and Sefton bush on the property, using a bullock drawn mallee roller.

At that time the Tabbita-Hillston area was being broken up into small properties for cropping and the Commission was sinking bores to provide water. Walter got the contract to move the drilling plant from site to site and to provide fuel. In 1928 he sent for his 17 year old brother Neville to help. Neville had been working since he was thirteen and a half and eventually became Driller's Assistant, until drilling was completed in 1930. The three young bachelors all lived at Dumossa.

Neville was to remain associated with Dumossa for the next 12 years or so, taking on the management of the property as others came and went. Greg Wells went back to dentistry to earn money to keep the farm, Walter bought his own farm, and the rest of the Tyson family - Neville's parents, brothers and sisters - arrived in 1930, and worked at Dumossa for four years before also buying their own farms in the area. In 1936 Neville married May Frances Alpen, and Dumossa became their first home. Although they moved onto their own property at Benerembah 12 months later, Neville continued to manage Dumossa for a few more years until Greg Wells returned. It was sold to the Huxely family in 1942-43.

According to Neville, the homestead, as they found it, was located on a rocky hill, like Scenic Hill, but lower, surrounded by magnificent pines, which had to be cleared. It was an old, comfortable, but not extravagant home - about 20 squares, including the verandahs on three sides. The external walls were post and drop log construction - the verandah rafters all beautiful natural round pine logs. Inside there were 4 bedrooms, lounge, dining room, 2 hallways, bathroom, kitchen and semi-detached storerooms. Most of the rooms had 4 inch varnished tongue and groove ceilings, with floral patterned linoleum on the floors. Double glass doors opened onto the verandahs. The lounge had a large open fireplace, possibly once used for cooking, and the kitchen a wood stove; chimneys were of made of galvanised iron. There was no electricity.

The bathroom had no running water and they brought water in by hand and heated it on the kitchen fireplace. When they were batching they put the bath on the edge of the verandah, so that they could let the water run over the sides - there was no-one around to see!

The house had had a garden, with a 6 foot fence to keep the roos out - but when they came there was nothing in it except a few cactus plants. Neville built it up again with vegetable garden and flowers. There was a row of peppercorn trees on the approach to the house.

The homestead was near the old Mountain Well, a public watering spot for drovers. A horse whim was originally used to draw up water on the double bucket system but by the 1920s it was windmill driven. Many thought it was good drinking water, but Neville thought it was terrible. The homestead got its own water from a dam at the back of the house and also had two rain water tanks.

One of the curiosities which puzzled Neville on Dumossa was the magnificent six-stand shearing shed, with large accommodation for wool handling and storage, yards to match, and a small shearers' hut, dating back before machine shearing. There wasn't a single sheep on the property when he first came, and with an official carrying capacity of 1 sheep to ten acres and only 2,219 acres of land it wasn't large enough to justify shearing facilities of this kind. He presumes that Dumossa must have had a history as a larger pastoral

property in an earlier period.

Dumossa was one of the survivors of the break up of the Hillston-Tabbita area into small wheat farms, most of which proved too small to be viable. Many farmers walked off their land for a payment of 300 pounds and cancellation of their debts, while the remaining properties absorbed their land. Dumossa acquired Ned Kennedy's and Bob King's to bring it up over 4,000 acres. The farmers weren't helped by a series of very bad seasons during the establishment years of the 1920s either. Neville told the story of one farmer who reckoned his crop wasn't too bad - 3 bushels to the acre - one of bloody grasshoppers, one of mallee, and one of wheat! (Robyn Oliver; Arthur Nixon's memoirs; Mr Neville Tyson, who lived in Dumossa Homestead in the 1920s; "Corridors of Gold - History of Goolgowi and District").

Jim Hurst's sulky wheel chair

The remoteness of the area from factory-produced supplies in the early twentieth century, and possibly shortage of cash, encouraged settlers to use their imagination to recycle the materials that were available. Jim Hurst's sulky wheel chair is a fine example of this kind of ingenuity.

This rocking chair is a very ingenious piece of "bush" furniture made from a sulky wheel. It was made by William James (Jim) Hurst, at Carrathool in 1927 and has been in use ever since.

To make the chair, the rim of the sulky wheel has been cut to form the sides and rockers, with some of the spokes left in position to form the legs and supports. The seat and back are filled in with loosely woven wool bale straps. The dull green paint on the chair is said to be original.

Something of the life of the rocking chair's maker can be found in "Brave Beginnings: The History of Carrathool and District". Before World War I, Jim Hurst was already well known in the Carrathool district as a teamster. During war service in France he lost his right arm, was shot in the right hip and gassed - but he never let these handicaps deter him. When he was discharged in 1920 he took up life where he had left off, resuming his horse and wagon to continue the carrying business. It is said that he could yoke his team and load as quickly as most men with two arms.

Between the war years he became one of the most prominent figures in Carrathool. In time he acquired two tray-bodied lorries and added the "Shell" agency to his business. During the 1944 drought the sight of his blue "Inters", loaded with fodder, going almost non-stop carting from the Carrathool Railway to the parched properties brought great relief to many. He was a keen supporter of community organisations and sporting clubs. He followed the football and cricket teams to matches, and when the Catholic Church was badly damaged in a gale in 1944 it was non-Catholic Jim who volunteered to organise the restoration (Robyn Oliver).

3

Irrigation and migration: a multi-cultural heritage

The advent of irrigation was a dramatic development. Irrigation not only brought intensive farming and settlement. Its social, industrial and agricultural changes made Griffith and the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area very different from most of western NSW. A few of the old settlers gave the new irrigation farming a go – mostly without success. Thousands of soldier settlers also came with irrigation, followed by a diverse multi-cultural community.

Irrigation

The full history of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme (MIA), could detail a whole series of events. There were the politics and mechanics of the introduction of the scheme; life in Bagtown and settler's camps; Burley Griffin, and the establishment of the physical structure of the town; a delayed start; and, the experimental nature of the scheme. Both the building of settlements and Burley Griffin's design are covered in a separate chapter. Some of the other aspects of the scheme can only be noted briefly here.

The publicity campaign for the MIA featured images of lush orchards and dairy farms with picturesque farm houses, when the reality was raw. The land was cleared of trees, resulting in either a dustbowl or mud. There were no civic amenities and not even the knowledge of which crops would do well. The farms were completely undeveloped.

The scheme had a delayed start. Development was interrupted by a series of catastrophies: firstly the First World War, then the influenza epidemic, followed by the Depression. It was by the Second World War that the needs for a "food bowl in the South Pacific" provided a launch pad for the scheme.

Intensive farming was developed by trial and error in Griffith, from dairy and stone fruits, to rice, citrus, chickens, onions, lettuce, pickles, and wine. Up to the present day, processing industries in the irrigation area have tended to be the large employers, requiring numerous labourers. The continuing arrival of new waves of migration in the area has therefore been closely tied to such labour requirements. For example Sikhs, often with postgraduate qualifications, arrive to work as pickers. Griffith remains one of the few places in Australia where people with little English and no recognised paper qualifications (or even citizenship) can obtain a start.

There are heritage implications of the above historical processes. First, there are iconic heritage items associated with some of the major industries, including some of the industries that failed. There is also a multi-ethnic population. Ethnic and social communities sometimes have heritage items that in some way symbolise the struggles and achievements of the group.

The first wave of irrigation settlers

In the first wave of irrigation settlers there were four main groups:

- ◆ Soldier settlers – many inexperienced in farming.
- ◆ Farmers from selections – many sold up and moved into the Irrigation Area, hoping for a bonanza.
- ◆ City people – from elsewhere in Australia, who dreamed of a rural lifestyle of apple trees, fat cows and secure income.
- ◆ Migrants from overseas – British initially, but also Italians, Spanish and Germans in the first wave.

The soldier settlers arrived and left in large numbers and are described in detail below. Of the overseas migrants, it is unclear whether Italians constituted the largest group - at least not more than settlers of British origin, but they have constituted the most distinct group. They have remained distinct from most other parts of regional NSW, with the strongest sense of community, and have been conspicuously successful at irrigation farming.

Other early overseas migrants adapted quickly. In this early wave, the Spanish were generally not distinguished from Italians, and the Germans quickly assimilated.

Subsequent waves of irrigation settlers

Subsequently, there arrived more Northern Italians, later outnumbered by Southern Italians. Some Wiradjuri people moved from Darlington Point, joined by itinerant pickers from other Aboriginal reserve communities. In recent decades there were Indians (both Sikhs and Hindus), Turks, Afghans and South Sea Islander communities. By the time this study is written, there may be a fresh wave of people seeking the chance of a new life in Griffith. Together, these groups have produced a multi-ethnic social environment that is unique in rural NSW.

Soldier settlers

Soldier settlers are one of the significant elements in the irrigation story. By 1916 it became obvious that there would be clear dangers in simply turning thousands of returned war veterans out onto the street with no employment. Federal and State governments discussed soldier settlement but realised the major difficulties of lack of finance and the scarcity of Crown Lands. Some land was available in the drier portions of the state, but this would have involved the construction of more railways.

The press and popular agitation demanded that something be done quickly, for there was a widespread fear that failure to provide employment for returned soldiers would result in serious disturbances (Cowper 1987:77).

Among the various ideas put forward to ensure that repatriation and resettlement went smoothly, was that returning men could be settled in large numbers on the Irrigation Areas. Government became involved in planning soldier settlement and had great hopes for its success. In fact, the whole soldier settlement program continued to be restricted by a shortage of Crown lands, and out of 20,000 returned servicemen in NSW who qualified for resettlement, only 4,000 had been settled by 1920.

Conditions were chaotic. Living conditions were crude, the railway from Yanco to Griffith was still under construction, farms had yet to be surveyed, and the township laid out. A hastily prepared scheme was devised to occupy the soldiers until farms were ready for them. Those who actually decided to take up a block were offered barrack-type accommodation at Yenda and Beelbangera where they worked while waiting to take up their farms. These tent towns served as home until they moved onto their blocks, to be provided with loans and a subsistence allowance until their fruit trees came into bearing.

Although conditions were easy at commencement, the interest on loans made during the period of establishment mounted up, so the soldier settler soon found himself saddled with a very large debt. By the early 1920s the interest bill was mounting up on farms that were not productive, and the subsistence payments ran out. The final blow was the collapse of the fruit market, so that by the time settlers were supposed to be paying back their debts, they had no one to sell their produce to. On all but the most productive soldier settler blocks, it became clear that investment costs were too high and that farm sizes were too small. Farm sizes in some areas were increased. A few of these settlers and some of the Australian-born irrigation farmers battled through the Great Depression.

But the early Italians held on harder. Hardship was something they had been born to and lived through -, as had their parents and grandparents. In the early part of the twentieth century a landlord class dominated Italy, and it was the vision of escaping this that sustained the early Italian immigrants. Until the early 1920s, America was the preferred destination. Then immigration restrictions were imposed in America, and Italians began to move to Australia. (Kelly 1988: 119-134, edited excerpts).

Bromfield's Soldier Settler hut

Soldier resettlement was a social experiment that failed for the majority of war veterans. Relics are scarce. Possibly the only Griffith area settler's hut of this period to have survived is "Bromfield's" Soldier Settler Hut, now at Pioneer Park.

It was built in 1919 on Farm 1485, Yenda, by a young British ex-serviceman, Gerald Debois, who had recently immigrated to Australia. Pine logs cleared from his new block were used to build the very basic one roomed hut, which was to be his home for the rest of his life. Photographs of the period collected by Griffith's Genealogical and Historical Society show it to have been very similar to other huts built in the Yenda area by young soldier settlers.

In 1929 Gerald was joined in partnership on his farm by another young Englishman, Bill Bromfield, who inherited the farm and hut when Gerald died in 1931. Bill married in 1934 and extra rooms were gradually added to the hut until the Bromfields bought an additional property and moved into its larger farmhouse in 1942. From then on seasonal workers used the old hut, now part of a farmhouse.

In the late 1970s Eric and Paul Rossetto bought the farm and decided to demolish the old seasonal worker's house to make way for a new development. The discovery of an intact pioneer log hut in the middle

of the house during the course of demolition came as a real surprise, and they offered it to Pioneer Park. Such huts were generally demolished to make way for something more comfortable long before anyone thought of them as history. However ordinary or common such things were, they are now very scarce (Robyn Oliver).

Multi-cultural heritage

Each ethnic community in Griffith has cultural icons, which in some way represent them. These heritage items occur in three strata: the longest established Anglo-Australians form one stratum. They are well represented by the public buildings such as banks and hotels, with cultural icons such as the Pioneer Park and the soldier settler's memorial built decades ago. The Italians were the next major group to become incorporated into the city. Their cultural icons are in the process of being recognised or being built. These include the Italian Cultural Museum, commercial items such as the better-known cafes, and memorial items such as the Lady of Loreto statue and the Capella Della Pietà mausoleum. The third stratum is the icons of groups still trying to get established. The Sikh community has built their own permanent temple, but the Afghans are still attending a temporary mosque housed in rented premises. These places of ethnic expression or nostalgia show that getting established is not just a matter of arriving and obtaining employment. There is much more to making the place part of your own community's mental map.

The most recent "boat people" exemplify the struggles of migration and incorporation. In 2004, refugee immigration was being discussed in the Australian media. Many of Griffith's recent migrants arrived since the 1980s as refugee status applicants looking for fruit-picking work. Some ethnic groups came little prepared for an Australian immigration process that can take up to twelve years. This might include arriving on a visitor's passport; overstaying; applying for refugee status; being assessed; being rejected; appealing; and appealing again through the High Court. It represents half a generation, in which time children grow up in the local area to English language and education. The most recent group has arrived as refugee boat people mostly living under a 'temporary protection' visa (a three-year permit). Arrival in Griffith is only the start of a long story which people will write themselves over the generations that follow. Every Australian group - except the first people, the Aborigines - are recent migrants, as well as pioneers in their own right.

By far the most numerous of the ethnic communities in Griffith are those with Italian ancestry. It is thought that up to three-quarters of the Griffith population has some Italian ancestry, though in 2004, many households were intermarried and no longer clearly identified as Italian. There were also Australian-born settlers and winemakers who created the first big wineries. There were Aboriginal mission descendants and itinerant fruit pickers who decided to stay. Then there are the other ethnic groups who originated overseas, arriving in Griffith as seasonal workers, and settling temporarily or permanently as small communities. Ethnic diversity gives Griffith its distinctive character.

Italians

The image of the Italian immigrant to Griffith as a farming pioneer arriving on a bicycle, or carrying a cardboard suitcase tied with string, is a common one. The pioneer image, once monopolised by Anglo-Australians, is now used both within the Italian community as a part of its own immigration folklore, as well as by others.

While the possessions brought over might have been few, there were customs and traditions that were centuries old and were bred in the bone that also came with them. They also had regional variations, based on the Italian province of origin – most distinctly between the pre Second World War northerners and post war southerners. Initially, men alone came to work. Finding that they could have a rewarding life here, they married and had children. It is these families that have left their mark on the cultural life of Griffith. Customs and traditions from the homeland were a means of making the alien landscape bearable.

Out of economic necessity to make maximum use of all resources, Italian immigrants planted olive trees in their driveways and vegetables around their houses. In an effort to cushion the shocks of life in the new country, they played favourite folk songs at social gatherings, cooked traditional foods and visited friends and family on weekends.

The reason for the success of early Italian settlers was that they had a background in a mixed economy. As well as working in a trade, they produced most of their own food in small, intensively farmed plots. This background, combined with poverty and the expectation that all members of the household would work, maximised their chance to succeed in tough economic conditions. There was no precedent – as there was in Anglo-Australian society - for wives to play ladies, or children to be sent to boarding school.

Immigrants from Italy subtly influenced Australian culture and way of life. This can be judged through the

popularity of Italian foodstuffs, restaurants and luxury items. As well, the contributions of individuals of Italian descent can be seen through the businesses that they have established as well as contributions to the cultural life of the community, for example, the annual the Wine and Food Festival.

Customs and traditions were rooted in the family, whether nuclear or extended, as well as in institutions and organisations in the community. Customary practices and traditions involved not only the nuclear family but also the *paesani* [townspeople]. Particularly when there were no close relatives, people from the home town formed an extended family. They gathered together for companionship and also to reproduce the customs and traditions of home. Social gatherings cushioned the loneliness and the strangeness of the life where everything was alien—landscape, weather, plants, language, food, religion, ways of relating to others and the workplace.

The motivation for the gatherings were secular, sacred or both. The celebration of marriages, births, name days, anniversaries and birthdays provided a reason to get together. Food was the vehicle for social interaction. Many of the customs and traditions of the Italian community revolve around seasonal religious festivals, all of which had their prescribed foods and rituals. Whether families are church going or not, if they connect with their Italian roots, then, they make foods associated with these festivals.

The carriers of these traditions were and remain the elders—the grandparents. They were also the keepers of memories and tellers of tales who were able to recount all of the stories from the home village and their arrival in Australia. They kept track of the genealogy and who was related to whom. On first meeting, the grandparent would quickly size you up and say, "Ah, you are so-and-so's daughter or son." Individual identity was rooted in the family network.

Italian Christmas was showcased with a *presepio* (nativity scene) in the church and an image of the *befana* (the good witch who is the Santa Claus equivalent in Italian Christmas celebrations).

Each region of Italy has its own ways of preparing food for feast days and holidays and some of these traditions were kept. Grapes were grown imported for wine making. Women competed to produce the best possible versions of recipes handed down from mother to daughter. There were special Easter breads and a whole range of baked goods for Christmas as well as the fish dishes, which are the basis of the Christmas Eve meal when meat is not eaten.

The love of the land and gardening was another aspect of cultural life from the home. Most Italians in Griffith became market gardeners. As in other Australian cities the growing conditions were markedly different from Italy, but even in the suburbs, keen gardeners viewed it as a challenge. In suburban areas, an Italian household was recognisable by the luxuriant garden.

Migrant communities have more than one identity. Members of that community are as diverse in their homeland, as Anglo-Australians are in Australia. However, the neutral label of "migrants," suggests this kind of simple view, as do the negative labels of "WOP," "dago," "DPs," etc." Because many migrants took on labouring jobs, they became identified with the working class whether or not this fit their background. While many migrants were *bracciante* [labourers], even from the earliest period of immigration there were craftsmen, who had significant standing in their communities in Italy, as well as small tradespeople.

The second wave of Italian immigration, after the end of the Second World War, saw a proliferation of Italian products in Australia. Initially, small shopkeepers began to import the goods that the recent migrants could not do without. Eventually, large wholesalers distributed these products regionally and nationally. Homegrown Australian companies owned by immigrants and their descendants began to produce the pasta, cheeses, salamis and prosciuttos (cured hams) so much in demand.

This is a marked contrast to the early 1960s when Australian schoolchildren turned up their noses at "smelly" sandwiches. Today, what grocery store doesn't have on sale Italian salami, provolone, etc.? Italian food, as all ethnic food, is now the rage evidenced by gourmet magazine recipes and television cooking programs.

Irrigation and Italian migration

Irrigation Areas created in the region were centred at Leeton, Griffith and at Coleambally, south of the Murrumbidgee. After the creation of irrigation, and during post Second World War mass migration era, many Italians came to Griffith. Emigration in various forms had been one answer to the problems of poverty and unemployment in twentieth century Italy.

During the nineteenth century and early in the twentieth, the government tried to favour British free-settler migrants (this had been a main element in the Immigration Restriction Act of 1901 or "White Australia Policy").

In the years immediately after the First World War there was a drive to attract as many British immigrants as possible as a way of quelling fears that the Australian population would be too small to adequately defend

itself against invasion. When this proved less successful than was hoped, the government established a far more "open door" policy for other Europeans. When the USA placed very heavy restrictions on their intake of Italian migrants in 1921, the result for Australia was a much higher influx of Italian immigrants.

The rise of fascism in Italy and mass unemployment in Australia the Great Depression of the 1930s caused the government to restrict Italian immigrants, who needed a sponsor or an agreed sum of money to settle in Australia.

The Second World War saw the cessation of immigration and the internment of Italian men in prisoner of war (POW) camps. Hostilities raged on the street and the government restricted Italian commercial enterprise and community organisations on many levels. But after the war, government undertook to attract European immigrants, signing an agreement with Italy in 1951 in which Australia promised to guarantee employment to Italian migrants for two years.

During the post Second World War mass migration era, some major Australian employers systematically recruited Italian men. The Snowy River Irrigation scheme was the best-known example. This brought many European migrant workers into Australia, some of whom moved on to Griffith.

In an era of mass emigration by young, single men, women in Italian villages were often left with the problem of finding a suitable partner. One solution was to uproot and marry a *paesano* already living in another country. It was often not just the prospect of marriage but hope for a better quality of life that attracted women to this arrangement. It was unfeasible for many grooms to make the trip back to Italy for a wedding. It was also regarded as unacceptable for young unmarried women to emigrate alone. This situation resulted in proxy marriages for Italian couples, particularly in the 1950s and 1960s. In Italy women would be married in the presence of a representative for her husband (often a brother) and a *festa* would follow. On arrival in Australia, another celebration often took place. Many Italian women came to live in Australia this way (Pesman 1998:4-6 edited excerpts).

Griffith as a centre of Italian migration

Griffith is still one of the six major centres of Italian-born settlement in NSW, the others being Sydney, Newcastle, Wollongong, Queanbeyan and Lismore (Pesman 1998:1). Italian immigrants have contributed in many ways to the cultural landscape of Griffith.

The earliest record of Italians living in the Griffith area is 1913 when three Italian miners came from Broken Hill. They were Enrico Lucca, Luigi Gulielmini and Francesco Bicego. Not long after Angelo Manera, Guiseppe Cunial, the Baltieri and Bonomi families joined them. These in turn were followed by Valentin Cecco and Girolamo Vardanega in 1917.

From only three immigrants of Italian background in 1913, the Italian community has flourished to the present day. Most came as part of migration chains, in the footsteps of their husband, parents or *paesani*.

The outbreak of war in 1914 started an exodus of Italian miners from Broken Hill, as well as from Burrinjuck Dam construction camps. By 1921 there were thirty-three Italians in Griffith, which had increased to about two thousand by the late 1940s.

The Ceccato Stove - symbol of achievement

A 1928 Metters' Early Kooka stove was placed in Taylor's Store at Pioneer Park, and then was the first exhibit item to go into the new Italian Cultural Museum. Vandals removed its door, so now it is not even complete. Yet it is important - not as a piece kitchen technology - but as a symbol of achievement for its donor, Elizabetta Ceccato, one of Griffith's earliest Italian settlers. She cherished it and polished its chrome it during its working life, and particularly wished it to come to Pioneer Park after her death.

Elizabetta arrived in Griffith in 1918, from Italy via Broken Hill, to join her husband, Giovanni Ceccato, on Farm 219, Hanwood - on the boundaries of Bagtown. They were the first settlers from the Treviso Province and were to remain here for the rest of their lives. For Giovanni it was the end of a peripatetic lifestyle.

From the age of ten, in 1892, to the age of 28, he followed his father and brothers to Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, California, Alaska and the Canadian Klondyke, working to support the family back in Italy and probably seeking fame and fortune, with intermittent returns to the homeland. In 1910 he and a friend returned to Italy to marry their sweethearts, but in 1912 Giovanni was off again to Australia and the mines of Broken Hill, where Elizabetta and their eldest child joined him in 1914. His children's names bear witness to these travels - Alaska, Alasko, Florida - even Alfonso, thought to have been the name of a ship travelled on.

By the time Elizabetta, now with four children, arrived in Hanwood, Giovanni had planted the previously undeveloped farm with a variety of fruit trees. The family's early years there were tough. Although they had been able to afford to purchase their own farm, this meant that what little support was offered to assisted

settlers was unavailable to them. Elizabetta looked after the yet-to-be-fruitful trees, with a part time assistant, while Giovanni earned their living as a bricklayer in town. They lived in a galvanised iron shed with dirt floor.

The death of the then baby of the family of gastro enteritis in 1919 is symptomatic of the conditions under which they lived and is emblazoned on their memories - daughter Licia, who was not born until 1928, could describe it graphically. It was late summer - the sun was pinging on the tin roof - Elizabetta had a terrible toothache and the baby in his box cot had uncontrollable diarrhoea. He kept getting weaker and Elizabetta ran out of rags to clean up the mess. Finally when the baby's eyes began to turn back, she picked him up and began to run across the paddocks towards Dr Watkins surgery near the C.S.I.R.O., calling for help in what little English she could muster, but there was no-one to hear. The baby died in her arms on her way there.

In time, however, the family's policy of growing a bit of everything to hedge their bets began to pay off. In 1923 they were able to build a cement rendered house. Giovanni made his own mould for the concrete cavity bricks, and Elizabetta and eldest daughter, Alaska, helped him make them. In 1927 they purchased a new Chevrolet truck, the first Italian family to do so. It wasn't just a work vehicle, but also allowed more social contact, including occasional picnic trips to the river at Darlington Point, with their own and other families perched on boxes on the back. A telephone came around the same time, at first through the Hanwood exchange, and in 1932, a radio - Licia recalls the radio room full of people listening to coverage of the opening of the Harbour Bridge.

The Metters' Kooka stove was bought second hand in 1932-33, to sit alongside the earlier wood stove - a source of personal pride for Elizabetta and a terrific cooker of baked potatoes.

Since the subject of food was raised, I asked Licia about other food they ate as a child. She recalled pasta being forced by a screw through holes at the end of a three-foot long brass tube and hung on bamboo poles to dry. While they only ate a full pasta meal once a month or so, the pasta appeared daily in the soup her mother made from shin of beef and vegetables. The soup was flavoured with tomato concentrate, also made on the farm. The tomatoes went through a home made mincer, from which the juice was collected, boiled, cooled, strained and left in the sun to turn into a stiff paste. It was stored in Agee jars with a little olive oil on top to keep the air out and used to flavour lots of dishes. Ricotta was made with the last of the whey, after the butter and cheese.

Possibly one of the ironies of life for the Ceccatos, when things were at their most difficult in the late 1910s and into the 20s, was that their "success" attracted a chain of other immigrants from the Treviso area to their doorstep. As Licia explained it, her mother was writing back home telling the family everything was "fine", so as not to worry them. The letters were passed around and young men looking for work noted down the address, named Giovanni as their Australian referree, and arrived unexpectedly at the tin shed home looking for work. Since the men had no money and nowhere else to go, the Ceccatos let them stay and offered what help they could until they found their feet.

All but one of the Elizabetta and Giovanni Ceccato's nine surviving children remained in Griffith, to become leading members of the community; their drive and initiative has been passed onto further generations. When people look at the stove in Taylor's store, I would like them to see beyond the chrome and enamel to the human struggle behind it, fought not just by the Ceccatos, but typical of so many of the irrigation pioneers (Robyn Oliver).

Northern Italian migration

The first migration waves were from the Veneto region, Province of Treviso, more specifically from the Comunita Pedemontana del Grappa, inland of Venice and at the foot of the Dolomite Mountains, between the Brenta and Piave rivers. Many Griffith families have their origins in the eight small villages of Possagno, Crespano, Cavaso del tomba, Castelvucco, Paderno del Grappa, Fonte or Burso del Grappa. Griffith has an active sister city relationship with the Comunita, exchanging civic visits every couple of years. Wade High School Italian teacher Margaret Graham, takes a group of students to the Comunita almost every year - where they are hosted as guests. Veneto is now one of the wealthiest parts of Europe.

The situation at the beginning of the twentieth century was very different from today. The Comunita was experiencing great poverty. Crespano was the administrative centre for the Pedemontana del Grappa - core source of northern Italian migration.

This country town, with a population of about 4000, experienced great prosperity to about the middle of the eighteenth century, becoming a city of great beauty. Then the once prosperous wool and silk industries declined with the failure of Venice as the great trade centre of Europe. The region suffered badly during the Napoleonic wars as well as during the Austrian occupation that followed. The collapse of the rural sector in 1880-6 brought the local economy to a critical point. Over the first two decades of the twentieth century,

Crespano was to see the most difficult and tragic period of its history. It was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting of the First World War. An epidemic of the illness *pellagra* was spreading (Torresan 1995). Bishop Pellizzo wrote a graphic description of the poverty in which the inhabitants of Crespano lived at that time:

Their life is harsh, marked by hard work on an unproductive land which yields only some wheat and corn, far too insufficient to support a family. Private property consists of small plots of land, which are worked as a family concern. Often the floor of their houses is bare earth. Bare tiled roofs and plain wooden shutters hardly protect them from the rigours of winter's cold. (Bishop Pellizzo, quoted in Torresan 1995:10, edited).

The final blow came in June 1923 when the biggest employer in the town, the local wool mill closed its doors. For many, their grinding poverty and bleak future made migration a necessary option. It marked the beginning of a large exodus of people. By the Second World War, three quarters of those of Italian extraction in Griffith were northerners.

Many Italian settlers took up 5 acres of rented land, growing vegetables between their trees or vines, while waiting for them to bear. They lived in shacks and worked often from daylight till dark putting together the money needed to repay the cost of their fare (and that of their wives), and to buy the farm that represented their goal.

Santo Salvestro is a typical example. Santo was a bricklayer who arrived from Cavaso in 1924 to join two of his brothers who were already in Australia. Two years after arriving he took up his own farm and married a girl from his hometown of Cavaso. His labouring in road construction paid off the farm. Chain migration from the area around Cavaso brought that there were always people who found their way to the row of huts on Santo's farm, while they accumulated money enough to buy their own farm (Kelly 1988: 165-179, edited excerpts).

Valentino Giovanni (Jack) Ceccato was another irrigation pioneer. His son Peter recalled how his father first helped people arriving from his region. Jack was obtaining building contract work through the Commission, and the Italian Consul in Sydney thought that there was employment in Griffith. The Commission's advertising certainly suggested limitless opportunity. Then more and more Italians began arriving from other provinces, directed to Jack Ceccato by the Italian Consul. By the start of the Depression there were about thirty or forty people camped on the Ceccato property.

Jack Ceccato was a recent migrant himself, so he knew first hand what it was like to arrive with no language and no contacts. As his building business only required a gang of six men, he employed them in rotation, so that everyone had a chance of working a week and earning some pay. Eventually, though, the stream of arrivals became too much to cope with, and Jack travelled to Sydney to inform the Consul of the situation (oral source, Peter Ceccato).

Angelo Manera's story is told by students of Griffith High (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au). Angelo was born in Possagno, Treviso, Italy (Northern Italy) in April 1886. He married and had two children. In 1913 he left his family and his country to come to Australia. After working at Broken Hill as a bricklayer, he joined the allies during World War I. Then at the end of the war he returned to Australia and was granted a farm with his friend Girolamo Vardanega - Farm 451 Yoogali, consisting of 28 acres. Later, in 1923, Paolina Manera (his wife) and his two children came to live in the tin and bag shack that Angelo had built.

In the early days Paolina would take in boarders, paesani (fellow countrymen) who were also new to Australia. One of these families was the Pastega family who were also from Possagno in Italy.

Maria Salvestrin (nee Manera), Angelo's daughter, recalled these things about 'the early days':

Our food was mainly home grown vegetables and we had our own chickens, cow and pig. I had no schooling as I had to help mother. One of the most exciting times of our childhood was when the ice cream man called, in a horse and cart with a white cover, ringing a bell to announce his arrival. We were allowed to buy penny ice creams. The ice cream man was Mr Pete. When we went to town with our Mother in a horse and sulky, the great treat was boiled lollies and a bag of 'broken' biscuits.

My parents, like a number of other Italian families, had a bocce court, and friends from the same area of Italy would come over and play at weekends. This was one of the main entertainments. (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

Relations between Anglo-Australians and Italians were very good until the outbreak of the Second World War, when Italians began to be seen as an enemy group. Maria remembered this as a difficult period:

It was very hard in those early years. Italians were abused and insulted by Australians and this was very hard to bear because we harmed nobody - we just worked and looked after our own families. My sisters were even stoned walking home from Yoogali School (Maria Salvestrin).

During the 1930s Depression, world prices collapsed and fruit was left to rot because no one wanted it. Even before the Depression, crop failures were common. The early crops were so experimental – it was too hot for the dairy industry. Peaches, when they fruited, were too soft for transportation to market. The tobacco

industry failed to produce competitive quality. Taking on other work and frugal savings habits enabled Italian settlers to survive. Australian-born irrigation farmers - many of whom were soldier settlers with no farming background and with war injuries – walked off their land or sold it for less than the cost of the improvements they had made. Most were broke and retreated to the cities. For the Italian farmers, whose whole extended family and community support networks were confined to the area, leaving was not an option. It was then that they pooled their resources to buy out Australian-born farmers at bedrock prices. By 1929 the Italians held 67 small farms, ten years later they held 230. By 1970 they held over 500 farms, and by 2003 had bought up almost all the irrigated farms.

Successful crops were almost discovered by accident. Grapes were originally intended for the table only. Someone saw rice growing on similar land in California and brought back a bag. Citrus trees were not in the original plans for the irrigation area. It took most of the twentieth century to make these accidental discoveries and develop a local economy based on them.

Towards the end of the Second World War, some of the Italians held overseas as POWs were shipped to Australia to work on farms. After serving their time and being repatriated to Italy, a few returned to Australia and settled in Griffith. Other Italian POWs had no Australian connection but came to make a better life.

Southern Italian migration

The second migration wave occurred mainly after the Second World War from Calabria.

Calabria is the tip of the Italian peninsula divided from Sicily by the Strait of Messina. Geographically, Calabria has its own distinct character, due to its relatively isolated position from the rest of Italy. The population of this region is slightly over two million, with a population density lower than the Italian national average. Each of the three Calabrian sub-dialects is distinctive to its province. The standard of living is much lower than the national average.

The per capita income is the lowest of any region for a variety of reasons, including its isolation from the rest of Italy, and economic exploitation carried out under the various rulers of Southern Italy. Agriculture is still important to the region, characterised by small proprietors and subsistence farming in the interior. Calabria is famous for its olives, citrus fruit and wine grapes. The poor industrial sector has factories processing agricultural products (essences, oil), together with several paper mills, and textile manufacturers (www.agmtravel.com).

Calabria's capital city, Reggio di Calabria, is a city with ancient origins, founded by Greek settlers in the 8th century BC. It was joined to Italy in 1860. In 1908, a dreadful earthquake destroyed Reggio di Calabria. Practically all the monuments in the city were totally destroyed. Nevertheless, some notable Greek and Roman ruins exist such as Lungomare Matteotti (the promenade), described by D'Annunzio as 'the most beautiful kilometre in Italy' (www.agmtravel.com). These are good reasons for Italian migrants to recall the importance of their history through "ethnic nostalgic" architecture of Griffith, incorporating classical statuary, columns and archways.

Large-scale emigration abroad as well as to Northern Italy began to diminish only in the 1970s and has had a lasting effect in the region. Over the twentieth century nearly a million people left Calabria. There are also many Griffith Italians from the Abruzzo Region – a scenic but agriculturally poor province west of Rome in central Italy.

The movement of Italians into large farms in Griffith really began only in the 1960s. "Tribal" distinctions between the Veneto and Calabrese communities are becoming less distinct through intermarriage between Italian descendants. Italians have now branched out into the business and professional class (Kelly 1988).

Particularly over the last thirty years, the largest wineries distinct to Griffith (apart from McWilliams and Penfolds) are all Italian family businesses.

The future of the Griffith Italian community

Members of immigrant communities, when they meet, wonder aloud whether they have "made it." Do they have professionals, business people, politicians, judges, artists, philanthropists—all of those people who comprise the intelligentsia and power brokers. In terms of Griffith's Italian community, there is a range of such individuals. If, as Ezra Pound said, poets and artists are the "antenna of the race," then, Griffith's Italian community has pioneers who provide a heightened sense as people of Italian descent who have lived in this place for one or many generations, and have left their mark.

Italians have a strong belief in the value of higher education. This was particularly true for Italian immigrants, some of whom realised that to move out of the labouring class, they needed to ensure that their children received as much education as possible. The first generation of Italian children stayed on the farm, because continuity of the farm and business was very important to Italian families. Gradually, though,

education began to be viewed as an investment in the future, though this was more true of boys than girls, and of North rather than South. By the 1960s, while the first generation and grown-up children coming from Italy worked long hours and even several jobs, some of their children were being encouraged to study to join the professions—teaching, law, medicine, pharmacy. The post-war immigrants are very proud of their first generation of professionals.

An aspect of the maturation and entrenchment of Italian immigrants in Griffith was their upward mobility—their ability to become professionals and to become a part of the mainstream. Families encouraged further education and entry into the professions. A strong work ethic and emphasis on family and family values characterised the Italian community. The working class roots had to be left behind and, in many cases, those other aspects of identity, language, culture and, in some cases, religion. Clubs, businesses and the church became the means of preserving aspects of the Italian culture that the immigrants valued and which helped to define them in a strange land. They also became a means of entrenching the community and giving it influence.

Italian social clubs are important to the community. But it is now almost 100 years since the beginning of immigration from Italy into Griffith, and the need for the clubs is probably starting to be questioned. Italians are a well-established community in Griffith and issues of discrimination rarely surface.

As a migrant community becomes integrated, those activities that brought its members together for mutual aid, protection and self-identification and affirmation are no longer necessary. New ways of operating need to be found. It is never advisable to write off an organisation simply because, at one point in its history, it suffers from “mission fatigue.” This is why the Italian connection with clubs and church festivals should be fostered.

Italians are a sociable, company-loving people, but for immigrant communities, there is another reason for seeking the company of compatriots. To be a stranger in a foreign land was a daunting experience. There was the necessity to earn a living, which was difficult enough, but there was also the barrier of language. Ties of kinship and also of community and region, became very important in immigrant communities across Australia. This was also true in Italy where unification at the end of the 19th century was still so recent that, for many, even today, the ties of region are more important than national ties. Many Italians, probably most, did not speak a common language – they spoke regional dialects, now better preserved in Australia than they are in Italy. This was especially a barrier between North and South.

What many post Second World War immigrants from the north had in common was their experience as “Partisans” – guerilla opponents of the Nazi regime. The Alpini club is especially strong in Griffith, as Veneto suffered badly under the Germans during the First World War and the population was actively anti-Mussolini. There are at least two factors in the North/South divide. One is a general Northern prejudice against the “lazy” or “corrupt” South. The other is rising prosperity in the post Second World War period, leading Northerners to regard Southerners as getting an easy ride on the foundation of their earlier struggles (the common derogatory term used in this context is *terroni*).

The war-time experience of internment and cultural assimilation policy had, I believe, a long-term impact on Griffith’s Italian community. There was a real turning away from the Italian language and roots because Italian-Australians had been conditioned to consider these activities as “un-Australian.” When new immigrants from southern Italy began to arrive in Griffith in the 1950s, the early northern Italian irrigation pioneers had largely assimilated. The result appears to have been a divide between the Northern Italian “founding families” and the new immigrants from the South. With the growth of a new, Australian-born generation, the divide is fading.

Tourism showcases the traditional as well as the multicultural theme of Griffith. Though, as the remaining survivors of the 1960s-70s immigration die, that first-hand link to Italy will be gone. The question for the Italian community is how to re-fashion community organisations including the church so that they remain relevant to new generations of Australians with Italian ancestry. The Government of Italy’s promotion of the re-acquisition of Italian citizenship and the growing power of the European Economic Community has made Italy not only a family tourism destination but also a place of work for those fluent in Italian. As globalisation continues, Italian language and roots will make Italian ancestry more and more desirable and marketable.

Anglo-Australians

Though the host community may not strictly be classified as an ethnic group, the other groups have often viewed them as such. The soldier settlement story was told earlier in this chapter. While many of the soldier settlers left the district, up to about the Second World War, Anglo-Australians ran the MIA. They owned most shops and businesses, controlled local government, provided teachers, made up the bureaucracy,

controlled the major industries and had their own clubs, pubs and sporting teams. Much of this involvement is described in the following chapters.

There were also Australian-born irrigation farmers, involved in rice and fruit growing. Poultry production and processing were then developed after the Second World War. The following section is devoted to Australian winemaking families in Griffith as a complement to the equally famous Italian winemakers. Given the strength of Italian winemaking in Griffith, it is perhaps surprising that the role of Australian-born winemakers has also had a lasting influence in the region.

McWilliams Winery

McWilliams Winery is a significant example of an early and ongoing Anglo-Australian success in Griffith. A poster describing the release of irrigation farms caught the attention of John James McWilliam, who came with his eldest son Jack in 1913 from their vineyard in Junee. On arrival they consulted the resident Dept. of Agriculture adviser, who expressed doubts about the possibility of growing wine grapes. J.J. McWilliam later wrote that if one planted a six-inch nail in such soil, it would grow into a crowbar. He set up his son Jack with a hundred acres at Hanwood and planted 36,000 cuttings from Junee the same year.

As on other holdings, conditions were primitive at the start. Jack put up a tent as an office and slept in an iron shed with the hired hand and his family. Within a few years a six-roomed hut was built.

But the railway line did not go through Hanwood, but instead the Yanco/Leeton/Griffith/Hillston line reached Griffith in 1916. A second winery was built by another son, Doug, on three acres at Yenda, to access this line. Around 1920 a branch line was built between the Yenda Producers Sheds and McWilliams winery. It was used to load not only wine, but also cases of rockmelons and rice from the Yenda Rice Mill. The branch line was very busy over the 1950s and 1960s.

The tree plantings at Yenda winery are a local landmark. Greg McWilliam said that his grandfather Doug obtained the palm trees, locally known as Petticoat Palms, from the Viticultural Nursery and planted them about 1920. Greg said his grandfather was surprised that they grew so tall.

Many farms have old palm trees at their entrances. These Washingtonian Palms (commonly grown in California in places such as Palm Springs) are very important as markers of original farms, and should be protected, or where they make a contribution to the street, listed. Many of the early willow plantings also serve as boundary markers.

As in other early success stories, this one can be partly explained by two factors: work ethic and extended family. From the beginning, each of the four sons of J.J. McWilliam, and their sons in turn, entered the family corporation, and remained there throughout their lives. Another businessman, Henry Francis Jones (Beelbangera winery), hired Leo Buring, who was to become a major figure in Australian winemaking. (Kelly 1988: 190-196, edited excerpts).

An interesting relic from the early period is the Doradillo Vine growing at the Griffith Centre for Irrigated Agriculture. The vine was first planted in one of McWilliam's vineyards in 1913 - and one of the first grapevines planted in the Griffith area - where it remained productive until the 1960s. The planting was bulldozed and the vine was left exposed for 6 weeks. Then it was salvaged from the McWilliam's Hanwood vineyard and planted in its present position. It has been in continuous grape production ever since (P. J. Mylrea).

Penfold Wines expansion into Griffith, and the 1934 frost

Attracted by McWilliams success and by the possibilities of arranging grower contracts, Frank Penfold Hyland visited the area during the First World War and, in the Hanwood Hall, addressed young men who had just returned from the war, advising them to take up viticulture in the area. Penfolds, he said, were prepared to build a modern winery at Griffith to process grapes, and would help in any way to establish the culture of the vine in the district. In earnest of the Company's good faith he offered an eight years' contract to growers for all grapes produced, at a minimum of £8 a ton. His faith in the venture was amply demonstrated by his readiness to sink a large sum in the building of a winery and distillery. This was in an area where wine grapes

had not as yet been grown, and where irrigation methods would be used, without the advantage of previous experience, in the production of grapes.

The task of organising growers, many of whom knew nothing about vine culture, fell to Mr. H. E. Laffer, who later became overseas representative in London of the Australian Wine Marketing Board. Suitable types of vine had to be found, and a great deal of preparatory work had to be done.

Penfolds sent to Griffith vine cuttings from their vineyards elsewhere in Australia, and soon about 300 settlers were growing wine grapes.

At the time, the Irrigation Commission would not permit any private enterprise to operate in the area but the Government, realising the value to the grower of the proposed Penfold plant, passed special legislation to enable the winery to be built. The plans were prepared under the expert supervision of Leslie Penfold Hyland, whose experience in the lay out and conduct of large wineries was invaluable.

The first vintage at Griffith winery was made in 1921, and Mr. A. Day, of Farm 131, Hanwood, claims to be the first settler in the Irrigation Area to have delivered a load of grapes over the weighbridge.

In spite of the vintners' efforts to keep pace with the prolific increases in vine culture the soldiers' areas reached full production between 1922 and 1924, and the inevitable happened.

There was a glut of grapes, causing prices to fall. The most popular variety of grape in these settled areas was the Doradilla, a type used for the distillation of spirit, which had all the virtues of hardiness, drought resistance and prolific bearing.

The Government overcame the crisis by reducing the Duty on rectifying spirit made from Doradilla grapes which was used for fortifying wines, and granting a bounty on fortified wines exported from the country. Thus over production difficulties were met.

Penfolds went through a period of great expansion after the First World War. By 1929 the Griffith wine-growing area had advanced so rapidly that it was necessary to extend the winery and distillery buildings, and this was done in time for the 1930 vintage. But Penfolds eight-year grower contracts, offered in 1922, were not renewed in a period that coincided with the Depression.

1933 was a bumper season in the Barossa valley wineries and, with the glut in production, the price of grapes fell from between £8 and £10 a ton to £3. At the end of the next year the growers on the irrigation areas at Griffith in New South Wales were experiencing troubles of a very different nature. A heavy frost on 22nd November, 1934, severely damaged the vines and the area suffered the worst setback in its grape growing history. The 1935 vintage harvest yielded only 4,754 tons of grapes. By the next year, however, they had recovered and production had again outstripped the capacity of the winery and distillery, making further extensions necessary (Eva Keane; www.nicks.com.au).

Spanish

The small community of people originating from Spain is made up both of those who arrived in recent years as well as descendants of early settlers. There was no chain migration (as there was with the Italians) from specific towns or villages.

The earliest to arrive were the Gras brothers in 1916. The eldest brother, Juan, worked on a Cuban tobacco plantation before travelling to Australia to cut cane and grow vegetables. He then brought his brothers Francisco and Sigismundo (with his son Jaime) out and they all moved to the new Irrigation Area. Juan and Francisco returned to Spain briefly in the 1920s to marry childhood girlfriends. Sigismundo - called Peter - obtained grape cuttings from McWilliams and set up as a grape grower, retiring to Spain in the 1950s. Jaime - called Charlie - stayed in the same house returning to Farm 15 that he occupied with his father (Kelly 1988: 179-181, edited excerpts).

Of the early wave of irrigation settlers, the Spanish were generally not distinguished from Italians, and did not form a separate community.

Germans

The first wave of irrigation settlers contained Germans. Locally, they assimilated quickly. Because of Germany's involvement in both world wars, and because of wartime internment in Australia, German descent has become one of the "hidden histories" of the region. People who had lived in Griffith all their lives said they didn't know any Germans. Yet the list of local family names – many of them leading Griffith families, such as the Kubanks – indicate German descent. While these families never identified as German, there was some sense of community between them. Many had come via German communities in South Australia.

Sikhs

The first Sikh to come to Griffith as an itinerant fruit picker was Vishan Singh Desu in 1974. He returned to Melbourne and spread the word. As a result, the following year a handful of Sikhs came from the city to pick up seasonal work. For illegal immigrants who had overstayed their visas, the cash in hand fruit picking was a good income supplement. Most of this group eventually became legal permanent residents.

By the late 1970s the word had spread among the Sikh community. Some came from North Queensland for seasonal work. A few stayed on between seasons and were joined by family and friends.

Another group was the Sikhs from Woolgoolga, whose Indian community goes back to the nineteenth century. The Sikh writer and poet Ajit Singh Rahi arrived in Australia in 1979 and persuaded some fellow Sikhs from Woolgoolga to come to pick grapes at Griffith.

Like other ethnic groups in Griffith, Sikhs have maintained their ethnic identity through distinctive religious beliefs and practices, dietary customs, marriage patterns and dress. (Kelly 1988: 181-183, edited excerpts).

By 2004 there were several hundred Sikh families. Some had come from India as business people, bringing friends and relatives as skilled migration category employees of Sikh businesses. Others had arrived as fruit pickers on visitor visas. The former Coronation Hall is now the Sikh Temple.

Turks

Turkish migrants and refugees began arriving into Griffith in 1998. Many have moved to Griffith looking for employment opportunities, with many migrants attracted to the way of life in Griffith. Most Turkish migrants who moved into the area came from villages or borders of Turkey, where farming is the way of life.

Early on, a pattern developed of Turkish extended family picking groups, though they were less involved in land purchase and longer term settlement than the Italians.

Many of the newly arrived migrants find life in the big cities daunting, too similar to cities of Turkey, where life is fast and crowded. This community prefers the slow, easy-paced life in Griffith. Many of these people are used to the rural regions and adapting to seasonal picking and labouring work has not been difficult.

The Turkish Community bring with them their skills and experience in farming benefiting the farmers they work for. They have been known to be hard workers and will take up any opportunity to work so as to assist their families here and overseas financially. Most of these people would otherwise be disadvantaged in their own country. Therefore Griffith offers excellent prospective opportunities for these new migrants.

Hindus

Hindus, also from India like the majority of Sikh arrivals, are a smaller group. In 1985 Mr Mohan (Ronald) Singh arrived in Griffith. He is the first Hindu worshiper to live in Griffith and is also one of the oldest members of the Sikh community. Over the years, Mr Mohan Singh and members of the Sikh community assisted a handful of other Hindu families to settle into the Griffith area. These were families from the business sector of India who found the farming life quite unfamiliar. However, through guidance and support from friends and the Sikh Community, they have been able to adapt to Griffith life. They also derive support and encouragement from the large Hindu community in Sydney.

Hindu families now do agricultural work as well as sharing their expertise in business with local farmers. In 2004 there were about five Hindu families in Griffith.

Afghans

People from Afghanistan began arriving in Griffith in the year 2000. By 2004 there were over three hundred single men, or men on their own. The Bartters poultry group employed most. There were only about six families. The Afghan community are refugees, many were forced to leave families and loved ones behind when they fled Afghanistan to seek asylum in Australia due to political, or religious upheaval in Afghanistan.

Many of these people are granted temporary refugee status for a period of up to three years with the opportunity to extend. Together with the Turkish and the Fijian Indian communities, the Afghans attend the Kotku Mosque.

The families, however, came to Griffith from Sydney and Melbourne after being granted refugee status. They were allowed to remain in Australia on a permanent basis. There are also families who are assessed after three years of temporary residency for their eligibility to extend their stay. All of the Afghanistan Community here in Griffith is Hazara.

Locally known as “The Boat People”, the Afghan Community have come from different regions in Afghanistan. Most are from Kabul, others from the Ghazni Province, a very cold region.

The Hazara people in Griffith have worked in all areas from farming, truck drivers, business, and teachers. They all have one thing in common: they love the way of life in Griffith. They have adapted to the climate of Griffith very well, and enjoy the hospitality of the community of Griffith.

The Hazara people in Griffith are known for being hard workers, for their honesty, hospitality, peaceful nature and close kinship links. Their religion plays a major part in their way of life, and they place great importance on their children’s education. All of the Afghanistan Community in Griffith are Muslim (Shiite sect). This group is but one of the new emerging communities (Source: Dianne Erika, Multicultural Centre).

Pacific Island Communities

These communities have been arriving mainly in the last ten years. A shared experience with many of them is arriving via New Zealand. Many of them (except for the Fijian Indians, who are Muslims) worship with small community-based Christian denominations.

Fijians

Semi Ketewai was the first Fijian to arrive in Griffith in 1988. His brother Roko followed him. The families of these young men later followed. Word then spread to Fijian communities overseas and other states of Australia about the employment opportunities in Griffith.

The Fijians are generous, friendly, and easygoing people who adapted to the climate and way of life in Griffith with ease. Daily life in Fiji, as with all the Pacific Islands, is relaxed and casual. Some call it the Pacific way. There are around fifty families in Griffith, with a few scattered in the outskirts of Griffith.

Griffith has painted a picture of opportunities for the Fijian Community, not only is work readily available in Griffith but it also provided a familiar environment to these people. Traditional values passed on to children in Griffith are similar to those of their own homeland.

Griffith has provided the Fijian people with a sense of stability because it allows extended families to keep in close contact. It allows them to teach their children about the importance of hard work, respecting the elders and even more importantly, the values of the ancestors. The regular Fijian greeting - “Bula”, pronounced Mboola and meaning “health”, is often heard on the streets of Griffith.

Tongans

This is the largest of the Pacific Island communities in Griffith. The first Tongan families arrived in Griffith in 1979 from other states of Australia. In an experience familiar to other Pacific Islanders in the region, word spread around Australia and overseas about the opportunities of Griffith.

People from Tongan often travel to Griffith to visit families and to work. Many decide to remain and make their home in Griffith; others found it too slow in comparison to life in the bigger cities. In 1981 to 1983 a few Tongan families opted to leave for that the reason. Other families like that of Mrs Litia Kosi, also president of the Tongan community association, decided that Griffith was the place to be. They moved their immediate and extended families to Griffith, enjoying the casual way of life and the availability of work.

Mrs Kosi said, “Griffith is like a treasure chest. There is always something to do and the people are friendly. Although life at times is not peaches and ice cream, the overwhelming support within our community makes it all worthwhile. Griffith reminds me of Tonga: it’s the right place to raise our children and to teach them”.

The Tongan Community is one of those that run activities throughout the year, providing a chance to meet others and maintain fellowship with other Tongans.

Samoans

In 1987 Sakaio Lafai and many other young people travelled to Griffith for employment, returning home to Newcastle after the season. In 1993 a young man named David Faanati also travelled to Griffith to work as a seasonal picker. He found the wealth of Griffith abundantly rich, with farming being a main source of work to supplement family income.

Within a few years people heard on the grapevine about Griffith, and many Samoan families migrated into the area. Cultural diversity was another attraction for the Samoan people. Griffith is said to be “like a tossed salad” with each group working together, united in their life experiences, but able to maintain their unique cultural background.

And so the saga began for the Samoan people. They travelled from Melbourne, Queensland, Newcastle and Canberra, with many families opting to remain and provide financial security for their families. The lack of tertiary institutions for further education for young people of Samoa after leaving high schools became an issue, and resulted with many families moving on to pursue a career or study for their young adults.

The Samoan Community is very committed to their specific religions and beliefs. The Samoan culture is the way of life here in Griffith, it's about combining the old ways with the new way, flexibility and open mindedness is important for us to understand the elements of support and networking with other ethnic communities. There are well over forty families living in Griffith. Many are from the Island of Savaii, which is a mountainous region in Samoa. This Island breaks away from the Main Island of Upolu, which is smaller, but is the capital of Samoa.

The Samoan families are identified by their chieftain-titled family name. This identifies the family and region of origin. The family hierarchy is based on the Matai system, an order of procedures according to the titled chiefs, from extended families to immediate family members. In 2004 there were about four hundred Samoan people living and working in Griffith and surrounding areas.

Cook Islanders

These form by far the smallest Pacific Island community. The Cook Islander community began arriving in about the year 2000, and now numbering about ten families in 2004. The largest of them is the Hosea family. Other families live in surrounding areas such as Leeton, Yanco and Yenda (Source: Dianne Erika).

Griffith also has representatives for small Bangladeshi, Chinese, Czech, Lebanese, Maori, Pakistani, and Sri Lankan communities. Considering its rural location, Griffith has an ethnic diversity that is rarely seen in Australia's cities. A look at the current picture allows us to project into the future of Griffith. This future will contain a distinctive diversity that will probably never be seen in the major coastal cities. It is worth reflecting on the possibility of conserving aspects of such a diverse heritage for tourism.

In Sydney and Melbourne, refugee and illegal migrant communities often form ghetto-like enclaves, living in friction with the host community. In Griffith these ethnic groups find employment, as well as social space. To their credit, the Italian community has treated these new arrivals with tolerance. Perhaps within the Italian community there is still a broadly shared memory of a not-yet-forgotten transplant from another culture; from another country.

4

Developing the economy

Since the introduction of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Scheme in 1912 the rich soil of Griffith has come to support a rich and diverse local economy. Much of Australia's wine and rice are grown in the area. Canola, a taproot crop that is processed as margarine, is an emerging crop. Oranges are the major citrus fruit grown. There are also large rockmelon, onion, gherkin, tomato, broccoli and garlic growing farms. Food processing has developed in tandem with growing.

Bartter Enterprises, a large producer of chicken meat, has one of its seven processing facilities across Australia situated in Griffith. Peter Bartter started the company with a hundred chickens as a 'Junior Farmer' project, and now produces a third of Australia's chicken requirements.

The coming of irrigation

Early irrigation on "Kooba" Station

Interestingly, there are close links between "Kooba" station and the beginnings of the Irrigation Scheme than most people might realise.

While a great deal of credit over the years has been given to Sir Samuel McCaughey of "North Yanco Station" for his contribution to the establishment of the Scheme, few people now would recognise the name of Hugh McKinney. Yet Bryan Kelly in his bicentennial book on the history of Griffith, "From Wilderness to Eden", and W.R. Cowper in his 1987 book, "The Barren Jack Scandal", make a strong case for regarding McKinney as the architect of the M.I.A.

In "From Wilderness to Eden" Kelly says "Although no one man can be said to have been solely responsible for the Murrumbidgee irrigation scheme, McKinney was undoubtedly the greatest single force that led finally to the creation of the scheme. He was the first to put forward a coherent plan based on sound engineering principles, for the proper use of the waters of the Murrumbidgee for irrigation."

How does this tie in with "Kooba"? Well, members of McKinney's family owned and managed "Kooba" from around 1875 to 1925. His sister, Sarah, was married to William McGaw, one of the two McGaw brothers who owned the property, and McKinneys appear to have managed the station from the 1880s. Hugh McKinney was a young irrigation engineer in India when he visited his sister on "Kooba" in 1875. From his experience in India he conceived a vision for an irrigation scheme on the Murrumbidgee, which led him back to Australia in 1879, taking up a position first with the NSW Department of Public Works.

After he was appointed Engineer to the Royal Commission on Water Conservation in 1884 he designed a plan for an irrigation scheme which he promoted through the political changes of the day with considerable frustration, various governments blowing hot and cold on the idea, generally baulking at the cost. The politics as outlined by Cowper and Kelly are extremely complex.

In 1900 he resigned his position and tried to get part of the scheme involving the Northern Branch Canal and Burrinjuck Dam through as a private enterprise project. He formed a partnership with Robert Gibson, prominent Hay stock and station agent - three times mayor of Hay, President of the local branch of the Farmers and Settlers Association and of the Hay Irrigation Trust. Their application to Parliament for the requisite permits, however, coincided with the great drought of the turn of the century. The drought made the costs of the scheme more politically acceptable. A new government now decided that it was too good for

private enterprise and decided to pick it up and run with it themselves.

The scheme was placed in the hands of McKinney's successor in his government position, the well-known Leslie Wade, who was given the responsibility of implementing the plans McKinney had left with the Department. Kelly writes, "What irony that McKinney, who had fought for twenty years to persuade the government to undertake irrigation works should now find himself in the opposite camp, while his ideas were being forwarded by the man whom he had trained!" Wade's brother, Charles Wade, was N.S.W. Premier from 1907, during much of the period when the Acts enabling the Scheme passed through Parliament.

After around 1906, when McKinney was still promoting a private enterprise irrigation scheme, his name seems to disappear from the annals. When the "Irrigation Record" of 1913 outlined "The Evolution of the Great Irrigation Scheme" for the general public, McKinney only rated a brief mention and chief credit was given to Leslie Wade.

McKinney had established irrigation on "Kooba" in the 1890s, involving huge marine steam engines and pumps on the riverbank. But the shrewd Sir Samuel McCaughey did not begin to establish his irrigation at North Yanco until 1899, when the coming of the major irrigation scheme to include his property was well in the wind.

It was probably during the 1880s, that the present homestead was built onto the original 1850 pise homestead. Mrs Cummin referred to the time when it was cared for by the two Mrs McKinneys, a cook, scullery maid, two housemaids, laundress, two gardeners and a Chinese gardener for vegetables (Robyn Oliver).

The scale of the Irrigation Scheme

In the 1920s, local historian, George Gow wrote that the young people then seemed to think that the roads and fences were natural phenomena.

It seems very much like that with irrigation. Griffith youngsters take the canals around them for granted with no appreciation that they are living in the midst of a mammoth feat of engineering skill.

The Scheme was approved in 1906 and irrigation commenced in 1912. The water flows downhill all the way from the Burrinjuck and Blowering dams, 386 kms to the Berembded Weir and on through the 3,740 kms of M.I.A. supply channels and 1,090kms of Coleambally channels. The journey takes 7 days from dam to farm, which means that the farmers' needs have to be anticipated that far in advance.

The two dams contain five times the volume of water in Sydney harbour. The comparisons may be a bit out of date, but an old journal reported that the Burrinjuck Dam was 15 m higher than the Queen Vic building in Sydney and 18m thicker than the width of the same building between George and York Streets. It was double the length of the G.P.O. from George to Pitt St.

Before the Irrigation Scheme was launched there was not one single town on what is now the M.I.A. Less than 100 people earned their living from it. Kooba Station, on which Griffith is now located, extended over 1,000 sq. kms, and away from the river supported only one sheep to two hectares. Crippling droughts ruined many farmers in the area in 1862, 1865, 1870, 1881-83 and 1895-1903.

It is only through irrigation that this area, which Oxley described in 1813 as a place of unequalled barrenness and desolation, has become the second richest farming area in New South Wales. The value of production, well over \$1,000 million, has long since repaid the original cost of \$30 million (Robyn Oliver).

Such intensification of farming was bound to have some ecological cost. In the 1950's following a succession of wet winters, widespread waterlogging and salinity problems arose which threatened the continued existence of the irrigation industry. The horrendous flood year of 1956 saw thousands of trees, including fruit trees, perish. A Board was established to coordinate and oversee the installation of underground tile drainage systems, designed to prevent the water table rising through the sub-soil thus keeping the leached out salts

away from the roots of the vines and trees. The first of these drains was placed in 1961 (www.walkabout.com.au).

Agriculture

Wine is the best known local product of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area (MIA). Rice growing, though valuable to the region, is less known. Citrus fruit is the other major local product. 230 000 tonnes are harvested in the MIA each year, with Valencia oranges the largest crop. Stone fruits, vegetables, wheat, cotton, sheep, wool, eggs and canola are also produced in quantity. All of the gherkins used by McDonald's are also grown here. There is, moreover, an engineering works, a cannery, a rice mill, a distillery, a brickworks, fruit and vegetable packing, the production of fruit juice and Australia's largest egg and poultry plant, with 60,000 hens being processed each week (www.walkabout.com.au).

The MIA is a specialised farming zone because large-scale irrigation has made possible the intensive inland production of plants that would only naturally grow in areas of regular high rainfall.

The agricultural success story of the Irrigation Area is largely a story of Italian cultural adaptation. Many Italian immigrants came from farming communities and were able to adapt to and take advantage of the Australian soil with relative ease. Agricultural industry in the area is still mainly related to primary production such as wineries, canneries and rice mills and Italians are involved in all levels of these industries.

Myalbangera Homestead

Myalbangera Homestead, on farm 1646, is an example of an early farm that represents several “slices” through early agriculture in Griffith. The original homestead was an early hut – probably a shepherd’s hut – which had pole framing, a tin roof and timber slab walls. The hut was later demolished.

It is thought that the first surveyor for the irrigation area (Reg Harnett, surveyor for the Mirrool Irrigation Area) lived on the property, and organised for the present day farmhouse to be constructed in 1920 or 1922. Because of its siting, on the side of the McPhearson Range, about twelve kilometres north of Griffith, the construction used local stone, quarried on the farm. The time of construction, and the methods used, is similar to the vernacular Italian methods of the church at Yoogali. According to oral tradition, it was built by Italian stonemasons brought in from outside the irrigation area to construct the Italian church at Yoogali. There is another story that Irish stoneworkers constructed the building, though this seems less likely.

Subsequent owners were Ben Chaseling, Lacey Johnstone (1940s), Ian Johnstone (Lacey’s son) and Peter Taylor (from 1988).

The farm contained a pioneering example of an irrigation system, which was supplied from a large concrete dam. Further research might clarify some of the early history of this interesting property.

Commonwealth Citrus Research Station Glasshouse

Situated on Research Station Road, the old glasshouse is a rare relic of the early period of government research into viable agriculture for the irrigation area.

The Commonwealth Citrus Research Station was founded on the current CSIRO site in 1924. Soon after, a visiting government review committee visited the station and commented on the meagre facilities, recommending construction of a house, lab building, tool shed, stables and reticulated water (Darryl Baltieri).

The committee also suggested that work on citrus bud and stock selection be improved, suggesting that a propagation glasshouse was part of this early expansion plan.

The wheels of bureaucracy moved slowly, and it was only in 1939 that the glasshouse was built. Surrounded by recent and upgraded buildings, it is now the most notable relic of early research station operation. It is a small structure, 8 m long, 5.6 metres wide and 3.7 m high. Although framed in timber

(Oregon and Queensland Kauri), the exterior has lasted extremely well. This longevity is due to the original choice of steel window framing, tallowwood sills and a brick base wall. It was painted in the green and brown tones popular at that time. The glasshouse is attractive and has been extremely well maintained by its current owners, CSIRO Land and Water.

While it post-dates the early period of irrigation settlement, the glasshouse is also a reminder of early government plant nursery activities, which were responsible for much of the signature planting of palms and sugar gums in Griffith.

Enid Atkinson was told by an elderly settler that sugar gums and palm trees were supplied free of charge from the Nursery, and that the Commission allocated two palm trees for each farm block, planting one either side of each entrance driveway. It is true that many farms have old palm trees that are important markers of the original entrances. Many of the early willow plantings also serve as boundary markers.

The only part of the original structure that has visibly been removed was the ridge windows and vents. They could be reinstated, because the original drawings and specifications are available at the National Archives (item number MISC 14764E Barcode 1688044).

Vegetable growing and Italians

First British immigrants and then soldier settlers were given plots of land, many of them coming to rural life with little, if any, experience. This inexperience was compounded by the lack of expertise on the part of the NSW Department of Agriculture, and by the 1930s many farmers were retuning to the cities disheartened. Italians continued to settle in the area between the wars, and then in larger numbers after the Second World War. For example, between 1947 and 1950, about 2000 new Italian immigrants arrived. They were mainly experienced farmers without schooling for other occupations.

Soon they were able to shift from a peasant style farming economy, primarily concerned with self-sufficiency, to commercial farming that involved specialising, in order to contribute to a wider economy.

The expansion of vegetable growing occurred after 1940. During the early 1940s Australia supplied food to the Allied forces in the Pacific. Vegetable growing, which had always been a minor industry in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation area boomed. Soon after the war Australian farmers abandoned this industry and it became an exclusively Italian occupation. Vegetable growing suited a migrant population who were leaving a war-torn Europe which was affected by hunger, poverty, financial instability. Italian migrants were suited to the challenge. Vegetable growing did not require much capital but needed intensive labour, which was suited to the extended family unit. Italians were willing to work hard in co-operation with each other, if the work offered prospects for the financial security that they could not find in post-war Europe. They began by leasing small plots of land but by 1952 Italians owned about a third of horticultural farms and by 1954 nearly half of all horticultural farms on the Riverina. Today Italians, who make up 60% of the area's population, own most of the horticultural farms and a number of the large sheep, wheat and rice farms (Pesman 1998: 21-22 edited excerpts).

De Bortoli history -the first Italian wine

By the close of the twentieth century, the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area was the largest wine-producing region in the state, producing twenty percent of the national total. Winemaking is now so closely associated with the Griffith area that it is usually thought of as only a recent phenomenon. The early role of McWilliams and Penfolds wineries has been discussed, but Italian winemakers also had an early impact. De Bortoli winery was the first. When the Italian migrants first started to arrive in the MIA in 1915, they instantly began planting their land (no matter how big or small) with grapes, which were first used to make sultanas but later wine. This carried on the tradition from Italy. At first, the grape was produced on a "home-made" basis because Griffith was administered as a "dry area".

When Vittorio De Bortoli left his birthplace of Castalcucco in Italy in 1924 for a gruelling two month boat trip to the developing country of Australia, he was fuelled only by rumours that he could build himself a more prosperous life and the desire to be a success. Leaving family, friends, his sweetheart Giuseppina, and everything he held dear, Vittorio De Bortoli arrived in Australia with 10 shillings and all his possessions in a tote bag.

However, not even in his wildest dreams could the 24 year old have imagined that he would become the founder of a \$120 million per annum business which is one of Australia's largest family owned wine companies.

Vittorio landed in Melbourne, caught the train to Albury and another train to eventually arrive at Beelbangera siding in Griffith. It is doubtful whether anything could have prepared him for the flat sunburnt country of the M.I.A., so vastly different from the lush, green hills overlooked by the towering mountains of his Alpine home.

Vittorio De Bortoli quickly obtained a job on a farm in the district but when he asked the farm owner for sixpence to buy some soup bones, the farmer told him he had no money. Vittorio was able to find other employment and ended up working for a number of local farms including Jones' Winery which today is McWilliam's Beelbangera winery.

By 1927, Vittorio had saved enough money to buy a 55-acre fruit farm in Bilbul which is still the site of the family wine business. Giuseppina's eldest brother, Giovanni, had also arrived to help in the business while Giuseppina herself was in France working as a maid, trying to earn enough money to join Vittorio in Australia.

In 1928, accompanied by her younger brother, Pierino, Giuseppina arrived in Australia to be reunited with her childhood sweetheart. Vittorio and his brothers-in-law concentrated initially on mixed farming to earn a living. A surplus of grapes in the area also allowed Vittorio to make his own table wine. Drinking table wine at meals was a European, rather than an Australian tradition, and the wine making in the 1920s in the Riverina district and nearby Rutherglen area was largely confined to fortified wines such as ports and tokays. Vittorio had grown up drinking wine at meals, and began to make home-made wine largely for his family's consumption.

Vittorio's hobby soon grew into the formation of the family wine business. During the fruit-picking season in the Riverina, Italian labourers who worked as cane-cutters in Queensland would visit the De Bortoli farm to exchange news of Italy and drink wine. When they returned to Queensland they convinced him to part with some of his wine. They also encouraged him to make more and send it to them. Thus Vittorio started exporting his surplus wine to Queensland and Northern New South Wales.

While Vittorio ran the farm having bought out Giovanni (who had a share in the business) in 1931, Giuseppina, encouraged by Vittorio, learned English with the help of the school teacher at the Bilbul Public School. This enabled her to help run the business and she became known as the "Bossa". It was very unusual in those days for an Italian woman to study English. Giuseppina from her years in France spoke French, and family lore has it that she sent away for French winemaking texts which she translated for Vittorio. The partnership produced three children, Florrie, Deen and Eola. The family home became a mecca for other Italian migrants who visited Griffith or settled there in the 1930's.

Life was tough for most Australians, even on the land, where there was always plenty to eat but no money for small luxuries. Six days a week of hard work and long hours would only be relieved by the one day of rest when family and friends would gather on the De Bortoli verandah, drink Vittorio's wine, play bocce and sing songs from the old country.

Once Vittorio began growing his own grapes, the wine business started to take off. The first crush of just fifteen tonnes of Black Shiraz grapes was made in two 900-gallon vats. By 1936 Vittorio had increased the capacity of the winery to 20 vats holding 25,000 gallons.

Other winemakers followed and built up Griffith as one of the major wine regions. They read like a Who's Who of Italian winemaking in Australia: Angelo Rossetto (1928), Francesco Miranda (1940), Calabria Brothers (1948), Salvatore Franco (1959), Cinzano (1971), and San Bernadino (1972).

There were two Calabria families involved in wine production. Frank Calabria founded Calabria Wines just east of Griffith on Beelbangera Road. The other Calabria family established the successful West End Winery in Brayne Road.

Everything was done by hand and up to twenty-five men would be working at the winery during the grape-picking and winemaking season. The grape varieties that were grown in the Riverina's red-brown earth were mainly Semillon, Trebbiano, Doradillo, Pedro Ximinez, Grenache and Shiraz.

With Vittorio in the fields and Giuseppina managing the office, the De Bortoli family business survived the Depression, and by the 1940s had grown into a viable wine company. With the onset of World War II, however, fear and paranoia had infiltrated the British-dominated Australian Government regarding events in Europe. This resulted in many Australian based Germans and Italians being confined in Australian prison camps. Those that were not imprisoned for the remainder of the war found their movements heavily restricted and new Government policies of compulsory acquisition of plants and equipment came into force. It was a dark and terrible time for many migrants and the De Bortoli family was at risk of losing all they had built. Vittorio and Giuseppina several times were faced with the prospect of having their property taken over, but they held on. As the war ended and normality gradually returned, a consumer boom erupted and by 1952 a rationing system imposed on alcohol had been lifted. De Bortoli Wines expanded their business.

It was naturally assumed that Vittorio and Giuseppina's only son Deen, would study to be a winemaker but hard times in the 1950s forced him to leave school at just 15 years of age to help his father, Vittorio, with the family business. Later the opportunity arose for him to train as a winemaker and by 1959 had increased the capacity of the winery to 110 vats, holding 795 000 gallons.

Florrie and her husband, Silvio, became the managers of a wine distribution company set up in Sydney. Archaic licensing and drinking laws and restricted distribution meant only tiny amounts of wine could be sold from the Bilbul winery. Distribution was vital for the survival of the winery and with Giuseppina's savings Vittorio bought a licence which enabled the company to package and sell wine to New South Wales and Queensland.

Eola and her husband, Ian, ran the Sydney distribution business after Florrie and Silvio moved on. When Vittorio died in 1979, the Sydney assets were divided between the two sisters while the winery was left to Deen.

Under the direction of Deen and his four children, an expansion strategy has seen De Bortoli Wines set up a highly successful Winery and Restaurant facility in the Yarra Valley, vineyards in the King Valley, distribution/sales branches in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane, offices in the United Kingdom, Belgium, the United States and export into more than 52 countries worldwide.

Unfortunately Deen De Bortoli, respected in the local community, Patriarch of the De Bortoli family and Chairman of one of Australia's largest family owned wine companies died suddenly at his home in Bilbul NSW in 2003. With Deen's son Darren as Managing Director, daughter Leanne and son-in-law, Steve, running the Yarra Valley winery, son Kevin as viticulturalist managing the vineyards, and youngest son Victor handling export, De Bortoli Wines is more than ever a family business and is in a good position to move into the new century (www.debortoli.com.au).

Rossetto winery

One of the first wineries established in the Griffith area. Angelo Rossetto (1903-1981) was born at Cavaso del Tomba, Treviso province in northern Italy. He arrived on a passenger steamship in 1923 to follow his brother Adolfo. After working at Broken Hill he married an Italian girl there, and moved to Griffith.

In 1928 he purchased the site on Farm 576. He set up as a grape grower, but by the late 1930s he was no longer happy with the deal he was receiving from the large Penfolds winery. Both the price offered for the grapes and spasmodic acceptance of grapes by Penfolds persuaded Angelo to turn to wine production in a small commercial way. He was typical of small Italian wine-makers, in that he did not "target" Australian tastes, but was content to make the style of wine agreeable to the palates of his countrymen. This was typical of wineries in France and Italy, where wines were made to quaff as part of every meal; a daily ritual.

Jack Salvestrin of Yoogali constructed most of the winery from 1945 to 1949.

Angelo built up the business with his two sons Giovanni (b. 1930) and Alan (b.1940). Alan went on to become an Australian wine judge. He judged the Royal Adelaide and Rutherglen wine shows during 1966-1978, and in 1970 became the first Australian wine judge to be invited to judge the New Zealand Wine Show circuit.

The business was later sold and is now part of Beelgara Estates Wine Company.

The original winery shed is of heritage significance. It is an old timber framed tin shed with a cemented floor. Angelo's original open fermenters, built in the late 1940s, are square concrete structures. Later they became covered over as wine storage vats. Though of various capacities, they average about a thousand gallons (4500 litres) each. In a corner is a small "Whitehill" mechanical grape crusher, with a juice pit, and weighbridge (constructed 1952). Since about 1950, buildings have been progressively added so that by 2004 the shed was quite surrounded by other buildings.

Miranda winery

Miranda Wines is the most centrally located winery in Griffith, situated in the same place in Jondaryan Avenue where the establishment first began. Francesco Miranda's older brother had settled in Australia first, and written that there was a demand here for grapes and wine. Francesco and his young wife left Naples in 1927, and had the winery established by 1939.

The grapes were crushed by the ancient method of treading in bare feet. In 1958 the first iron exchange column in Australia was installed. The expanding business was run by Francesco's three sons, Sam, Jim and Lou; with Bruce Holm as the winemaker. As with most expanding wineries in the region, Miranda ceased to grow their own grapes, buying them from independent growers (Murray Paterson: The wineries and wines of the Griffith region of NSW; edited excerpts).

Fruit salad history

A fruit grader donated to the Pioneer Park Museum in the 1970s is a relic of the fruit growing and processing industry that has been vital to Griffith. It also represents the focal point of hard work and happy memories in earlier years of Farm 1826, Lake Wyangan.

The property from which the fruit grader was donated was established as a "fruit salad" farm by Edward Loxley (Ted) and Elaine Meggitt in the 1920s. Ted ran it until his death in 1969. Ted's farm diary and account book provide information about the farm from 1936 to 1972 and fill in details about the fruit grader.

During the Meggitt's period on Farm 1826 they produced peaches, nectarines, apricots, prunes, sultana grapes and citrus. Their daughters Joan Gray, Doreen Sandberg and Helen Barber visited the Park when the grader was moved there. Joan recalled hating being left at home while the others went out, banging tins to keep the birds off the sultanas. These days the farm's main crop is citrus, but illustrating the swings that farmer's have to keep pace with is an entry in the diary for 1949 - "Citrus Out - Last of the Citrus Trees pulled out in Nov 1949" - they appear to have been replaced at that time with prunes.

The Fruit Grader, made by D. Harvey Ltd of Melbourne, was purchased on the 30 November 1947 for over 219 pounds, then a substantial sum, and was used up until the 1970s. It is made of wood and was powered by a 4 1/2 h.p. motor, with a gear to change the speed. Jack Gray, who came to the farm in 1954, reports that it took quite a while to set up each year. There was greasing and setting the sizes, adjusting from one end to the other, then back again until it was exactly right - a fiddly business, needing to be readjusted from apricots to peaches to nectarines.

Joan reports that the whole family worked on the grading - including her mother, brother Bill and sisters Helen and Doreen, as well as neighbour, Vi Jones, who kept them all laughing. It was a job she really enjoyed as a change, first from school (where she had to finish early each year to help with the picking season) and later from teacher's college and teaching, during holidays. Jack or Col Pollard used to pour the peaches on, while the others took their positions, her mother seated, with bandaged wrists to protect them

from the irritation of peach fluff.

According to Jack Gray, the fruit would roll by so fast "you went blur blind in the end so you didn't know what you were looking at". Amidst the hard work there was tea in glass cups that you had to put a spoon into to stop them breaking, served on a yellow wooden tray, with tomato sandwiches for morning tea, and biscuits in the afternoon - Mrs Meggitt was keen on cups of tea. The girls worked in their swimming "cossies", and swam in the mud dam during breaks, because it was stiflingly hot in the corrugated iron shed between December and February. Somehow it added up to fun.

Joan said her father was very fussy about the way the peaches were packed, checking to see that the colour was right, that the boxes were properly lined, that the peaches were turned the right way. Some, like the Elbertas had a beautiful flavour but were very soft and hard to handle - but her father always got top prices because of his care. Another trick to the packing was allowing for overnight shrinkage - the wooden boxes were left open overnight and Ted Meggitt hammered on the lids the next morning with Col Pollard.

Eating fruit, such as Elberta and Pullers peaches, and Goldmine nectarines, were taken by truck to the railway station on their way to D.C.Turnbull, the Sydney market agent they dealt with for years - in the end he became a friend of the family. Other fruit went to the canneries, larger fruit for canning, smaller for jam, while ripe fruit - apricots, and sometimes Elberta peaches and nectarines, were dried. The Passey girls used to help them, and Joan recalled that she was pitting apricots at Druitts farm when her Leaving Certificate results came through - they got threepence a tray for pitting.

The picking season was hard work - Joan referred stone fruit as the "panic fruit" because you only had 2 weeks to get them off. At the end of the day, the family fell into their beds exhausted. But it was satisfying work, and when done in good company has clearly left memories of happy times, including the taste of some of the fruit. Joan's talk of "Goldmine" nectarines, with their white flesh and beautiful flavour; Pullers peaches, with red centres and delicate flesh, and Elbertas, their favourites, huge, golden and sweet fruit made my mouth water! (Robyn Oliver).

Rice cultivation

The flooding of fields by irrigation allowed the first tentative rice farming efforts in 1922 to expand rapidly. A milling co-op was formed in 1950 as local producers were unhappy with the returns from private millers. There are now six mills in the Riverina. The three irrigation areas of NSW produce about 1.4 million tonnes of rice a year which is virtually the entire Australian output, most of which (around 90 per cent) is exported (www.walkabout.com.au).

Yet local rice growing is little known by the Australian public. There are possibly three reasons for this. Firstly, it is a crop imagined as grown mainly by traditional peasant farmers in Asia. Secondly, the flooding of fields is thought to have little place in such a dry continent. Thirdly, rice growing has a tainted image as a link between irrigation and salt. Yet the biggest single crop, in terms of both volume and value, in the Mirool Area, is rice.

Undocumented farm histories

Most families purchased housing or land, which they farmed or occupied, without ever feeling a need to document its history. Such "undocumented histories" consists of fragments of knowledge, usually somebody's personal memory of their home.

An example is the shed owned by Gerard Brown. Gerard recalled many details. But without historical context, the specifics are difficult to fit together:

My grandfather JG Gordon was a car garage proprietor in Banna Avenue, of Gordons Garage next to the Area Hotel. He arrived in the district in about 1919 from Hillston, and bought the farm for property investment in about 1936. The shed was already on there, so a soldier settler would have constructed it.

The very large tank (earth dam about 80 metres long and forty metres wide) that was already on the property suggests that the place might have been part of Ballingal Station, as might have been the shed.

The shed is made of cypress pine posts, with sawn timber girts and roof frame, with corrugated iron cladding and an earth floor. All the horse harnesses were stored there, and still remain there to this day.

In 1940 my father, who was a mounted policeman in Griffith, left the force and purchased the farm from my grandfather. He remained there and ran it as a typical mixed farm of that time, mainly rice, but also sheep and cattle. He used the shed for harness storage. He was heavily into horses, and had a lot of draught horses that he used into the 1950s. The first tractor, bought in 1950, was a Deutz, and that went into the shed, as well as the workbench.

I think my father painted it in the 1950s in the red that it is now. Mum was a keen golf player in the 1940s, and had a net stretched out beside the shed to catch the golf balls (Gerard Brown).

Commerce

The oldest business in Griffith

Area Builders is the oldest business in Griffith still in operation, following the demise of the Farmer's Co-op store a decade or so ago.

The Area Builders was established in 1920 by German settler, Frederick August Ernest Schultz. Mr Schultz and his wife were stalwart members of the Griffith Salvation Army, and their unusual German style house, "Loreley" adjacent to the Salvation Army, is a feature of the central Binya Street block.

H. A. Taylor, who was the building supervisor for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Trust in 1912, recalled Frederick Schultz in a letter written in 1966

Prior to the First World War, I had three camps of men erecting settlers' houses, which were of three types A.B. & C. costing 155, 215 and 325 pounds. My difficulty being tradesmen and in answer to my requests to the Labour Department in Sydney, they offered to send me six Germans, who had just previously landed, all carpenters and amongst them was a man named Schultz. He was a very good tradesman and he was the only who had a few words of English to his command. He was a most likeable character who afterwards settled in Griffith and become I believe a most successful business man (Griffith Pioneer Park Museum files).

The next Area Builders owner was Edmund Sheed. Mr Sheed started work at the Area Builders in 1934 and bought the firm 30 years later in 1964. Mr Sheed retired and the business continued in the family. It was taken over in 1977 by his two daughters and their husbands, and is managed by sons-in-law, Noel Gale and Danny Vardanega.

At its 74 years of operation, the Area Builders shop had scarcely changed, apart from rearrangement of the interior and an occasional new coat of paint. With its attractive pressed metal facade, it is one of Griffith's finest character heritage buildings (Robyn Oliver).

It is a significant building because there are very few other examples of well-maintained older style shops in Griffith.

Finance institutions

The Commonwealth, Bank of New South Wales (later Westpac) and Rural Bank (later State) are all represented on Banna Avenue.

Westpac Bank

The Westpac building has a plain history. Originally the Bank of New South Wales, it was first set up in a 10 x 9 foot rented room at the back of a draper's shop in 1920. The irrigation scheme was just under way with about 650 settlers. A decade later the bank put up a weatherboard building on Dave Taylor's shop site, and a decade after that, the two storey brick building replaced it. The cost was a little under 10,000 pounds and as was typical at that time, the banking chamber was on the ground floor with the manager's residence upstairs.

The social history of the Westpac building is far more interesting. Another bank, the Rural Bank, had been set up by the government to aid the early irrigation area workers. The early irrigation scheme was practically a disaster. Returned soldiers had little chance of success and the Rural Bank foreclosed without mercy. There was such hatred of this bank that when the other bank opened; settlers swiftly transferred what money they had left.

Norman Boot was the first manager of the Bank of New South Wales. He was a conscientious, highly regarded compassionate bank manager. As such the Bank of New South Wales was respected, and the new building was regarded with great pride when it was built in 1941. Norman had followed the bank from its earliest days in 1920, and had refused promotion rather than move to another community (in those days, and indeed up to about the late 1960s, banks had a policy of promoting managers only if they relocated). The building stood on the corner, in the commercial heart of Griffith, the epitome of solidity - a reliable and caring bank.

Anne Gribble remembered that this attitude altered dramatically with the name change to Westpac. This was during the 1990s (under Prime Minister Keating) era of high interest rates and unbridled corporate greed. The whole banking sector switched from service to profit generation, represented by centralised service, impersonal bureaucrats and low staff numbers.

The inside of the building has been regularly gutted since about 1970, in various attempts at dressing up its public image. But it appears that the return of dislike of the institution of banking is mirrored in dislike of the bricks and mortar: "It is just another red brick building," said Anne Gribble "I doubt that it now holds the degree of respect or significance that it once did."

Rural Bank

The Rural Bank of NSW, previously the Government Savings Bank of NSW, is a fine example of an interwar period public building, with aesthetic, social and landmark value.

The building was erected when the Rural Bank of NSW came into existence in 1933. Additions at the rear were made in 1938.

This is a bank of Interwar art deco style, being single storey, dark brick with tiled roof. It has an art deco influenced clock tower on the corner with a stepped form, rendered and painted. It has been well maintained externally, though much altered internally into a pizza restaurant.

The rectangular building is dominated by the clock tower, which is of sufficient elevation to be functional but does not dominate the intersection. The main entrance to the Bank is beneath the clock tower, via double doors into a spacious entrance hall.

The building exhibits a different architectural style to that of the clock tower. Frosted glass windows are set within recessed brick panels, which form the south side. Doors on the south side are surrounded by a neo-classic architrave, and mantle.

At the top of the substantial portico is the Coat of Arms of the Rural Bank. The motto means "Though recently risen, how brightly we shine ". The white doorway surrounds, Coat of Arms and side windows with wrought iron grillwork provides a colour variation to the sombre dark-brown brick construction.

Double doors at the main and south entrances contain small hexagonal display windows. Copper panels of rice in relief are on display in recognition of the contribution that rice growing has made to the prosperity of the district.

Provision of a ramp to the south entrance has been handled sympathetically. On the corners of the building several courses of bricks are recessed to approximate quoins (keystones) as appeared on Victorian buildings.

The clock tower is characterised by a build up of geometrical blocks neatly fitting into each other. The

profusion of geometric pattern at the base of the clock is not repeated elsewhere on the tower. On the tower are four neo-classical urns treated in the Art Deco style.

The main doorway and steps are faced with pink marble. Geometrical metal grillwork above the doorway and on the side windows emphasises the Art Deco ornamentation. (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Commonwealth Bank

The Commonwealth bank is an example of an interwar period public building. Though the interior and ground floor street front has been extensively redeveloped, it has social and landmark value. The upper floor frontage is mostly intact.

A ceramic tile mural lining the counter, depicting the founding and development of Griffith, is a contributing heritage item.

The Commonwealth Bank traces its association with Griffith to 4 April 1913, when the Bank opened an agency at the local post office. Post Offices had become a Commonwealth instrumentality upon federation and were subsequently made available as agencies for the Savings Bank Department (later CSD) of the Commonwealth Bank, following its establishment in July 1912. Thus, on 13 January 1913, the day the Commonwealth Bank first opened in New South Wales, the 642 post offices throughout the state that had previously represented the Government Savings Bank of New South Wales, commenced acting on behalf of the Commonwealth Bank. This agency remained the Bank's main representation in Griffith for the next 18 years.

On 6 December 1921, the Commonwealth Savings Bank purchased land, with a 55'5" frontage to Banna Avenue by a depth along Kooyoo Street of 154'5", and a rear measurement of 55'5" to a lane, from the Commission.

J G Taylor erected new two storey brick premises, consisting of ground floor banking chamber with portion of the Manager's residence at the rear and the remainder on the first floor, in 1922. The bank first opened for business on 22 January 1923.

Five years later, the premises were extended to provide a larger banking chamber plus a lock-up shop on the ground floor, with rental offices on the upper level.

On December 1931, the Government Savings Bank merged with the Commonwealth Bank, the latter opening its Griffith branch on that date, utilizing the former Government Savings Bank premises. Griffith and the surrounding district was experiencing a period of growth. By this time Griffith had a district population of 12,000 and was growing economically. Moore's Almanac and NSW Country Directory of 1931 describes this portion of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area as containing "some of the most perfect soil for the production of fruits of all kinds", whilst the township itself was rapidly developing as the "centre of the large district of dry country encircling the irrigation area". The commercial district boasted "4 banks, 2 hotels, a wine café, 2 guest houses, 5 refreshment rooms and a number of blacksmiths, saddlers, cycle agents and motor garages. There were 4 wineries in the district – Mirrool, Penfolds, McWilliams and Beelbangra. Daily train services ran via both Leeton and Temora and there was a tri-weekly motor train between Griffith and Hillston. By the mid 1930's the branch business had increased sufficiently for alterations to be carried out providing extra space in the banking chamber.

During World War II, Griffith branch became heavily involved with Commonwealth Bonds and other forms of Government fundraising activities, as well as acting as local agent for the meat and clothing rationing authorities. Several male staff members left to "join-up" and their places were taken "for the duration" by female officers.

By 1957, branch business had increased and the staff quota had reached 18. Public and working space was inadequate. The banking chamber and offices were extensively enlarged by absorption of the former dental surgery (in the adjoining shop), which moved to the rear of the building. New staff amenities were provided on the first floor in place of rented office space.

In November 1958, a portion of the Bank's land, with a frontage to Kooyoo Street, at the rear of the branch was sold.

In 1964, minor alterations were carried out to house a newly appointed rural valuer and a staff of four. These alterations were done by a means of providing a separate structure in the rear yard. During 1968, an evaporative cooling system was installed at the branch.

By 1975, with growth in branch business, public and working space had become inadequate. These were done by means of absorbing the vacated residence on the first floor, and relocating the Manager and loans offices to the upper level. The size of the Note Issuing room was reduced. A new strong room was erected with the old strong room then becoming the voucher room. Construction work was completed in 1976.

By 1982, working space had once again become inadequate for a staff quota of 32. Alterations to the existing premises commenced in May 1984. These included demolition and rebuilding of the rear section of the premises, replacement of the ground floor timber floor with a new concrete slab, removal of internal walls, construction of new access to the first floor, installation of an air conditioning plant, and construction of a new voucher room. The interior and exterior of the branch was painted and the rear yard was paved to provide a car park.

At completion of the renovations, there were residue funds. So the decision was made to commission local renowned artist David Byard to paint a series of tiles, to decorate the outside of the tellers and customer service counters. The Bank's decision to commission Mr. Byard to do the artwork was based on a similar art feature he had done for the local bar at the Yenda Diggers Club. The tile mural depicts historical scenes relating to Griffith and the Commonwealth Bank.

On 17 April 1991, the Commonwealth Bank ceased being a statutory corporation and became a public company. In June 2001 Commonwealth Bank of Australia finally merged with the Colonial Bank (CBA brought out the Colonial Bank). This saw the integration of banks staff, systems and customer base.

The first floor now houses the Business Banking section of the Commonwealth Bank. In 2003 it underwent major renovations to the office and floor space. The Bank no longer owns the Commonwealth Bank building, but leases the buildings. The branch also has several historical signature books for the Griffith area at the local Branch, dating back to 22 January 1927 (Brenda Wade, Commonwealth Bank).

Communication

Communication in Griffith is reflected in developments such as the Post Office, telephone and television networks. More locally significant is the Area News local newspaper and radio station. These two institutions have had a vigorous involvement with the local community and local identities.

The Area News

The Area News has social significance as a local cultural icon. Though the Area News has weathered changes of ownership and location, its name is most commonly associated with the present building, an interwar period building on a landmark corner site. The Area News building has a long history of use by media organisations.

By 1923 the town had its own newspaper, The Area News, first published by P.J. Slattery in a building later occupied by Fred Cole Pty Ltd. It was priced twopence and the first issue contained eight pages (Chessbrough 1982)

In 1934 the present building was constructed, and newspaper ownership changed to Irrigation Area Newspapers Ltd who also owned radio station 2RG. They began broadcasting from the upper floor of the building in 1936.

From 1969 to 1971 a daily newspaper called the " Riverina Daily News " was printed in the building (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

This two-storey building has a corner facade and stepped parapet, which exhibit the linear style of Art Deco. The Palladian round-head window appears unusual on the geometrical facade. The sign "2RG" can still be seen on the facade. Part of the ground floor was used as a dental surgery. This side used to have a suspended verandah over the footpath. The single storey additions to the west of the building are recent (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Events

Festivals in Griffith

Festivals are not mentioned in any written histories of Griffith but they are an ongoing feature of local identity. From the "Hard-up Ball" and "Peace Celebrations" of Bagtown, to the Hospital Parade of the 1929 Depression, Griffith people have enjoyed a chance to kick up their heels for a good cause.

The earliest Festival programme in the Pioneer Park's collection of Festival memorabilia the Pioneer Park collection is for the 1956 Water Wheel Festival Week, apparently the first of the regular Festivals. The idea for an annual festival came from Mr W.G. Mackay, who approached the Chamber of Commerce. On 31st August 1955 a Chamber sub-committee presented their ideas to a public meeting which was convened by the Shire President, and attended by representatives of service, arts, sporting, and farming groups. The name was coined by 16 year old Stuart Cochrane, who won the "Name the Festival Competition".

Proceeds of the Festival were to go "towards meeting the expense of a City Hall", probably the current Regional Theatre. The inspiration came from festivals "conducted in other towns and cities", and it may have been the "season" for such things the Henry Lawson Festival started in Grenfell in the late 1950s.

The U.K. High Commissioner, Sir Stephen Holmes launched the 1956 Festival by switching on the water wheel in Banna Avenue at 9pm, 27 April 1956. It was not Easter, and may have been timed for the then May school holidays.

Highlights included the Festival Queen Competition, a large number of balls, Billy Cart Derby from the top of Boonah St., Decorated Bicycle Parade, sporting events, hay ride, N.S.W. Art Gallery exhibition in the Sunshine Club rooms at the R.S.L. (a hint of the present Art Gallery?), shop window, floral art and garden competitions, concerts and plays, Grand Street Procession and two street carnivals.

The Aero Club demonstrations an important part, with a lot of recently returned WWII airmen to the fore. Church Services enjoyed a prominence they have since lost - the Archbishop of Brisbane dedicated tablets commemorating lost servicemen at St. Albans, and anti-communist campaigner Bob Santamaria addressed a breakfast on "Communism in Australia" for the Catholic Church. The notable absence in the programme is any reference to wine or wineries!

In 1971 a new biennial festival, "The Griffith Vintage Festival", was launched, with a glossy, full colour souvenir booklet, using the now familiar bacchanalian cherub logo. The focus of the Festival moved in the direction of promotion, and wine was definitely on the agenda. Shire President, Nevis Farrell, announced that "The purpose of the Vintage Festival is to bring these wines to the attention of Australian and overseas visitors", although its "object" was to raise funds for the "Civic Centre", now more probably the Regional Theatre, since the present Council Chambers appear in the booklet.

Apart from heavy coverage of wineries, the souvenir booklet highlighted the official opening of Pioneer Park during the Festival. The Park then possessed only two buildings - a drop-log cottage and a brick display building, but the booklet predicted that "There is little doubt that Pioneer Park will be the major tourist attraction in the M.I.A. in the years to come".

An events programme for 1973 showed that The Bacchus and Bacchante Competition was underway, with a gold plated crown for Bacchus donated by the Continental Music Club in 1971. As well as a Wine

Auction, Wine Seminar, Grape Picking and Wine Buff Competitions, wineries were open for "Inspections and Sales". To get your free tasting, a current Festival wine glass was a must, a tradition clearly begun in 1971. Pioneer Park was en route to its Action Day, offering teas, sales table and demonstrations of equipment and skills.

In 1989 the name was changed to "The Griffith Wine and Food Festival", ideologically sound, but verbally unwieldy. It was the first festival since Griffith was declared a city in 1987, and the ten-day programme was so crammed with events that its voluntary committee were left in tatters by the end. For the first time in 1991 a Festival Organiser was employed. The annual format was re-instated, and the scene was set for the event to be placed on the national tourist agenda (Robyn Oliver).

The Wine and Food Festival is now the major event in Griffith. It is held annually at Easter and features a street parade, street carnival, ball, family fun day, street theatre, rodeo, grape treading competition, fun run and the Venetian Carnival on the main canal. The festival focuses on Banana Avenue for its street procession, Mardi Gras and various carnival activities. Other venues such as Memorial Gardens and Willow Park in Kookora Street are also used as key venues. The Festival of Gardens is by contrast lower in key and has a largely visual presence. It opens up a number of outstanding private gardens for viewing. The Belle Amour Garden is open year round by appointment. It can be found in MacGraith Place north of Griffith.

In October the Agricultural Show takes place at the Showground. A number of facilities have been purpose-built for the event including, stables, sheds, a small grandstand, the Woodside Hall and Pavilion. The show is a traditional rural event and is patronised by a broad cross-section of the community. A number of special events occur at the railway station with the occasional visit of exhibition and steam trains. Heritage advice and tourism planning should strive to increase the range and quality of festivals and community events (Clouston 1993: 23, edited excerpts).

Health

Griffith's emergency and health care services developed from a primitive start. The first ambulance service was Charlie Tranter on his bicycle. The hospital was first a "tent" hospital largely made of canvas at Bagtown, with Nurse Lillian Burns in charge and visited weekly from Whitton by Dr Watkins. When the influenza epidemic hit in 1918, Hanwood Hall was made the emergency hospital. Afterwards, the small Field Hospital was built for twelve beds, a small operating theatre, and verandah for an overflow of six beds. For several decades, a number of small hospitals operated, each generally manned by a doctor and nurse. Then in 1931 a new Griffith Hospital was built and progressively upgraded with extensions. The current District Hospital occupies the same site (Kelly 1988: 212-216, edited excerpts).

Ambulance Station and Residence

The NSW Ambulance Service had its start as the Civil Ambulance & Transport Brigade in 1895, based in a borrowed police station on Railway Square, Sydney. It then had a staff of two, and patients were transported on stretchers and hand litters (stretchers on wheels). The first horse drawn ambulance was donated in 1899, and the first motor vehicle in 1912. Radio controlled vehicles commenced in 1937, the rescue service in 1941, a training school in 1961, air ambulance in 1967, and intensive care vehicles 1976. The Service now has thousands of officers and ambulances, as well as several aircraft.

In the 1990s, two early members of the Griffith Ambulance Service, Mrs Farrell, then 90 years old, and Mrs Love, then 92 years old, were interviewed by Robyn Oliver and Mrs Jean Munro. They provided much of the story of the origins of the Service.

The Griffith Ambulance Service had its start in 1937. One cold wet miserable day when Mrs Love was on Hospital Auxiliary duty with Mrs Burrell, wife of Dr. Burrell, a seriously ill woman arrived at the hospital on the back of a truck from beyond Rankins Springs. She died a couple of days later leaving seven children.

The two women decided that something had to be done about an ambulance service. They began organising and within a short time the Griffith Ambulance Finance Committee (mostly men) and the Griffith Ambulance Auxiliary (mostly women) were formed to begin serious fundraising.

The Ambulance Auxiliary women catered for anything, from weddings to farm sales. It was not uncommon for them to begin work on one function at 4am one day and finish work on the next at 2am the following morning. All of the ingredients came out of their own pantries. They held street stalls, sometimes in a dust storm, crouching under the trestle tables hanging onto covers over their goods. Mrs Love said that when she wasn't cooking she was sewing for both stalls and catering - including aprons for the waitresses and hundreds of greaseproof bags to put over the salad lunches.

Jessie Farrell wrote of her mother's experience, "These days the amount of money would probably seem trivial but in those days [there was] no petrol even if you had a car, which we didn't. These ladies often walked long distances to cater or sell tickets at some venue. No one had much money so there were no large donations, just little people persisting in obtaining their goal."

By 1936 the Committee and Auxiliary had raised enough money to employ a "Superintendent Secretary for the Griffith Ambulance Station" - although there was no ambulance station or ambulance. Charlie Tranter from Goulburn took on the position in 1937, bringing with him his own enthusiasm and his wife Queen, who took the distress calls and became the driving force of the Auxiliary.

The first "ambulance station" was a rented house in Yambil St., and the ambulance was Charlie Tranter's bicycle, housed in an adjacent shed. Queen kept track of Charlie's movements and when a call came she would locate him. He would tear off on the bike, fling it into the nearest doorway, administer first aid and then, if necessary, commandeer a handy vehicle to drive the patient to hospital - on one occasion it was Bill Birch's butcher's van. Fred Cole's 100wt red truck was the first unofficial ambulance, since Fred was a volunteer first-aider.

As soon as possible the Committee bought a fibro house in Binya St., which became the Tranter's residence and ambulance station. A second hand Dodge ambulance was bought from Leeton. When it finished service as an ambulance, it remained in use as the catering committee's "meals on wheels" van.

Even then the ambulance service was hard work. As the lone ambulance officer, Charlie Tranter was on call 24 hours a day. The ambulance was often bogged on wet roads, the doctor coming out to meet it.

Ill health forced Charlie Tranter to resign in 1958. Both he and his wife were sorely missed. Charlie's dedication was such that on at least one occasion he missed his holiday because the ambulance bank account would have been empty if he had taken his holiday pay. Most of the Ambulance Auxiliary resigned after Queen Tranter's departure in the belief that they could not carry on without her.

According to then Shire President, Nevis Farrell, the Tranters' was the first "presidential farewell" given by Wade Shire Council - "Without his drive and his wife's active co-operation, there would not have been an ambulance service in Griffith." At the same farewell, Dr. Burrell spoke of the old days when Charlie Tranter drove thousands of miles on "frightful" roads, mud or dust, in makeshift vehicles. Sergeant McCrohan, from the Griffith Police, mentioned that the ambulance service was colloquially known at the police station as "Tranter's Transport".

The current ambulance station opened in 1959 on what had been the old town tennis courts on Banna Avenue. The Ambulance Committee and Auxiliary fought hard for this position when the Council wanted the Service located out near Penfold's winery. The other street, which forms the Ambulance Station corner, is now appropriately named Tranter place (Robyn Oliver).

Bagtown Medical Services

Early medical service, as with almost every other amenity in the irrigation district, was provided under the auspices of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, from Bagtown through to the first Griffith "Field" hospital, now at Pioneer Park. It took a long time to get the current "Public Hospital" off the ground, and in the meantime the inadequate facilities of the Field Hospital were augmented by a number of small private hospitals sprinkled around the town.

Mr Wally Quinliven has produced the most detailed research into early health care in the area, published in

full in the Historical and Genealogical Society's "Ibis" magazine, which can only be summarised in this work.

The first Commission-sponsored medical services in the area were provided from Leeton. In 1912, however, the Commission came to an agreement with Dr. Frederick Jones of Whitton to provide medical care for their workers.

The Commission collected ninepence a week from its employees. In return they and their families were entitled to "free" medical service from Dr Jones (including drugs and dressings), either during normal surgery hours at Whitton or on his weekly visits to each camp. Any employee, however, thoughtless enough to suffer the effects of "immorality or drunken-ness" had to pay ordinary fees as a private patient.

Doctor's attendance at childbirth was expensive at three pounds three shillings - at a time when a matron was paid two pounds two shillings a week. The doctor's fee did not include the cost of travel at five shillings a mile during the day or seven shillings and sixpence a mile after 8pm, with babies so frequently inconsiderate in their timing. It is not clear whether the Commission or the parents paid this, but it seems at least to have been a special deal that was struck by the Commission on behalf of their employees. Other special arrangements were to be made for operations.

For its part the Commission agreed to provide a hospital tent and a nurse - who was the only one able to authorise unscheduled calls on the doctor's services. Employees were to treat the tent as an ordinary hospital and contribute to its upkeep as far as possible. The first such hospital was established at Bagtown in 1913. Its walls were made of hessian and lined with newspaper. It was one of the few buildings at the time with a wooden floor and corrugated iron roof. The first nurse was Miss Lillian M. Burns.

In 1914 Dr Jones was replaced by Dr Arthur Moorhouse Watkins, later Griffith's first doctor. Dr Watkins continued the Whitton surgery, but lived near Bagtown in a house erected by the Commission at a cost of around four hundred pounds. I believe this house is still standing near the old Commission Cheese Factory.

Although the move of settlers from Bagtown to Griffith began in 1919, the transfer of medical services to Griffith was felt to be unreasonably slow, given the generally poor living conditions, the number of soldier settlers in need of extra medical care, and the impact of the great influenza epidemic which soldiers had brought back with them from overseas. The campaign to establish a hospital service in Griffith forms quite a saga (Robyn Oliver).

The Field Hospital

By 1919 the people of Griffith were desperate for a hospital. The population was expanding rapidly and illness was rife, both from the rough living conditions as well as the effects of World War I, including the influenza epidemic which soldiers brought back with them. Given the promises of civic amenities made to settlers in Irrigation Commission promotional brochures from as early as 1913, forward planning for such an essential facility certainly was lacking.

It is not entirely clear who was responsible for the construction of Griffith's first hospital, located in Banna Avenue on the site of the Government Office Block. It was referred to as "The Commission Hospital" and the "Field Hospital", and the Irrigation Commission was clearly behind it, probably intending it for the use of their employees, but public fundraising was also involved. It seems strange that the campaign for a Public Hospital which was running at the same time as this first hospital was built, not only made no reference to it, but also stated within a month of its opening that "the establishment of a local hospital is not yet within view".

From the start, the construction of the first hospital owed a lot to the efforts of the Commission workers. In October 1920 the President of the Political Labor League made strong representation to the Irrigation Commission that the "Griffith Hospital" be opened immediately. The Commission replied that the building was ready and furnished, but they were having trouble negotiating with a doctor to take charge and appoint other staff.

In March the following year, 20 men and 16 lorries, apparently from the Commission, went out to Yenda to bring in the Barracks to make a new ward. Such was their enthusiasm, that the services of another 12 men and lorries from No. 2 section had to be knocked back. Mr and Mrs Chambers of Yenda supplied the crew with tea and sandwiches and the men were dined afterwards at Mrs Moulder's cafe. Public subscriptions and donations for the furnishing of the new ward were called for - one of the largest coming from Taylor Bros., who had the first shop in Banna Avenue.

Later the same month a working bee was called "to erect the new ward in one day". The Committee hoped to see over a hundred men ready to "make the new ward rise like Alladin's palace". Ladies were asked to provide cakes and sandwiches - with the comment that "All men can work better if the ladies are there to smile and hand round refreshments."

The bee must have been a success because on the 4th April 1921 the new hospital was opened by the resident Commissioner, Mr Evatt. During the opening it was stressed that "the present hospital was only of a temporary nature and the people of Griffith must keep working for a permanent hospital building on the site set aside for it". Approximately half the running cost of the hospital was funded from Commission employees' weekly medical contributions and the other half from government subsidy, amounting to eight hundred pounds a year.

By this time Dr Watkins had moved his surgery from Whitton to Banna Avenue. He was paid nine hundred pounds a year to look after Commission employees (in addition to his private patients), and was presumably the new hospital's first doctor. In addition the hospital employed Matron Cooper, herself a World War I veteran, a nurse, a probationer, cook, casual girl, laundress and wardsman.

On January 1922 the Griffith Hospital Building Fund decided to take over the "Commission Hospital" and run it as a "Public Institution". References to the hospital on death certificates subsequently changed from "Field Hospital" to "Griffith Hospital". It is not clear what the terms of the take over were but the donations were called for and the committee excused themselves from other community activities saying that the hospital would need "all the money that can be raised during this year".

Hospital staff were asked to stay on under the change of management and Drs Watkins and Bodycombe accepted the positions of honorary medical officers. The treatment figures for the first year may say something about the balance of the population at the time: 143 males were admitted, but only 20 females, although the death rate was higher among women. 896 people were treated as outpatients - perhaps not surprising given the very limited space in the hospital.

In spite of promises the "temporary" hospital remained in use until 1931 when the present hospital opened on the official site in Noorebar Avenue. The old building remained on its original site as rental accommodation until 1977, when it was moved to Pioneer Park Museum, along with its associated Nurses Quarters (Robyn Oliver).

Industry

In addition to almost a score of wineries in Griffith, there was a rice mill, fruit packing plant, juice factory, cheese factory and chilling plant. Some of these industries failed, and others, such as the Colla Bros steel smithing works, have continued their tradition to the present day.

Colla Bros.: carrying on the blacksmith tradition

In 2004 there was still a firm of blacksmiths in Griffith, Colla Bros., carrying on the tradition and adapting their skills to the work required by today's farms and industries.

The Colla brothers, Tony, Luigi, Alcide and Tarcisio, were "born in the blacksmith shop" in Castalcucco, Province of Treviso, Italy, run by their family for as many generations as they know back. Tony Colla's own written account of this shop is fascinating.

Although a promising student, Tony left school at the age of 11 to help his father in the blacksmith shop. At the age of 16, he was unexpectedly taken prisoner of war- one boot on, one foot bandaged from a serious burn at the forge, ending up in German concentration camps. Italian partisans had attacked Fascist army headquarters nearby and 13 people from small villages in the area were taken hostage as a reprisal.

After his release at the end of the war, he returned to the blacksmith shop, but life in Italy was tough at the time, and he had ideas of going overseas to earn money for a few years, as his grandfather had done in America earlier. In 1949 he took up a landing permit sponsored by Tony Andreatta of Griffith, and set sail for Australia.

At first he worked on farms, but it wasn't too long before his blacksmithing skills came to the fore. In 1950, he spent a month with Bilbul blacksmith, Tom Bortolazzo, working through two year's backlog of repairing plough shares over a hot January. Tom became sick, however, and Tony was unable to carry on by himself because of his lack of English.

The following April, he found work at Blue Ham's blacksmith shop in Bonegilla Rd, where Yambil Street now runs through. At the time, Blue's brothers, Jack and Percy worked there, as well as Blue's son-in-law and a couple of others. Tony recalls that they were "very good Australian blacksmiths, very fast in horse shoeing and very good on building horse lorries or sulkies or bread and milk carts, and wheelwrights". The faster you hit the hot metal, the hotter it got. Many blacksmiths used a powered hammer - theirs in Italy was water powered - but the Ham's power hammer hadn't worked for a while and they were very fast on the sledgehammer. Tony was also employed on the sledgehammer, and he said at the end of the day, they would have to pour the sweat from their shoes.

It was during this time that Tony worked hard on his English. Each time he learnt a new word, he would chalk it up on a wall. He was still unsure of his English when Blue Hams was forced to retire because of illness in 1951 and offered to sell the business to him. He was also unsure of the work, because Australian blacksmithing encompassed a wider range of work than it did in Italy, where horse shoeing, wheel wrighting and coach building were quite separate trades. However, he had recently married Julia De Valentin, whose family had come to Australia in the 1920's, and with the encouragement and help of her family, he took the plunge. His brother, Luigi, who had followed him to Griffith and was working for the Council, joined him in the new venture.

At first work was slow, but as Italian farmers began to change from horse lorries to small trucks, they got a lot of work building the trays for the trucks, which arrived with chassis and cabin only. By 1953 their premises were too small and they made the move to their current Benerembah St. site. When they began building, Benerembah and Kookoora Streets only existed on paper - they had to put in a track to deliver building materials to the site. Banna Avenue then went right across where T.A.F.E. is now, and there was an Aboriginal town camp on the hill.

Since the move, their preparedness to move into new areas and learn new skills has seen the business continuing to expand, with many extensions of premises - at one time an entire new building was erected over the top of several old ones, while work continued underneath.

Brother, Alcide, joined the firm at the time of the move, and in 1960 Tony's father decided to sell the blacksmith shop in Italy and join them, moving to Griffith with his wife, mother and youngest son, Tarcisio, who also joined the firm. Of the nine people now employed, six are members of the Colla family - the four Colla brothers, all trained blacksmiths, and Tony's two sons, Terry and Stephen - Stephen, who was leading NSW apprentice of the year in 1979, in the workshop, and Terry working on plans in the office.

At the time of the move to Kookora St., they gave up the horse work. The biggest change in their work, diversification into steel structures for farm sheds has led to much more complex structural steel work, including San Bernadino Wines Warehouse and the State Office Block. Other work has included machinery for the carrot industry - washers, graders, toppers; machinery for the rice industry - large land graders, aeroplane wheeled hydraulic delvers (Pioneer Park acquired one of these last year), scoops, multi-tined rippers, bulk grain bins, ploughs, seeders and more - most of this equipment designed by them. Tony also donated all the steelwork for building the Italian Cultural Museum.

The "blacksmith" sign is still over the top of Colla Bros.' premises, and the forge still in use, but their large airy premises are a far cry from the blacksmith shop of the past. The office, filled with drawing boards and plans, looks more like an architect's office. When I asked about the future of traditional blacksmithing, Tony said sadly, that the work was too hard, and you can't get young apprentices to take it on these days. To the best of his knowledge, theirs is the only forge in operation for some distance - the last forge in Wagga closed down a decade ago (Robyn Oliver).

Griffith Producer's Co-operative

Griffith Producer's Co-Operative was a very important institution for the local farming community from its very beginnings. It was Griffith's longest running fruit handling business, operating for eighty years until its closure in the year 2000. Its peak period of operation was during the interwar years.

Canneries would send empty wooden fruit crates to the Co-op for farmers to pick up. Farmers would deliver the crates packed with fruit to the Co-op where a cannery agent would inspect them. The cases would be weighed in, loaded onto a train, then sent to the IXL and Rosella canneries in Sydney.

The Co-op was a great asset for the farmers in reaching the Sydney market. The Co-op not only packed fresh fruit, but also sold dried fruit to buyers who would come down from Sydney. Dried fruit was pooled, then graded and paid according to the grade. This system protected farmers who were having a bad season from being economically punished, as their fruit was pooled in with the better quality fruit. Equally, the high quality growers were not happy with this method, as they received a lower price than if their produce had been individually graded. The Co-op also used to provide loans (by carrying growers until the produce was delivered. In the meantime, they could obtain goods on credit from the Co-op Store. Built in 1931, it was something like a department store, also supplying farm chemicals.

During the Second World War there was also an expansion of vegetable growing. It was around this time that competition arrived in town in the form of Alf Nugan. He was a Spanish settler who came to Griffith in 1938-9 and began working on farms. He also began buying fruit. Starting out in a shed beside the railway, he began to invent new methods of marketing the produce. He accepted half-cases as well as full cases of fruit, cool stored it and distributed to a wide circuit of towns (not just Sydney). In these early days of non-refrigerated truck transport, he began to move fruit in trucks lined with Sisalcraft (a heat insulating building paper), with ice packed between fruit crates. The fruit was able to reach a very large number of far-flung markets, in much better condition than was previously thought possible. The Co-op never fully recovered from this competition (Oral source: Peter Ceccato).

In 1913, 27 settlers banded together, put in one pound each and the first Cash Club was formed. Its object was to buy goods direct from Sydney, distribute them to the members at bare cost, and save money.

The first Co-operative Society was formed not long after the birth of the Cash Club and superseded it. This became the Griffith Co-operative Society in 1920, which was located in Banna Avenue under the management of Mr O. Whiting. It was a very flourishing business and in the early days it catered for the wants of all the settlers. It had a butcher's shop, slaughter yards, and agistment section, besides the ordinary business of a country general store. The agistment section was formed to run the cattle of shareholders and its land was leased from the Commission. An offshoot of the agistment section was the Co-op butchery, which was formed primarily to dispose of settlers' surplus stock to the best advantage. But soon the necessity for finding agistment for stock off the farm largely disappeared and the section was wound up. A year or two later the butchery was sold to private enterprise.

In 1921, fruit farms were rapidly increasing in production, soldier settlement was taking place on a big scale and it was realised by many that a separate company would have to be formed to handle the sales of horticultural produce. And so the Griffith Producers Co-operative Co. Ltd was formed and registered in November 1921 under the Companies Act. Each of the original 10 subscribers took 50 shares. This section was housed in a building on the railway, built with the assistance of a loan from the P.D. Society. An adjoining shed was bought from the Commission on very easy terms and a large proportion of the fruit then produced passed through the organisation.

The Company remained under the Companies Act until 1928 when the registration was transferred to the Co-operation Act.

During this period the problems being faced by the soldier settlers were major ones. The farms were coming into bearing and no provision had been made in the scheme of repatriation for the marketing of their produce. The Irrigation Commission solved a difficult problem in a very simple way. It advanced money to the soldiers to buy shares in the Griffith Producers.

The ten years following 1928 were fairly difficult ones. The Depression was underway, prices were falling and finances were strained. Conditions did not materially improve until the outbreak of war in 1939, but the Company in the meantime managed to keep growing and made steady progress.

In 1929 the first contract for the sale of canning peaches was made with the Sydney cannery. In the same year a new brick office was built, the contract price being approximately 1,300 pounds. The Company's bulk loading scheme was launched in 1929.

In 1932 the new cool store was completed and the President of the Rural Bank Mr McKerihan whose co-operation had made its erection possible came to the official opening. This proved of wonderful assistance to apricot and peach growers as it enabled them to pick seven days a week, whereas previously when fruit had to be railed immediately no picking could be done Thursday and Saturday.

In the early days of the Company's operations no banking facilities were available to the growers. The more fortunate left their credit balances with the Company, which was in turn loaned to those in need. This practice continued after the town of Griffith had become well established. With the advent of the Rural Bank, this need was largely done away with.

The years 1942 to 1952 were years of expansion for the Company. Additions were made to the cool stores, the packing sheds, plant etc. During the war years, costs were reasonably stable, although many lines of goods were scarce and difficult to get (Sources: Letter from Mr C Lasscock to Mr Iredale and an *Area News* article dated Friday May 1 1953 in the Local Studies Collection of the Griffith City Library).

Berry's Brickworks on Scenic Hill

The site of Berry's Brickworks is thought to be located off Remembrance Drive, just below, or at the back of, Pioneer Park. Berry's was the first machine-made brick manufacturing business in Griffith. Thomas Berry of Sydney, a builder by trade, arrived in Griffith in 1924 to establish it. He immediately set about designing and building the Works, locating his wife and two small sons in a rented house in Canal Street. As the business prospered, he designed and built his own house in Hyandra Street.

The Brickworks operated until 1948, when Thomas died. There were two breaks in operation, first during the Great Depression, when Thomas employed his staff in "spec" building while there was a downturn in the brick business, and later, during World War II, when both sons, presumably at this time working in the business, enlisted in the military forces. The family sold all properties and left the district after Thomas's death.

Some of Griffith's best known buildings are made from Berry's bricks - the Courthouse, Police Station, Rural Bank, old parts of the Hospital, and Griffith High. Most cottages built during the early years have foundations of "Berry's Brick".

One of the sons, Mr Harold Berry in Sydney, visited places he remembered on the Hill with Kelly Tyson and Enid Atkinson in 1996 providing detailed recollections of the brickworks and the people who worked there. To date, no historical archaeological surveys of Scenic Hill have been carried out.

One of the notable features of the brickworks was a huge steam engine. For feeding the brick kilns and the steam engine, Berry's staff were constantly busy cutting timber, often out Tabbitta way. This steam engine is

now in a steam museum at Menangle (Robyn Oliver; "Griffith and District Pioneers" Series 3, Part I).

The foundations and remains of the kilns of the old Brickworks are still evident today. Berry's brickworks is a significant local twentieth century archaeological site, containing the remains of brick kilns and a large dam (which may be a later, mid-twentieth century construction). Little is known about the site and it requires further research.

The site where the brickworks are was considered for development by the then Department of Lands in 1971 and a Public Works grant of \$1000.00 assisted in the provision of amenities and drainage works on the site. When they designed the walking tracks on the hill, the Department of Lands discussed the desire to beautify the area east of Remembrance Driveway. The marshy area would require fill between the two excavations and a drain was to be constructed to allow a firm drainage course. Some nearby concrete was to be put in the hollows but the Berry's Brickworks site was to be left undisturbed for historical reasons. The drain has a concrete base and sides camouflaged by rock and rubble to give a natural look. A waterfall was proposed between Pioneer Park and the dam area. The dam has been used for dumping of tyres, rocks and steel and the cumbungi growth is extensive. Mosquito breeding may be a problem. Further, the Motor Sports Club has experienced drainage problems because of seepage from the area and there is a need to correct the drainage and perhaps divert the water around the Motor Sports lease. Redevelopment of the Berry's Brickworks site was first considered by the Department of Lands in 1971 and the Friends of Scenic Hill in 1979 (Scenic Hill Plan of Management 2000).

Manufacturing and burning bricks at Berry's Brickworks

Harold Berry described the process for manufacturing the bricks. As there was no electricity available to power the brick making machinery and also to provide heat to the forming moulds for shaping the bricks, for this purpose a Fowler Stream Tractor was used.

Suitable material for manufacturing bricks was fed into a grinding pan, which crushed the material. The raw material was then scraped through fine grates to the pit under the grinding pan. It was then picked up by the cups on the elevator belt and transferred to the loft in readiness for brick making.

During the process of grinding the clay a small quantity of water was fed into the grinding pan to give the clay an adhesive quality. The clay was then ready to be fed into the brick making machine via a chute from the loft into a charger box which supplied the correct amount of clay to go into the moulds to shape the bricks. The bricks were formed by cam pressure, which was built into the design of the brick machine.

As the bricks were pressed into shape the machine operator then placed them on a brick barrow in readiness to be wheeled into the kiln for setting by the brick setters. It was possible to manufacture between 8,000 and 10,00 bricks per day per machine. The method was generally known as machine dry press method. The brick setters had to set the bricks in the kiln in a special way to enable an up draft of air to take the flames and heat to the top of the kiln.

A small fire was ignited in each fire hole to steam the bricks, in other words to slowly dry out the moisture before the main firing began. This procedure took about 2 to 3 days. After the steaming process the fires were built up to full fire. The fuel used for this purpose was pine logs, which were obtained from the dry area farms outside Griffith.

As the heat increased and the flames had reached the top of the kiln, stopping was then spread over the top of the kiln. Stopping was damp clay. The purpose of this procedure was to drive the heat back to the bottom. The fires were then reduced for a few hours and once again full fires were put into effect. By this time shrinkage had started on the bricks in the kiln and when it had reached six inches the bricks were burnt.

From the time the full fires were commenced it took between 60 and 70 hours to burn a kiln of bricks, each kiln contained 100,000 bricks. It took 4 to 5 days for the bricks to cool before they could be used.

The men employed at the brickworks were:

Cyril King: Truck driver, wood carter, brick carter and blacksmith.

Fred Fisher: Brick setter and brick burner.
Albert Fisher: Brick setter and brick burner.
Jacky Daines: Brick machine operator.
Lionel Daines: General hand.
Punch Daines: General hand.
Dick Smith: General hand.
George Freeman: Engine driver.
Paddy Walsh: Wood cutter
Alan May: Deliveries.
Bill Gibson: Grinding pan operator.
Les Berry and Harold Berry.

Most of these men could work in any section of the brickworks, and there were others who worked at the works for short periods of time (Harold Berry's recollections in Scenic Hill Plan of Management 2000).

Cheese factory and later Freezing Works

The Water Commission erected a cheese factory located at research Station Road, Hanwood. It opened in January 1916. The Manager was a Mr Boller.

A few years later the experiment with dairy farming was drawing to a close. A lot of farmers began growing fruit trees and left the dairy industry. The cheese factory was not viable anymore.

The railway arrived in Griffith and farmers began growing seasonal crops, peas and tomatoes in between the young fruit trees, and on any open land. Peas were transported to the Sydney markets by rail, but because tomatoes were perishable a tomato-pulping factory was set up at the site.

Then later when the fruit trees began bearing, the tomato pulping plant closed down and a process for drying fruits such as apricots and Alberta peaches was set up.

Farmers who did not have the capital to buy equipment for drying fruit themselves delivered their fresh fruit to the factory for drying.

Peter Ceccato described the drying process. Fruit was pitted open and laid "cut side up" on 3' x 2' wooden trays. Trays were stacked 20 trays high with 6 stacks per trolley. Trolleys were made up of a wooden frame on four steel wheels, about a quarter the size of train wheels. Trolleys would be wheeled onto a rail track, which ran under the factory verandah. From there, the rail track continued out and down the paddock some half a kilometre from various farmhouses. A team of two horses pulled trolleys to the sulphur chamber where each trolley was sent into a separate chamber to be sulphured for eight hours.

Trolleys were then pushed out to the open paddock, where the trays of fruit were laid out to be sun-dried. When dried, the fruit was taken off the trays and packed in hessian bags for the farmer to collect.

It was in about the late 1920s and early 1930s that farmers, such as my father, were able to set up their own facility, although not as elaborate as the trolley and rails, to carry 10 trays on a barrow to their own sulphur box. It was hard work, but it saved a lot of money to dry our own fruit.

Later in the late 1920's Arthur Justice purchased the property. He set up the old cheese factory as a rabbit chilling plant where rabbit trappers took and sold their catch to the factory.

The rabbit carcasses were exported to England, the skins were sold in Australia, and also tons of ice was sold locally to households that in those years did not have refrigeration. Refrigerators were unheard of and most households had a drip safe or ice-chests. Mr Abbott was employed driving the ice-truck, delivering ice to households in the town and on farms in the district.

Rabbit trappers came with various means of transport, mostly by horse drawn carts and sulkies, though a few had motor vehicles (utilities). Some even rode push bikes rigged out to carry up to 30 rabbits.

The trapper worked from just before sunset to early sunrise. They would work the traps all night as that

was when rabbits were active. They were paid sixpence per pair of rabbits. Most trappers earned nearly twice as much on a night's trapping as a labourer on the basic wage earned in a day.

About 1939-40 the old cheese factory was sold off. Open land of about 15 acres was sold to a neighbour, Stan Wright. The five or so acres containing the Freezing works and two houses were sold to Vasilios Livanes.

Livanes continued chilling rabbits and after World War II he introduced the chilling of kangaroo meat, which was exported to Europe, a lot of it going to post-war Germany. When myxomatosis was introduced to destroy rabbits, they became scarcer and the meat chilling plant was closed. The introduction of refrigerated truck transport in the 1960s made small local meat chilling plants obsolete.

Barry Scobie and Rex Mills then bought the property. They turned the chilling rooms into cold storage (with another two cool rooms added) which they rented out to various fruit packing companies for additional storage space for fruit and vegetables.

In about 1980 the premises were sold to the Nugan Group (Peter Ceccato).

Mining

Quarrying at Scenic Hill

In the 1990s, two visitors from Victoria, Ted and Neville White, recalled the days when the whole Pioneer Park area was a gravel pit. Around 1931-34 they were among five sons of Teddy and Esther White who had the contract for the Scenic Hill gravel pit. The sons' names were Ted, Tom, Eric, Alf and Neville. There were other gravel pits at Lakeview and Tharbogang, but Scenic Hill was the "main pit". A quarry and brick kiln operated on the hill at the same time.

While they were working at Scenic Hill, the family camped near the water tanks, on the only bit of ground not dug up! Their compound comprised three tents - kitchen tent, parent's tent, boys tent - and horse yards. They had to be very careful of snakes, and the youngest, Neville, recalled an older brother throwing him onto the kitchen table one night to protect him from a snake.

The fear of snakes was an issue on his walks through the bush to school - although, as he said, he "went to school, but was never at school"! Apparently there were superior attractions at the greyhound track, where their neighbour at the brick kiln raced dogs, and at Tranter's ambulance station.

Other members of the gravel digging team included a man called Rafferty, and Tommy Dean who drove a motor truck. The truck belonged to Area Motors, run by Miss Cook. The Shire Engineer was John Conan, later a captain during the war and subsequently at Mawell Shire in Gippsland.

The gravel was dug using horse drawn ploughs and scoops. The scoops dragged the gravel into piles that were carted away by the truck. Neville recalled the Lakeview gravel being screened, but not the Scenic Hill gravel. The aggregate must have been about the right size, because Neville White could not recall it being screened.

He also recalled the ingenious "Chinaman" loading system used at one of the sites, possibly Lakeview. The gravel was piled onto raised platform doors, held up by a prop from below. The truck to be loaded drove under the platform. When it knocked the prop out, the gravel fell onto the back of the truck.

One of the jobs the family worked on was the Yenda Road. They had six horses on the grader - "Pop" worked the blade on big wheels at the back while one of the older brothers looked after the horses. At the end of the day it was "all hands to" to go back along the road to pick out all the large stones.

Father Teddy "Pop" White was spoken of with great respect. He began with enough money to buy one horse, scoop and second hand harness, starting on a canal at the back of town, and working his way up. "He worked his damned inside out - at night by hurricane lamp!" I imagine that Esther must also have had her

share of hardships, bringing up five boys in tent camps.

Old photographs of the Scenic Hill Quarry, held by Griffith City Library, give some idea of the scale of operations for the removal of material from Scenic Hill in the early years, for concrete, roads, bricks and other construction materials. Tracks went down to a road leading to Bagtown/Wilbriggie, where the quarried rock was used in making concrete (Robyn Oliver).

The quarry is a good example of a twentieth century archaeological site dating from the early 1930s. The rock cliffs forming the sides of the quarry are evident, as are the remains of a loading dock. Other relic features of the quarry site have either been removed or are difficult to interpret. This is a suitable site for further research, and is significant, as it is the last remaining quarry site on Scenic Hill. There is also evidence of a gravel pit near Dare Road where early railway development can be seen, although little information has been obtained about this site. It is thought that the several other quarries were filled in with rubbish dumps.

Technology

Griffith contains two notable monuments of technology: The Davy Paxman engine and the railway turntable.

Ron Kubank and the Davy Paxman

Ron Kubank and the powerful 106 H.P. Davy Paxman diesel engine go back a long way. Ron's family had come to Griffith in 1922 from a dry area farm in Tailem Bend, South Australia, when Ron was five, settling on Farm 101, Yoogali, which was then a dairy farm, only half-cleared. Ron recalled an hours' work for the children turning the milk separator before their two and a half mile walk to Yoogali School, along with holding out a green disk on a wooden arm to stop the train at a nearby railway siding for the milk to be picked up to go to the Leeton Dairy Factory.

The cows didn't last long, however. Ron's father, Alfred Gustav Kubank became one of the first to experiment with a new crop - rice, supported by wheat, sheep and pigs. He also became, incidentally, a long serving Alderman, and was at various times Shire Vice-President and President.

Ron initially worked on the farm, but started work for Griffith Producers Co-operative about a year before the Second World War. It was then that he first met the Davy Paxman, which had been purchased new by the Co-operative in 1934 from Colchester, England, to drive the 50 ton ammonia compressor used to cool the fruit.

Ron's work there was interrupted when he joined up. Three months training at Kapooka were followed by a stint driving a winch on the Sydney wharves, where the Royal Australian Engineers were employed to show the wharfies how a Liberty ship could be loaded in 5 days and 5 nights, half the usual time. He then went on to spend 13 months in Darwin before "ending up in Borneo".

After the War he returned to the Producers and the Davy Paxman. He was one of three drivers rostered around the clock to run the big engine, for three months at a time without stopping during picking season. The Manager, Ron Hawkins generally took the day shift, and Ron had the night shift from 10 pm to 6 am - "It was the biggest job in the world to stay awake!" The fruit was cooled to around 35 degrees Fahrenheit, or minus 10 degrees for figs, to prepare it for the long hot train trip to Sydney in unchilled louvered carriages. With an extra topping of pulverised ice, prepared by another engine (the Davy Paxman wasn't generally used for freezing, although it was capable of it), the system "worked alright". According to Ron they were "very busy" - there could be 1000 tons of fruit in the cool rooms and "farmers ready to shoot you if it wasn't right!"

The Davy Paxman was also used for cooling more than fruit. During a terrible two month long heat wave in 1938, during which at least 15 people dropped dead on the streets of Griffith, older citizens and children were moved out of the hospital during the heat of the day to the Davy Paxman chilled cool room at the Producers, saving their lives. It was a time when other citizens moved out of their house at night and slept on their lawns, including Ron and his wife.

In the 1950s, Ron left the Producers to take over the management of the family farm until it was sold in 1983. Around 1965 the Davy Paxman was replaced at the Producers by electric motors which turned on automatically when the coolroom temperature rose, reducing the need for operators. It may also have been that after 30 years operation the Davy Paxman was wearing out. Although the Davy Paxman's partner 53 H.P. engine was still in use at the Producers in the 1990s for back up power generation, the Davy Paxman fell out of use.

By 1978 the engine was in Pioneer Park and letters were being sent to the manufacturers in England to

obtain information and parts for the engine's restoration. Ron was one of those responsible for putting it in its present position - requiring the excavation of a five foot hole and the laying of five tons of concrete to create a slab strong enough to support it. Part of the roof of what is now the Stationary Engine Shed had to be removed and a 25 ton crane lifted it into position.

In 1981 Perry Howard, as Secretary of Pioneer Park wrote to the Australian representatives of the manufacturers, who had assisted with information and parts,

"The old 4MZ engine has been restored almost to its former glory, and on special 'Action' days which we conduct at intervals, Mr. Kubank coaxes it along until it is purring like a kitten (albeit a rather noisy one) and it is a source of great interest to all, partly because of its size and obvious power and partly because it has been restored so lovingly."

For some twenty years after its restoration, Ron would take up his post every "Action Day" to run the engine, coming up in advance to clean the shed and to make sure the Davy Paxman was running smoothly. It is thought to be one of only two or three such engines in Australia (Robyn Oliver).

Railway turntable

This railway turntable is a rare item: few still exist in the State. It has a strong connection with the early development of the city, and provides what little evidence remains of the city's historic links with the railways.

This small railway turntable is no longer used. Details of its operation would require further research, for interpretation and promotion of the site to visitors.

Transport

Staging Inns

The era of animal-powered transport, that really only ended in about the mid-twentieth century, has left surprisingly few relics. The many staging inns that dotted roads in the area in the nineteenth century have now disappeared.

Arthur Nixon's memoirs refer to at least fourteen "wayside inns, hotels or shanties" built on the roads running from Hay to Hillston in the 1880s. These roads were used by carriers, the mail, Cobb & Co coaches and settlers. The names of the inns often mark the distance travelled, which must have felt like an achievement at the time, with slow, poorly sprung vehicles and dusty, bumpy roads. An early clergyman's weary account of travel in the area asserted that, in his experience, there was no possible way of sleeping in a Cobb & Co coach. An early Hay reminiscence talks about preparations at an inn for coach travellers. At the moment the coach was sighted in the distance scones were popped into the oven, timed to be taken out, piping hot, just as the coach pulled in.

The Nine Mile (9 miles from Hay), Whealbah (at Whealbah close to bridge over the river), Duke of Edinburgh (Booligal), Quandong (12 miles south of Booligal) and One Tree (23 miles south of Booligal) were on the route via Booligal. The Six Mile (6 miles from Hay), Crows Nest (19 miles from Hillston), McKinley (23 miles from Hillston), Gunbar, Galah (site of Galah watering place), Twenty Mile Gums (20 miles from Hay) were on the road via Gunbar. There were two further unnamed inns on the cross roads. By 1890 a history of Hillston lists 31 hotels in the district, spread out along these and other roads.

Inns were sometimes the preliminary to a larger settlement. The earliest remembered building in Gunbar was a log hotel built by William Spry before the 1880s and later destroyed by fire. By the 1882 the town included a newer hotel, a smithy, wheelwright's shop, Chinese market garden and a mail change. The first church service in the town, around 1883, was held in the dining room of the Gunbar Hotel. The settlement continued to grow until the late 1910s when the proximity of the M.I.A., arrival of the railway and motorcar lead to its rapid decline. Between 1923 and 1925 the mail run ceased, the school and police station closed and the hotel was burnt down.

Hillston is said to have been named after its first innkeeper. The earliest settlement there was known as Daisy Plains (or Daisy Hill). By the 1850s it was Redbank. In the 1860s an unemployed stockman named William Ward Hill decided to invest the proceeds of a recent droving trip to Adelaide in building "The Redbank Hotel". By 1868 the settlement of Redbank had grown sufficiently for a group of settlers to gather in this hotel to discuss agitation for a Post Office. The Post Office replied that there was already a Redbank on their list, so a new name would have to be found. When the group again gathered to discuss this matter,

"in the same congenial surroundings as before", the suggestion that won the day was that they name it "Hillston" after hotel's founder (Sources: Robyn Oliver; Arthur Nixon's memoirs; Mr Neville Tyson, who lived in Dumossa Homestead in the 1920s; "Corridors of Gold - History of Goolgowi and District").

The Cobb & Co run

The stables on Ballandry Station were built from a mixture of milled, pit sawn and adzed timbers. It is one of the places in the district connected to Cobb & Co.'s run through that area.

Barellan stock and station agent, George Gow in April 1926 talks about this run in an issue of Gow & Gow's Quarterly Gazette. He noted that the last Cobb & Co coach in Australia had been replaced by motor power about a year previously, "thus ending Australia's coaching days, breaking one of the last few remaining links with the past". According to George Gow, this coach was purchased by the Federal Government to be preserved in Canberra, "the new Federal Capital".

I will share with you verbatim his account of the coach run through this area.

"A mail camp was established every 20 miles, and a man would have the fresh team ready to change as the coach came up. Jim Bourke was an old-time driver on this line.

A five horse mail coach used to run from Narrandera out past Mt. Crystal via The Willows, Moombooldool and Barellan Homestead, thence down the old Binya-Barellan Stock Road on country now occupied by Messrs. Preston, Woolnough, Dunn, Overs, Salt Bush Tank Reserve, Waide's, Hogan's, J. Evans, sen., and J. Evans, jun. the last three being in old Binya part. On going through the gate on to the Binya Forest Reserve it turned partly to the right, making out to (Mt.) Elliott or Rankins Springs direction.

The whole road after leaving Mt. Crystal to where it hits the Binya forest reserve, is now mostly ploughed up, and all the old numbered trees showing the distance are gone, with perhaps the exception of one, which bears the mark 63 1/2, the distance from Narrandera.

This one tree now exists on the Binya forest reserve, and it really ought to be preserved as a link of the old coaching days. It is the last of its line, standing there unrecognised and rarely noticed, though perhaps it remembers the peculiar rattle of Cobb and Co.'s coaches, giving the distance from Narrandera to the Binya Forest Reserve according to the turns and twists of the road as travelled by Cobb and Co.'s old five horse coaches." (Robyn Oliver).

Horse troughs

The horse troughs, one at Yenda, another relocated to Pioneer Park, are landmark pieces of street furniture dating from the animal-powered era. They also speak of a couple's extraordinary generosity to working horses. These concrete items have an impressed inscription reading, "Donated by Annis and George Bills, Australia". I had assumed this couple to be relatively local philanthropists, but it seems that their philanthropy was on a much grander scale, and that there are thousands of horse troughs donated by them, not only in Australia but in Europe, America and England.

George Bills was an English naturalist's son, who came to Australia as a lad in the 1850s. He and his brother, Henry, ran a prosperous wire-wove bedstead and mattress business in Kent St., Sydney. George and his Brighton born wife, Annis, became life members of the R.S.P.C.A. after it was established in Melbourne in 1871.

One of their concerns was the inadequate facilities for the watering of horses, which were the mainstay of commercial transportation. During their lifetime the Bills donated thousands of troughs to countries around the world and another thousand or so within Australia.

Annis died on a visit to England in 1910 and left her estate of 3,350 pounds to George. When George died in 1927 he left a sizeable legacy of 70,000 pounds and a trust fund to continue providing the troughs. One of their troughs was received with such enthusiasm by a mid-western town in the United States that a local

authority declared a public holiday the day it was unveiled.

Other known locations of Annis and George Bills' troughs are in: Centennial Park Sydney; the roadway flanking Parramatta's Prince Alfred Park; the corner of Mona Vale and Palm Street St. Ives; the corner of Bells Line of Road and Terrace Road at North Richmond; Clarendon; Galston; Gosford; Wentworth Falls; Maitland and Lawson.

One of the interesting features of the troughs is that they also catered for dogs. A sub-division in the trough had a pipe in a side wall which dripped water out into a smaller external dog trough at ground level. The dog drinking spout at the Yenda horse trough is one of the few to have survived (Robyn Oliver).

Cec Leckie, Horse Provisionary

Cec Leckie was an early saddlery owner in Griffith. His full name was Cecil Fenton Leckie, born to Irish parents at Yarroweyah, Victoria in 1895. He was the first of his family to move to this area from the Finlay district in 1919/20, marrying Leeton girl, Iris Clarke.

By around 1922 he was advertising as the "Griffith Livery and Bait Stables, C.F. Leckie, Proprietor". His business also included produce sales, auctions, saddlery and blacksmithy.

The business covered most of the Kooyoo Street block from Yambil to Canal Street, down both sides of Kooyoo Street.

For younger readers, a livery stable was like a motel for horses, horses being more difficult to "park" for a prolonged period than a car. Farmers coming to town for the day, or out of town visitors, would leave their horse and vehicle (buggy, spring cart, or sulky) at the livery stables. For a fee, the horse would be fed, groomed and rested, and the vehicle stored under cover. Cec also hired out horses and vehicles.

Cec did not appear to be a saddler or blacksmith himself. He had a variety of specialists working for him, whose names are no longer known. It was said that he was a hard man to bargain with. When customers made a lower bid than the marked price for an item in his saddlery, he would offer to toss them for the difference - usually winning.

The part of his saddlery shop that most people remembered is the model horse that always stood outside, which well behaved children were sometimes allowed to sit on. A photograph from about 1935 showed the horse standing outside Collier and Chandler's Blacksmithy (formerly Leckies). A vehicle also appeared in the same photograph. It was Sep Chittick's newly done up milk cart, with the words "PURE FRESH MILK" on the side.

The Livery Stables was ultimately sold to Mr Ledwidge and the Blacksmithy to Collier and Chandler. Cec Leckie died in 1953, and his business was still apparently going around this time, but was less specialised in horses. There was no working saddlery by that time (Robyn Oliver, "Griffith and District Pioneers", Volume 3).

Arrival of the railway

Historical notes prepared by students of Griffith High School (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au) show that early Griffith relied heavily on animal-powered transport.

The only link between Melbourne and Griffith (Bagtown) before 1916 was the train to Willbriggie and a coach, drawn by five horses, from Willbriggie to Bagtown. After 1916, however, the train line was extended to Griffith from Temora (through Barellan) so that produce could be transported faster to and from the city. This train took a whole five hours to travel from Temora to Griffith (a distance of approximately 150km) and made its run 3 times a week.

There was also a train to Whitton that came from Melbourne. It took two days to get to Whitton from

Melbourne, with an overnight stop at Junee. Mr George Williams, who owned the only car in Bagtown at the time, picked up passengers from Whitton station.

Before the railway line was extended to Griffith (Bagtown), a horse-drawn coach was used to transport the mail, produce and people to and from Willbriggie Station. This coach was run and owned by Micky Cush.

Travel around Bagtown was almost always by the family horse and sulky, usually carrying a maximum of three people. The main danger to people's safety was the steam roller and chaff cutter, which caused most horses to "bolt". Then, motorcars were introduced in 1916.

Transport to schools for children was firstly by coaches drawn by four horses which carried twenty people. This was later changed to the back of a lorry, owned by Mr Ravenscroft. The most effective form of transport though, was on the back of a horse - for roads in the newly established community were of a very poor standard (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

The railway line in Griffith, running roughly parallel to Banna Avenue, is in an area identified in Walter Burley Griffin's plan for goods interchange and light industrial uses, with electricity and gas factories.

Built around the same time as the Police Station, it is of similar style: functional, residential in character, with minimal ornamentation. This severity appears to have been typical of the utilitarian government buildings erected during the Great Depression. It stands in sharp contrast to the art deco style that appears in community and commercial buildings of the same period.

The Railway Station building is double-brick and tile roofed; built to a standard government design ("type 13"). Together with a "fibro" signal box raised above the platform, it was completed in 1937.

In the present age of expensively built stainless steel and glass status symbols, it is hard to imagine that at the time of its construction, this plain brick railway station was a source of considerable local status and pride.

Area News articles of the time reported that the old weatherboard station building was "moved bodily" from its original position at the western end of the platform to make room for the new brick station. The Progress Association had campaigned for the dignity of a brick building for years. But the Association was incensed when they read on the plans that the platform (12 feet wide) was actually going to be smaller than Temora's platform (18 feet wide). They complained to the Commissioner for Railways, Mr Hartigan.

The newspaper, reporting on the official opening, wrote that the "new brick structure replacing its old derided weatherboard building is now definitely established". Declaring the new station open, the Commissioner probably reflected local sentiment when he said it had been hard for him "to refrain from blushing when he visited Griffith to be confronted with the old outworn building" but that now he could "face Griffith with composure."

So much of Griffith City has been re-developed, that the interwar city fabric has become significant. The station buildings now represent an important civic group of structures within the town of Griffith. Components of heritage significance in the group include railway lines, the station building, side building, signal box and railway turntable. The Griffith/Temora and Griffith/Leeton railway line is a major local cultural landscape feature.

The railway corridor in Griffith City is visually significant in defining "edges" of the city centre. Though currently managed as a barrier and hazard, planning should emphasise the railway's contribution to urban form in Griffith.

5

Building settlements

Described by explorer John Oxley in 1817 as an area “uninhabitable and useless to civilised man”, Griffith is now known as a cosmopolitan city with sophisticated cafes, tourist attractions, wineries and vigorous farms. Situated at the centre of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, the people of Griffith refuse to live under the shadow of the coastal cities, and maintain a fierce independence. But this was not always so. Settlement in the area grew out of the British colony based in Sydney Cove.

The Aboriginal mission

The first chapter described in detail the history of Aboriginal missions and fringe camps in the local area. This section summarises how such settlements fit into a world historical context.

When a colonial power arrives into a new area, it sets up settlements. For example, the Spanish established towns in South America that had churches, central market squares and seminaries, that is, they placed idealised copies of the Spanish town onto the South American landscape. Similarly town planning in New South Wales was based on the English model.

Firstly, the colonised people are subjugated by the colonising power. In the Wiradjuri region of New South Wales this occurred as the pastoral frontier advanced along the river systems during the 1830s. Local people always remain some sort of a threat to a colonising power, due to continuing active or passive resistance. The choices are either to build fortress towns to keep the local people out, or allow the subjugated local people in as dependents. Pastoral station owners in colonial New South Wales had that choice: shoot local Aborigines on sight and live in fear, or trade with Aboriginal groups, using them for a range of services and treating them as part dependent.

Once a town is imposed onto the landscape, it becomes a magnet for all local non-urban people, who may not fully understand the nature of urbanisation, but who are attracted by the concentration of new people and goods that appear in the town. What happens in these situations is that some of the remaining local people who may have been either hunter-gatherers or farmers, then move in closer to the town. Then others join them in a chain migration. As time goes on, these people, who live culturally divided from the rest of the population, progressively settle on the edge of the town, into a separate sub-urban area. There they live geographically and ethnically separated from the town. Darlington Point Reserve, the Griffith Town Camps and Frog Hollow Flats are all examples of such settlements which Aboriginal people created in the local area. In migrant situations they may actively try to assimilate into the dominant community. In some cases, though not all, later generations of these local people may intermarry with urban folk as the two groups assimilate into one. However, these small communities may remain isolated, non-integrated and feared.

The other strategy employed by an urban community with respect to managing the remaining local people is to contain and control them in enclaves. Warangesda mission at Darlington Point was such an enclave, created not only to be managed as a welfare institution, but also as an attempt to convert the Aboriginal population into self-sufficiency through schooling, church, work and small-scale farming. If the local people are perceived as sufficiently different, then the colonial power may also attempt to wipe out these differences, and train the local people to conformity. The ghetto, the reservation, the mission, the removal of children for training, the prohibition of local language and belief are all examples of this pattern of colonial occupation. These have existed in a wide range of historical time frames and places. This context helps explain how Aboriginal housing areas, such as Three-Ways, become distinct precincts separated from towns.

The "barbed wire occupation" marks the end of hunter-gathering

Early land legislation to limit the squatters was therefore highly significant to the question of Wiradjuri access to their lands. The 1826 Government Order was the first legal control to the spread of European settlement. At this point there was no fencing. For this short squatting period of illegally settled river land,

Wiradjuri were still able to use the river corridors and gather bands together as in pre-European times. At this stage there was information gathered about settlers within the Limits of Location by the 1828 Census. The Limits of Location were also progressively surveyed by Mitchell over several years and published as a government map in 1836, showing places which were settled by Europeans at that time. The main form of official information beyond the Limits of Location was that gathered by the Pastoral Commissioner who visited the established stations, reporting on size of herds, number of people, the amount in crop, and approximate size of squat.

The first fences came in 1846 with the formalisation of squatting: graziers were able to purchase 1 square mile around improvements, usually a dwelling. The home paddock then became fenced. Squatters tried to purchase as much of their land as possible but often only that with water was needed because crown land was still accessible to the squatters. Also, reserves were used carefully to provide continuing access to water and to lock out other graziers.

After 1861 there was a filling of the landscape through legislation for small, closely spaced farms. With respect to the 'barbed wire occupation', the whole period of fenced European occupation can be divided into two phases: the mainly unfenced period prior to 1861 and the post-Robertson period.

The other great change in the post-Robertson Act period was that the region experienced a wave of town foundation. Prior to 1850 the main town in the region was Gundagai, a government town on the Great South Road set up in the 1830s. After 1850 there was a wave of town foundation in the region. Some of this urban growth was driven by government creation of towns such as Tumut. Other small towns had sprung up at creeks and crossings at which pubs had been built, such as Murrumburrah and Wagga. These had provided for travellers, but became urban facilities for the growing population. After the 1850s gold rushes came mining towns such as Young, Forbes, Temora, Grenfell, Lake Cargelligo and Adelong. Railway towns appeared at large railway junctions, such as Junee and Wyalong, and at railway construction and maintenance points, such as at The Rock and Grong Grong. European occupation of the region was therefore only truly consolidated in the 1870s, followed by the creation of a system of Aboriginal reserves. Between 1871 and 1879, New South Wales fences lengthened from 32,000 to 1,207,500 kilometres (Gammage 1986: 55). The period in which every back-block came to be fenced, 1884-1920, was dubbed "the period of closer settlement" (Roberts 1968: 306). This is why the hunter-gatherers observed by Sturt in 1830 were no longer in existence in 1870.

To summarise, in terms of land occupation the region can be considered to have been colonised twice. First, land and water sources were fenced out by graziers, with Wiradjuri living a riverside life on residue land in community camps. Second, the region filled up with closely spaced towns with Wiradjuri gathered at the edges, later moving into the towns.

Land tenure

Land tenure in the irrigated areas falls into two distinct phases: the period before irrigation and the post-irrigation phase. The most significant changes in the former period resulted from land subdivision. One of its effects was a devastating impact on hunter-gathering. It explains why Aborigines had to give up hunter gathering, and gather around towns. The second phase was that of creating irrigated areas. This imposed a whole new pattern of land ownership and land use on the local map, consisting of a dense mosaic of small farms, each parcelled out to an individual owner.

Italian success where Anglo-Australians had failed in farming is partly explained by traditional differences in land tenure. The foundations of a culturally distinctive Italian land holding system began to be laid from the very beginning of the Italian farming settlement. Shared land holdings reflected the willingness of Italians to form co-operative and inter-family arrangements for holding land, if individual families could not purchase the land. This form of land tenure contrasted with the British system of individual holdings that was pursued by Anglo-Australians (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

Bagtown

The initial irrigation settlement around Griffith began near Hanwood. The construction workers, potential farmers and tradesmen set up a large camp in 1911 known as Bagtown (officially it was to be a Public Works Department construction camp named Crowther's Camp, after the engineer).

Ces Bonomi, a young Italian boy who arrived with his parents from Broken Hill in 1915, said it resembled a wild west frontier town. He recalled the main entertainment was standing around, waiting for the mail in the evening, or leaning against a verandah post waiting for bread to be baked in the mornings. Single men put up makeshift humpies and practically lived on golden syrup, because local prices were so high (Chessbrough 1982:67-72). The main alley of Bagtown contained shops made of corrugated scrap tin such

as the "Tango Tea Room", "T.G. Bone, Hairdresser", "Thomson and Carroll's Blacksmith's shop" and the billiard saloon, surrounded by the sprawl of shacks in the surrounding area.

The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission had provided some tents, but in a short space of time people made their own shacks of scrap timber frames clad with materials such as flour bags, opened-out cement bags stitched together and flattened four gallon tins.

The Commission was also faced with the prospect of thousands of returning soldiers being unemployed and living on the street, and began serving notices to the Bagtown residents to quit. The soldiers arrived to live in two tent towns before moving onto their small farm allotments. Not surprisingly the mostly 12 to 35 acre farms failed after fruit prices dropped in 1922 (Kelly 1988:165).

New South Wales had a tradition of hut building dating back to first European arrival in the Sydney colony. Bagtown was little exception: emptied cement bags, flattened four-gallon tins, corrugated iron and timber scraps comprised the main building materials. People had been building temporary huts such as these for decades. Whole bagtown camps were built on the edges of towns during the 1930s Great Depression. Aboriginal households built similar huts, and due to housing shortages continued to build them for several generations after the Depression ended. Photographs show Bagtown to be a long street of such shacks.

Shacks were later supplemented with Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission buildings. The main early buildings were the office, general store, accommodation house and Bagtown Hospital, run by Nurse Lillian Burns. Irrigation settlers erected Hanwood Hall in 1914. For many years this community hall was centre of social life in the district. By 1918 the accommodation barracks, community hall, medical centre, and the Leeton cannery had been built. At the southern end of Bagtown was the official construction camp for Commission employees. Tents with duckboard flooring contained two people each. Senior officers had a separate tent compound.

Another feature dating from the Bagtown days was a co-operative formed to help irrigation settlers save their money. The Mirrool Settlers Cash Club was formed in 1915. It grew into the Griffith Co-operative and the Producer's Co-operative.

Bagtown was only ever intended to be a temporary camp. The railway extension from Barellan to Griffith was completed in 1916, and should have put an end to Bagtown. But the settlement thrived until 1920. Even then, Griffith had only received its second police officer. The police station was a tent, and the lock up a sapling with chain attached. Sly grog was available despite the Commission's attempt to maintain a 'dry' camp. (Kelly 1988: 67-74, edited excerpts).

Bagtown - together with several legendary figures such as Tango Joe - is one of the places that has developed a larger-than-life existence in local folklore.

Bagtown businesses

People in Bagtown mainly worked for the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission (WC&IC), constructing canals and channels for irrigation. However, there were also other businesses and places of work in Bagtown.

The businesses in Bagtown in 1916 were:

- * The Carroll's Blacksmith Shop
- * Thomson's Blacksmith (taken over by J. Collier in 1917).
- * Bert Jacka's Bike Shop
- * Dave Arblaster Mechanic and Car Hire
- * J. Miller's Barber Shop
- * Fallon's General Store (destroyed by fire in 1917).
- * Tango Joe's Refreshment's and Cordial Works
- * ABC Bank
- * Martin's General Store
- * Harris Butchery
- * Co-op Store and Grain Store
- * A. Cumming's Children and Ladies Drapper
- * Mrs Milne's Cake Shop
- * M. Cush Stable and Coach Shed
- * McLean's Store
- * Clauda Hanna's Bakery
- * Post Office
- * Jacob's Store
- * J. Bone Billiard Room and Hairdresser

- * A. Jacka's Saddler
- * Auction Room
- * Cheese Factory
- * Tomato Pulping Plant.

(Source: www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au)

Millionaire's Club

Once Bagtown emptied and the City of Griffith began, it grew in fits and starts. Wherever the town fringe occurred at each stage of city growth, small temporary town camps developed. Whether occupied by Kooris, itinerant workers, drovers, drinkers or any other landless people, the camps had to be relocated when the city expanded. Eventually, Kooris were pushed out as far as Frogs Hollow, across the canal from where the Three Ways housing reserve was established. Meths drinkers set up a place ironically known as the Millionaire's Club, or Millions Club.

Though simply one of many temporary town camps, the name is now lodged in public memory. By the early 1920s, it was already passing into folklore. Ronaldson's diary for August 1923 noted that the Area News published poetical pieces by Walter Herbert on the "Million's Club".

The Millionaire's Club is significant as a well-remembered example of a "metho" drinking camp, established by the early 1920s and continuing up to about 1935.

Typical of much of Griffith, the site has seen a varied history, with numerous changes of use and ownership. These "slices" through different periods of time document the experimental nature of local industries, many of which failed.

Earmarked as the site of a butter factory by the Commission, a cannery was planned there. The unfinished building got as far as the underground foundations and floor slab. The space underneath was about four feet high, insufficient to stand, but suitable as a camp.

The cannery project was abandoned. Then the Great Depression came, filling up the Millionaire's Club with the large numbers of people who were out of work, or surviving as itinerant workers (swagmen). Later in 1938 tenders were called for the site with W.H. Johnson from Waterloo in Sydney owning it. In 1940 it was sold to Griffith Producer's Co-Operative, and in 1943 the site was actually developed into Griffith Cannery. The cannery was received fruit until about 1950, when the business failed and was bought by a Griffith developer. It was then leased to Swift's winery for about three years. Then leased to a starch factory for about three years.

In 1959 IXL bought the site presumably with the intention of re-establishing a cannery (or to prevent competition with the Leeton cannery). It remained unused for many years until in 1970, a local man who had gone to Sydney and was working for Hooker Real Estate bought it for the Valley Hotel. However he was not able to obtain a liquor licence, the argument being that the hotel was too close to the railway crossing for safety. The site was then sold to Woolworths in 1973 and was eventually developed for its current use (Oral source, Peter Ceccato).

Though physically obliterated by the current Coles/Myer and Woolworths supermarkets, the camp is still well known and remembered. It probably warrants a pavement plaque, so that visitors might better understand the town camp phenomenon, and better appreciate how a place with no physical relics can pass into local folklore.

Hermit's Cave

Near the Jondaryan Trig Station there is an outcrop of caves that were the living quarters of a hermit, Valerio Ricetti, who lived here for about thirty years. The hermit's cave is an interesting historical archaeological complex that includes rock shelters, stone structures, gardens, water well and inscriptions. The site has not been researched or documented in detail. A composite reconstruction, correlating archival photographs, surface survey and oral history would be make an original and interesting piece of research.

The hermit who made this previously remote place his home is the focus of much folklore. So much so that Valerio Ricetti has become a larger-than-life figure in local imagination.

The site is significant as one of very few known examples of a hermit dwelling in NSW. The living quarters of the hermit have been subject to vandalism and the effects of the climate over the years. The Wade- Apex Club has detailed information on the Hermit's cave and associated places and have a primary objective to restore the sites, including stairs, kitchen, chapel northern cave, gardens and lookout. Instead of ad hoc restoration projects, there needs to be developed a program for restoration set in place that has been subjected to public scrutiny and verified for authenticity. The Natural Heritage and Landcare Committee and Council's curator should be actively involved in any restoration project (Scenic Hill Plan of Management 2000).

Peter Ceccato provided most of the hermit's story and details of the caves. Additional biographical detail, much of it disputed by other sources, was obtained from press articles in the Area News. Valerio Ricetti was an Italian migrant who arrived at Port Pirie South Australia in October 1914 at the age of 16. From Port Pirie, Ricetti went to Broken Hill where he stayed at the Ceccato boarding house and obtained work in the mines with Mr Ceccato and Mr Bicego. Later, Ceccato and Bicego left Broken Hill and came to Griffith. Ricetti continued to work in the mines and also fell in love with a barmaid who later jilted him for someone else. This love affair devastated him and left an impression on his mind for the rest of his life.

In 1918 Ricetti left Broken Hill and went to South Australia where he worked at various jobs for several years then he moved onto Victoria and then to Burrinjuck NSW in 1928. In that decade Ricetti befriended many people but few were loyal.

His disillusionment with humanity is shown in a story, how at one point he departed for Adelaide with a year's timber-cutting wages in his pocket. There he visited a brothel. Upon leaving he found that he had left his wallet behind and that the bouncer wouldn't allow him back in. After hurling a rock through a window, he was chased and ended up in Adelaide gaol. After his release he left for Melbourne where he intended to pawn his one remaining possession, a coat. Unfortunately he was duped by a passer-by, who said he would pawn it for him and never returned (www.walkabout.com.au).

Leaving Burrinjuck, he set out on his own. In the next twelve months or so Ricetti followed the Murrumbidgee River downstream to the Lachlan River then upstream to Hillston NSW.

The Area News reported that "He finally found work on a riverboat of the period. He later explained that he had been a sailor on the Murray and that his "ship" had been the Mary Anne. The Mary Anne was one of the many boats that steamed the Murray, Murrumbidgee and Lachlan, and it would appear that Ricetti was to learn more about life during the period he spent on board her; perhaps something about love, unrequited. On the walls of his cave he etched a brief, pathetic epitaph to those days - two hearts and an anchor. " (Extract from Area News Feb 3 1977 by W.H. Fenwick).

He then walked along the railway line to Griffith. All of this time Ricetti did not know where he was going. He was searching for a position where he could be on his own. That did not eventuate. Ricetti arrived in Griffith in 1929.

Arriving on the outskirts of Griffith, a sudden rainstorm drove him to seek shelter on Scenic Hill. Next day he moved around to see where he was. Down, about a quarter of the way from the top, he found a huge overhanging rock which was dry underneath. After exploring the surrounding area, he could see fruit and vegetable farms at the foot of the hill, and closer up, two reservoirs full of water. To the west was the town rubbish dump which teemed with rabbits.

Tired of travelling, and with no money left in his pocket, he later recalled saying to himself "I have found the Garden of Eden". Ricetti decided to construct a private utopia, by making the cave his permanent home. He scavenged the rubbish dump where he found a half-worn out shovel, a pick head and an axe head. He felled branches off trees to make handles for them. He believed himself to be the only Italian in the area and kept entirely to himself, whereas in fact old compatriots from Broken Hill had settled nearby and increasing numbers of Italian migrants were arriving.

He cleared and decorated the caves, creating massive stone galleries and pathways, cliff-side gardens and floral painted rock walls. So as to remain unseen he worked at night and early in the morning, eventually moving hundreds of tons of rock. Digging under the huge rock, the earth that he threw out rolled down the steep hillside. So he set about building a stone retaining wall. As it gradually became back-filled, he increased the retaining wall height and length. Finally it reached thirty feet long and eight feet high. This gave him a level surface of three or four yards outside of the cave. Portions on either side of the rock were closed off with stones and clay mortar leaving an opening about four feet wide and seven feet high to enter the cave.

Outside he planted flowers on both sides of a path that lead to the top of the retaining wall. Turning right, he then followed along the top of the wall for about twenty feet, where he had made a pathway two feet wide, leading to and from the cave.

Under the lookout, some forty yards to the right, is a formation of three high rocks in a half circle. The centre one is fashioned by nature as a dome. In front of these rocks he built a stone retaining wall about five feet high and fifteen feet long. This he filled with earth to level it, and then he planted more flowers. He called it his "shrine".

Further west he found an area that was partly surrounded by a sheer wall of rocks jutting out from the sloping hill. He made beds of flowers with pathways leading from one bed to another. On the sloping side he built small stone retaining walls. Towards a corner of this complex were four large rocks, joined together front and back, and one either side forming a central open space about ten feet in diameter. The top was open. On the garden side was a hole about three feet deep that you had to crawl through to get inside. Ricetti dug down in front of the hole to make it large enough to walk through, but two feet down he found rock. At this level he dug inwards, carrying the soil up and forming more beds for flowers. At the centre of this "room" was a rock about two feet high and too large to move. So with stone and clay mortar he shaped it into a table. At the entrance he made a stairway so he could walk down to the cave. For the top he laid thin poles across like a lattice, planting grapevines and wisteria to form a canopy.

Close to these gardens he had a couple of places to hide when people came. These places were not developed in any prominent way. But over the other side of the hill, some two hundred yards from the main cave, amongst shrubs he built a stone walled circular cave, around a large tree, with a peephole so if people came there was another place to run and hide.

Eventually he fell and injured himself. In 1935 Ricetti fell off some rocks and broke his leg and badly bruised his ribs. A passing swagman found him and notified an ambulance that conveyed Ricetti to hospital. There a Dr E.W. Burrell, who was also the Government Medical Officer, attended to him. He became a celebrity when the enormity of his work was discovered. During Ricetti's hospitalisation an article appeared in The Area News 19 November 1935. It read "Wade Shire Council last night resolved to attend to and maintain the gardens during the Hermit's indisposition. Councillor Lenehan stated that the recluse, by vast labour, had added considerably to the interest of Griffith outlook and it was up to the Council to do something for him."

Ricetti still remained reclusive. Later when he recovered, in order to pay the pay the doctor he decided to sneak down to the doctor's place and do some gardening. After a few times the doctor caught him and explained to the hermit that he was paid by the Government to help him. From then on a friendship was formed, and Dr Burrell would visit Ricetti regularly at the cave and leave boxes with useful items such as clothes and shoes.

In 1937 a Mr Agostini who wandered up the hill one night came face to face with the hermit. In conversation the names Ceccato and Bicego came up and the hermit said that he had worked at Broken Hill with people of those names. Soon after, Agostini told Ceccato of his contact with the hermit, Valerio Ricetti. After a couple of months of searching, the acquaintance between Ceccato, Bicego and Ricetti was renewed.

On weekends they would pick up Ricetti, and take him to places where he met many people. They would try to coax him to come and live amongst them, but the hill remained his home. By now Ricetti had become

more “domesticated” and did not shy away from people.

A couple of years later World War II came. In 1941, Ricetti, like many other Italians, was incarcerated at Hay. He was put to work building roads and instructed his captors on how to improve their road-building methods. After four months he was assessed and declared a deranged person and was moved to a mental institution. Six months later he was released and sent back to Griffith. There the police met him and told him to get a job, find accommodation and not go back to the hill - or else he would be in more trouble. Asked if he could name someone, he gave the name of Valentino Ceccato, who was duly informed and agreed to take him in.

From 1942 to 1952 Ricetti always worked and remained at the Ceccato's. He was troubled by visions and obsessed with his cave: "Disturbing him also was an illusion - a “man and woman in the sky”. Very real to him, they towered above him, demanding that he do more and more work." (Extract from Area News Feb 3 1977 by W.H. Fenwick). He returned to Italy in 1952 when his health began to fail him. He visited his brother with whom he had lost contact, and died there six months later.

Irrigation redraws the land map - a shaky start for Griffith City

Much has been written about the establishment of irrigation. For example, several chapters are devoted to the topic in Kelly (1988), as well as a summary in *Regional Histories of NSW* produced by the Heritage Office (1996: 137), so there is no need to repeat the saga here.

The most common storyline for the irrigation scheme is the "engineering marvel" version, focusing on the size and extent of land transformation, rather than focusing on its problems and costs, both social and ecological. The untold story of the irrigation scheme is that the planned city of Griffith almost didn't happen. Although farms in Griffith became available in 1912, it wasn't until August 1916 that town land, residential and commercial, came onto the market.

At the very least, Griffith had a very shaky start according to Clive Prichard, when interviewed by Robyn Oliver in 1996. "I'm sure", noted Clive, "if I was to quote the prices requested for such land at that particular date, you would have good reasons to think that you had landed in 'Fairy Land'". As a result of this non-existent demand for land, the Shire Council was not established until 1928.

Ken Walters, Clive's childhood friend from the 1920s, remembered how his mother bought blocks in 1920, and resold them fifteen years later, for a price which was well below the mandatory improvement value. This was a time when, according to Clive, one very prominent block in the centre section of Banna Avenue changed ownership for no monetary consideration.

"It would seem that some people in Griffith had begun to lose faith in the future of Griffith" said Clive. "Since these were early days, and the value of water had only been 'minimal', maybe they thought the chance of survival to be too big a risk. So they cut their losses and de-camped. For people living in Griffith today, we can only say, 'How wrong they were.'"

Early irrigation villages

Hanwood, Yenda and Griffith were early irrigation settlements and it was only with the sudden filling up of the local area with soldier settlers that the Government Gazette of 18 November 1921 notified three more villages - Beelbangera, Bilbul and Yoogali. Some of the early irrigation villages were established enough to have a group of public buildings. By 2004, most were in a struggle to maintain identity, as Griffith City grew in ascendancy. Typically, some of the early irrigation communities were so small, that they built their own main public buildings.

Myall Park

The district of Myall Park is a named locality, which never had official status - no village of that name, no school of that name, no post office, railway station, pub or church. What village there was, was known as Ellimo, for unstated reasons, and when the school gained official status the Department of Education rejected the name "Myall Park" because it was already in use elsewhere in NSW - and the school was named "Climsland". So the hall is the only public building every to have proudly waved the Myall Park name, and that because it was built by the community itself.

Myall Park consists of a triangle of land north of the Beelbangera-Yenda Road, bordered by a sharp bend in the Northern Canal on the other two sides. Some of the dry area farms on the outside of the canal may also consider themselves part of Myall Park.

In the mid-nineteenth century this triangle was part of North Hulong Station, later absorbed into Kooba.

When land on the large stations became available to selectors, the Matchett family selected the Myall Park area in 1881. The selectors had a pretty rough time of it, between droughts, rabbits and long distances from civilization. The Whitton-Rankin Springs stock route, however, ran adjacent to the eastern side of the triangle. A coach travelled the route from 1854, and by the 1880s the Ballandry Hotel and post office were relatively nearby at Mt. Elliott.

In 1914 the Myall Park district was proclaimed part of the Irrigation Area. When returned soldiers arrived to take up land in 1919, the Northern Canal was four and a half miles long, and construction workers and prospective farmers were based at the settlement of Ellimo, located on Myall Park Road, now Farm 1620. Ellimo's chief buildings were Mrs Langman's tin and canvas boarding house, and one "proper house" built by the Water Commission for the Bailiff. A tennis court was built in 1924, a school started in a disused farm cottage, and foundations were laid for a shop which was never built. As construction workers moved on, however, and farmers moved onto their own farms, the village disappeared and the school closed.

Over the succeeding years, the new community, like the old selectors, did it tough. Most of the new farmers were inexperienced, the allocations of land for orchards or wheat growing were too small, and some of the intended land uses, such as dairy farming, were unsuitable. As farmers walked off the land the number of farms reduced from 52 to 19. Then rice farming took off, sheep were introduced onto the dry area, irrigation water piped onto dry farms relived drought worries, and technology improved. Crop returns increased dramatically with increased demand for food around World War II.

The tough times, however, seemed to have welded the community of Myall Park. In the 1920s and 1930s an unofficial "civic centre" developed at northern apex of the triangle, at the junction of Myall Park and Rankin Springs roads where wet and dry land met. The first structure appears to have been the community sheep dip, built on Commission land around 1925, and paid for by the settlers. Next came the Climsland school, which after several temporary homes on private properties, achieved a purpose built official building on land donated by a parent in 1933.

Moves towards the construction of Myall Park Hall began in 1934 with a request from the Climsland Parents and Citizens Association for a recreation reserve of ten acres. In 1936 the Hall was built by local builder, Mr Clark, using local timber clad in ripple iron, at a cost of 300 pounds. It was paid for by local fundraising, an apparently retrospective loan from the Rural Bank in 1939, and further years of fundraising to repay the loan, including monthly functions in the Hall, a gymkhana, card evenings and street stalls. Tennis courts were added, and in the 1940s a supper room - with further voluntary labour, donations and fundraising

By the 1970s, however, time and vandalism were taking their toll on Myall Park Hall. Rather than see the Hall in decline, the Myall Park Trustees decided to extend its life by donating it to the Park in 1976, as well as holding a reunion and hall re-opening ceremony. The appearance of the Hall was changed radically with the addition of new timber cladding and verandahs, but the citizens of Myall Park were happy that its spirit and name would live on in a new community function. (Source: Robyn Oliver; "Memories of Myall Park", Back to Myall Park Committee, 1976)

Soldier settlers and a unique village - Yenda

Although each of the villages around Griffith has its own story of separate identity and development, the locality name with the strongest identity is Yenda. The formation of Yenda overlaps with that of Griffith but is summarised here, from the recent study of Yenda produced by Stedinger and McPhee (2003):

'The Barren Jack and Murrumbidgee Canals Construction Act' was passed in 1906. This Act supported an immense scheme to irrigate the semi-arid Murrumbidgee plain with water from the Murrumbidgee River. Much of the work was to be undertaken by the Public Works Department, which included the construction of canals, weirs, channels and bridges. With this irrigation system in operation, the Government hoped to attract hundreds of new immigrants to a new farming region.

In 1911 a large camp was set up on the Whitton Stock Route three kilometres from Yenda. The camp was part of preparations for the construction of the north east section of the Main Canal which would pass through Yenda. The following year, on 13 July 1912, Sir Arthur Griffith the then Minister for Public Works turned on the water at the Yanco Regulator, officially opening the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. By the end of 1912 the first civilian irrigation settlers were taking up farms in the Mirrool Area.

Construction of the large bridges of the main canal continued between Griffith and Yenda in 1914. Today

the Main Canal is 159 kilometres long with 2010 kilometres of supply channels and another 1391 kilometres of drainage channels. This system services some 2500 farms in one of the most highly productive food producing areas in Australia.

By 1906 Yenda had emerged as a 'little village'. Situated at the eastern end of the Mirrool district in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area, the village was initially referred to as "East Mirrool". The name 'Yenda' first appeared in 1877 as the name of a parish. With the opening of the main canal and the Temora-Griffith railway line through Yenda in 1916, the site for the village was formally laid out and gazetted.

Like Griffith and Leeton, Yenda emerged and grew with the construction of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. The first farms were made available in 1912. Initially farmers established hay crops and raised stock. The irrigation and settlement scheme was advertised both at home and abroad, in Great Britain in 1914 and in San Francisco in 1915. With the outbreak of the First World War, advertising ceased.

Then, as the war came to an end, a soldier resettlement scheme was introduced. Early development had been slow in Yenda because of the considerable shortage of men and materials due to war. However, with the arrival of returned servicemen in 1919, development increased.

In Yenda, the Commission set up a sawmill and workshop and began a permanent construction camp for the district. Soon large numbers of men were employed on the construction of channels, roads and drains. By 1920 several hundred men and their families were camped on the site of Wade Park north of the railway. The ground was covered with tents, humpies, shacks and temporary boarding houses.

A camp was set up at the side of the Stock Route in 1919 that became known as the "Barracks". Here provision was made for the accommodation of returned soldiers for training prior to being granted farms. Over the next two years many of the returned servicemen worked here in the clearing gangs on a ninety-day probation period.

The first farming blocks of the area were released between Yenda and Bilbul for dairying and mixed pursuits. Given an acute shortage of horse fodder, 1,000 acres was set aside south of Main Canal at Yenda for growing sudan grass, sorghum, millet and lucerne for the Commission's horses. Crops of oats, wheat and tobacco were also grown. Additional blocks were then made available in the Yenda area for fruit growing bounded on the west by the village and railway.

More blocks were released for fruit growing north of the railway. A public auction was held in Yenda as business and residential sites were made available. In 1920, 21 town blocks had been taken up. This had increased to 61 by 1922. Having purchased allotments in the centre of Yenda, the Simpson brothers, E. Cass and J. McLean soon put up small general stores in Yenda Place. McLean and Cass had been following the construction camps with their stores, but the Simpson Bros were returned soldiers. Other small businesses soon emerged including a butcher's shop, a bakery and refreshment cafe with a billiard room, newsagency, barber salon and drapery store.

Earlier in 1916, Jack J. McWilliam had opened the first winery at Hanwood. In 1920 he acquired a three-acre site at Yenda where he erected a second winery under the management of his son Doug. His business has since continuously expanded and prospered interstate. Penfolds began their Griffith winery in 1920 and encouraged the planting of wine grapes in Yenda by offering eight-year contracts to returned soldier settlers. The 1920s saw an increasing number of Italian migrant families establishing farms in the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area. Today DeBortoli Wines, Miranda Wines, Riverina Wines and McWilliam's Wines all rate in Australia's ten largest wineries for tonnage produced.

Italians also brought traditional knowledge of market gardening. Key agricultural and horticultural industries in the Griffith area now include wine, citrus and stone fruit and vegetables. Rice was also introduced to the area in 1923. Within a year, Sydney Marchinton of Yenda, a pioneer of the rice growing industry, was harvesting his crops with "a six-foot comb wheel-driven harvester drawn by six horses". Rice growing has since become a major industry.

Yenda town centre

Yenda was declared a village in 1916. Although probably designed by some unknown Irrigation Commission subdivision draftsman, the radial layout is often attributed to Walter Burley Griffin. The matter has not been researched at the time of writing. Yenda town centre was originally dirt streets lined with cypress pine buildings.

It began to take its present form after a fire storm hit in the summer of 1926, burning down much of the wooden structures. Afterwards, the town centre buildings were substantially rebuilt in brickwork. Tarring of the roads and a garden re-design of Central Park brought the town centre to its present form. Yenda town centre may owe its remarkable state of preservation to the decline of soldier settlement, combined with slow growth - or negative growth - during the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Yenda town centre echoes the nearby Walter Burley Griffin towns in miniature with its characteristic radial design, tree-lined streets, ring road and park. Yenda is unique as both a soldier settlers' town and major outpost for construction workers of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area.

Its outstanding level of intactness of original architecture documents an early 1920s building boom, which saw the construction of most of Yenda town centre. Slow population growth after the 1930s ensured preservation of a remarkably wide range of community buildings. The town centre has retained its community importance, recognised for its high integrity and aesthetic values. The streetscape is highly distinctive due to flat topography, four branching avenues, and richness of its 1920s/1930s architecture.

Yenda is unique. As it stands today, the town captures the character of its early builders. Their reconstructions reflect the perseverance and growing success of the town.

Hanwood Village store

Hanwood was a place of settlement before Griffith was thought of. So it was not surprising that the Bagtown construction camp was established in Hanwood. Once Griffith was established, however, Hanwood began to merge with Griffith and lose some of its distinct identity. Though still identified by local people as a separate place, there is little to suggest to the visitor that Hanwood exists at all. There is no road sign that proclaims Hanwood.

In such circumstances of fading identity, the village general store becomes very important. It provides the necessary core of services and social focus for keeping the village identity alive.

Cypriot storekeeper Elliot Batros owned and operated the store from 1928 to 1975. When he retired, the store was sold to Victoria Zappacosta. The old store may have dated from the late nineteenth century, as it was clad in ripple iron. The new owners set about improving the property and found heritage architect Peter Freeman who was doing some work for Pioneer Park's Bagtown exhibit at the time. Under Peter Freeman, an addition was built to the front that doubled the store in size. The extension matched some of the original features of the shop, such as using ripple iron and similar doors to the street. The main introductions were two barrel vaulted skylights and a verandah with posts, which replaced the earlier cantilever awning. An old Bushels Tea advertisement, painted on ripple iron, was too decayed to be re-erected on the new building and was put into storage in a shed on the site (Jan Morrison; Dino Zappacosta).

The Hanwood Village store is representative of early twentieth century general stores, which were small, family-run businesses serving small local communities. The store has aesthetic and landmark value, making an important contribution to the streetscape and to the identity of Hanwood as a locality.

It is also an example of heritage infill design by a prominent architect. Peter Freeman designed the new barrel vaulted roof and deep verandah to echo the character of early twentieth century store buildings. The building design does not, however, try to trick the visitor into thinking that this building is old. It clearly is recent.

Bilbul Village store and blacksmith

When Mrs Sumpter ceased selling produce at her stall on Kearney's farm in 1922, the need for a local store became clear in Bilbul and the grey weatherboard Post Office and Store was opened. Mr and Mrs Axford ran the store and it was from here that mail was collected and delivered by their son Joe in an old T-model Ford he used to start by joining two wires. It was nicknamed "The Great white Train", and with it Joe became Bilbul's first Postman.

Other owners followed, including Italians such as Gino or "Jim" Aventi who had left Italy in 1938, and in 1944 a petrol bowser was added to the Store. It remains highly visible from the highway and identifies Bilbul as a real place to visitors. The Store and Post Office is important to the identity of Bilbul.

Bilbul's soldier settler days were marked by early farming experiments that failed. The first farmers grew tobacco, and had a cooperative barn near the town hall. Farmers were paid "sustenance money" by the government but when this stopped they tended to go broke. As a last attempt to try to raise some cash, a few farmers burned their houses. One farmer used to burn houses for five pounds to enable the owner to collect the insurance.

Villages such as Bilbul had a blacksmith because up into the 1950s, horse and cart were the mode of power and transport. Tomaso (Tom) Bortolazzo had learned the trade in Crespano in his native Italy. He migrated to Australia in 1938, working for several years as a cooper for McWilliams at both their Beelbanger and Hanwood wineries. His skills were much needed during the war years when there was a shortage of steel and machine parts. He was able to weld spring steel and return it to its original temper to repair cart springs. Farmers came from as far as Hillston and Lake Cargelligo for repairs. He would shoe horses and clip their hooves only on weekends and made all his own horse shoes. He also did the wheel-wrighting repairs of wooden sulky and cart wheels. Like other blacksmiths and coopers, he made most of his own tools.

Wherever a blacksmith has worked, children have gathered to watch, fascinated by the whole process. It was also a meeting point for farmers particularly on rainy days, with anywhere up to a dozen gathered around the forge yarning and comparing notes.

Using drawings provided by Vic De Bortoli, he made the winery a new, large grape crusher. Manufacturing stills for distillation of *grappa* was a special service he provided to Italian farmers; and a headache for Customs and Excise officials.

The purchase of an electric welder in 1946 gave him a quick means of joining metal together without the arduous forge and opened up a whole new area of work for Tomaso. It enabled him to make the transition from the horse and buggy era to motorised power. He carried on his small but satisfying business right up until the day of his death in 1963 (Bilbul Public School, a history. 1988 Bicentennial Project).

The store is a good example of family operated general stores, which were typical in small communities such as Bilbul. It has a mid-twentieth century fibro clad front section, possibly added onto an earlier shop at the rear.

Walter Burley Griffin's life and work

I am grateful to the biography *Burley Griffin: in his own right* (www.pbs.org/wbgriffin). It chronicles the life and work of one of America's and Australia's greatest architects, also the designer of Griffith, and is the basis of this section of text. Together with Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright, Griffin would complete the group of architects who developed America's first original architectural style, the Prairie School.

Griffin's story is that of a man who designed houses and imagined cities, dogged by professional jealousies. And it is the story of love between two people who shared a dedication to stretching the boundaries of architecture.

From 1899 to 1914, Griffin created more than 130 designs in his Chicago office for buildings, urban plans and landscapes, half of which were built in Illinois, Iowa, Michigan and Wisconsin. This prolific period in his career occurred as Griffin moulded his own vision of Louis Sullivan's concept of a modern architecture free from the precedents of historic styles.

In 1912, Griffin and his wife, Marion Mahony Griffin, won the Canberra Commission for the design of the federal capital of Australia. That same year, they completed the design of Rock Crest Rock Glen in Mason

City, Iowa, which would become their most dramatic American design development of the decade. Griffin's success and reputation would eventually be overshadowed by Frank Lloyd Wright who would describe Griffin merely as a "draftsman."

In 1899 Griffin graduated in Architecture, and quickly found a job as a draftsman working with Chicago's most progressive architects. They called themselves "The 18". Frank Lloyd Wright, who had left the group in 1898 to start his own design studio in Oak Park, Illinois, remained an irregular member. By accident or design, Griffin became exposed to the most progressive design philosophy in America. "The 18" took their inspiration from Louis Sullivan who argued that all designs should be free from historical precedents.

Griffin was then offered a position in Wright's studio. His new post was a step up. He saw himself playing the role of junior partner to Wright, who was 10 years his senior. Griffin was a strong addition to Wright's design practice because he not only had a university degree but also two years of drafting experience, a license to practice architecture, and extensive experience in landscape architecture. Since much of Wright's work at this time involved domestic suburban housing, these landscaping skills proved to be an asset.

It was in Wright's studio that Griffin met the woman who would be his first love, Maginel Wright, his employer's sister. Griffin was extremely shy and socially awkward. So despite his attraction to the pretty woman who was his same age, Griffin attempted to keep his love for Maginel private. She, of course, had no clue of his affection for her. Then one day, Griffin proposed to her. Maginel was totally shocked. She didn't really even know him that well and she refused him. She was married shortly thereafter to someone else. Griffin took the rejection very hard, and signed off on the idea of women and love evermore.

In the spring of 1906 Griffin resigned from Wright's studio, and began an independent practice. What led to the break were a series of events. A year earlier, Frank Lloyd Wright and his wife Katherine went to Japan for five months. The often financially strapped Wright borrowed money from Griffin to take the trip and left the young man in charge of the office during his absence. Griffin took liberties with Wright's work while he was away. He completed several commissions and even substituted his own designs. Upon his return, Wright felt that Griffin had overstepped his authority and strongly reminded him of his subordinate role. Wright also attempted to repay his loan from Griffin with a series of Japanese prints instead of hard cash.

Angered by the Japanese prints foisted upon him, and finally aware that he would never be Wright's full partner, Griffin left the office.

Griffin started his independent practice with only one commission, a landscape design for a school. But with his personality and ability to work with clients and developers, Griffin's practice grew. By 1907 Griffin had become increasingly connected to real estate developers and contractors for whom he designed speculative homes in the Chicago area.

In 1909, Frank Lloyd Wright captured headlines when he left his wife and children and ran off to Europe with the wife of one of his clients. The scandal caused an uproar. Wright's studio closed its doors, leaving his draftsmen and his clients in limbo.

Before his departure, Wright had searched for someone to finish his outstanding commissions but none of his former employees were willing. Finally, Marion Mahony was hired to finish the designs.

Mahony had worked for Wright on and off for 14 years. At times she had been his only employee. She was an outspoken, dramatic woman and the only female draftsman in Wright's studio. Mahony was the second woman to graduate with a degree in architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the first licensed female architect in history. She had a very strong personal relationship with her employer and his wife. Wright even posed the two women together for a photograph.

Marion was an exceptionally talented artist and draftsman. Her presentation drawings were based on the style of Japanese prints. The buildings appeared surrounded by an abundant landscape, recalling Mahony's own interest in the natural world. Also she contributed many beautiful leaded glass windows as well as furniture and fireplaces to Wright's designs.

Griffin was hired to produce landscape plan for one of Mahony's designs. As the project progressed, Marion who was five years older than Walter, began to think of him more than on a professional level. The friendship blossomed into marriage in the summer of 1911. News of the marriage between the two architects was greeted with a surprised reaction from friends, family and co-workers. No one could believe the fiery Marion and the mild-mannered Walter were suited to be husband and wife.

After their marriage Marion went to work in Walter's office, becoming his partner both personally and professionally. But her new role was taken not without repercussions. Harry Robinson, Griffin's chief draftsman and fellow classmate from the University of Illinois, resigned and returned to work for his former employer Frank Lloyd Wright. Marion became chief draftsman in the Griffin office. She began to use her pen to breathe life into all of Walter's designs. Despite her outspoken nature, her architectural license, and her recent taste of independence, Marion's monogram, obscured amidst the flora, was the only credit she

would claim.

In January 1908, Frank Lloyd Wright was commissioned for the design of key buildings in Mason City, Iowa. The Mason City plans came to a sudden stop when news of Wright's scandalous departure reached the city. The city was left without an architect to complete its grand development.

Marion Mahony Griffin was contacted to see if she would be interested in picking up the pieces. Marion in turn recommended her husband. Within a week Walter visited Mason City, and at the end of the visit a contract was signed giving him complete approval over the development of the property. He talked the developers into building on a site they had previously overlooked because it had been turned into a garbage dump. Griffin envisioned that an 18 acre parcel along Willow Creek would be a beautiful natural setting for a group of houses.

The development would be called Rock Crest, Rock Glen. Griffin's vision was to create a development that would conserve the natural area. He sited all the houses along the perimeter to create the greatest amount of open land along the creek. True to his philosophies on democracy, he insisted the land along the creek was a "commons area" to be enjoyed by all the homeowners. Griffin planned all the houses to face the glen and forbade any out-buildings to be built within the commons area. Griffin's plans for each home incorporated this natural backdrop. Today Rock Crest Rock Glen remains the largest collection of Prairie Style homes surrounding a natural setting. Marion claimed that Griffin himself was so overjoyed with the finished product he scaled the cliff side of the house in celebration. A task that certainly would have been quite an accomplishment for the 37 year old architect.

Soon after the commission in Mason City, Griffin would take on the largest challenge of his career. On May 23, 1912, the Griffins received a telegram in their offices in downtown Chicago. It came from Melbourne Australia and read, "Your design awarded first prize." The telegram from Australia would prove to be the defining point in Griffin's career.

The Griffins' plan for the Federal Capital of Australia was the first test of their marriage. The call for designs occurred shortly after they were married. But it was only through Marion's insistence that Walter sat down at the drawing board three months before the deadline. His design allowed him to fully integrate his ideas on landscape, town planning and most importantly democracy.

Marion's drawings of Walter's plans were immense in scope. Eight feet wide and thirty feet long, they unfolded like Japanese screens. They were so beautiful and impressive that the judges had miniature copies made so as to not be swayed by their presence. Griffin's win made him an instant celebrity. He was asked to give lectures around the country. His design was hailed internationally for its creativity in layout, and its ability to incorporate the natural setting.

Simultaneously with the announcement of the Griffin's win came a claim from Frank Lloyd Wright that Griffin was nothing but a draftsman. Wright and Griffin would never speak again. For the next 45 years Wright made it his mission to disregard Griffin as an architect. He claimed that all his former employees including the Griffins were simply stealing his ideas, or as Wright put it, "sucking his eggs."

Griffin was invited to visit the Canberra site in July of 1913. There, too, he became a celebrity. Unknown to Marion, who was still in Chicago minding the store, Griffin was falling in love with the Australian landscape, and the Australian people were taken with him. He returned to Chicago after three months restless about his future. In short time, he received a letter from his alma mater, the University of Illinois, offering him the position as the head of the Department of Architecture. But the lure of Australia won Walter's heart and soul.

Griffin hurriedly made plans to move to Australia, with many projects still up in the air. The Mason City development was under construction, the Anna Library was incomplete, as well as his own house north of Chicago. He would have to find someone to manage the Chicago office and finish his commissions. Less than one week before their departure Griffin introduced Barry Byrne to his clients as his new American partner.

In the years ahead, Griffin would not only face criticism in Australia, but he would be discredited in America as well. Unbeknown to Griffin, Byrne began changing his designs. When Griffin sent plans from Australia, Byrne would substitute his own drawings of that project, then write back to Griffin that all was well. It took Griffin three years before he realised what Byrne was doing in his absence, and before they parted company.

In 1908, the Canberra site was chosen for Australia's National Capital after years of contentious debate over proposals for some 60 locations. King O'Malley, colourful member of the Federal House of Representatives and Minister for Home Affairs, declared it would 'rival London in size, Athens in art, and Paris in beauty'.

In 1911 it was decided to hold an international competition for the design of the federal capital. King

O'Malley was given the final say in the judging over a professional panel. These conditions so displeased the Royal Institute of British Architects and affiliated bodies in the British Empire, including Australia, that they instructed their members not to participate. In spite of this, 137 entries were received.

The winning entry was submitted by Walter Burley Griffin, magnificently visualised and illustrated by Marion's drawings and sketches. It was geometrical, with major and minor axes creating impressive vistas through the design itself and links to external landscape elements, in particular the hills surrounding the site. It incorporated generous green space, tree-lined avenues as part of a comprehensive road system, residential areas with open spaces, playgrounds, churches, clubs and public transport. The plan also had overtones of the 'garden city' movement. These included the ideal of generous, democratic open-space provision and public ownership of land through the 99-year leasehold system to prevent rabid land speculation. All of these elements were later incorporated into the design of the city of Griffith.

It was also in 1913 that Walter Burley Griffin was invited to Australia to be Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction, on a three-year contract.

Officials of the Department of Home Affairs had drawn up a modified design, based on Griffin's design, and Griffin was to confer with the Board. Griffin's term proved to be a stormy period, with a breakdown in relations caused by political and professional jealousies and frequently, a hostile bureaucracy. The Departmental Board which had put forward the modified design for the Capital were now required to co-operate in carrying out Griffin's original design. There was concern that the expenditure required for Griffin's design would almost certainly expose the Department to severe criticism.

O'Malley decided to back Griffin, whose problems with departmental officials were increasing. He ordered that no operations or matters in connection with Canberra be initiated without Griffin's advice. In May 1916 the cabinet renewed the agreement with Griffin for a further three years.

The increasing demands of war began to limit the expenditure available to bring the Capital City into being. Construction of the lakes and basins in the Griffin design was shelved. Griffin, however, pressed on with the work of planning and designing. His contract came up for renewal again in 1919, but was extended by quarterly periods only.

The Government decided to appoint a Federal Capital Advisory Committee which would include Griffin. While Griffin's ability as a designer was undisputed, they believed he lacked the qualities necessary to carry out the task of building the city in a practical and economical way.

While his Chicago practice was slipping from his grasp, Griffin's experience in Australia was proving to be equally frustrating. He had spent years battling to see his ideas executed in Canberra by city planners who had no intention of actually building his design. The outbreak of World War I was the final nail in coffin of both the Canberra project and Griffin's American practice. Griffin terminated his contract in 1920, returning to Chicago for a time.

Griffin returned once again to Australia, and with his wife continued their private architectural practice in Melbourne for the next 15 years. They designed the NSW towns of Leeton and Griffith, Newman College and some houses and office buildings in Melbourne, as well as supervising the construction of the new Sydney suburb of Castlecrag. The subdivision faltered and Griffin was often in conflict with the local Council and with the onset of the Depression, he was reduced to designing municipal incinerators. Griffin left Australia to work in India in 1935.

The next time Americans heard any news of Walter Burley Griffin it was the announcement of his death. In 1937 Griffin died of peritonitis in Lucknow, India. He was barely 60 years old. By comparison, when Wright was 60, he had a full 30 years of his career ahead of him. Most of the buildings that Wright is famous for, such as Fallingwater and the Guggenheim Museum, were not designed at that point. After Walters's death, Marion returned to America to visit her family. She intended to return to Australia but the outbreak of World War II prevented a trip to the south Pacific. Marion Griffin died in Chicago in 1961 (www.pbs.org/wbgriffin).

Walter Burley Griffin's Griffith

Griffith Shire has had a short but rich history, underscored by the planned nature of the City. The plan of Griffith is very similar to that of Canberra - it has a circle at the centre, surrounded by an octagonal street layout.

The town of Griffith was to be transformed from a tent city to a modern, wealthy and flourishing town. Griffin designed the town to house 30,000 people, a population that was only achieved by the end of the twentieth century. It was also to be the headquarters of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission (WC&IC) which acted like a government for the irrigation area. Griffith was designed as a town for

administration, law, and education. It was also planned with a commercial centre in mind.

Walter Burley Griffin's city plan has local and possibly national significance, which is not always recognisable in the subsequent development of the city. Even though Burley Griffin designed the town, he did not supervise its construction. As a result, many of the things he had in mind for the town did not eventuate. One example was the actual site of the town. The railway station was supposed to be built on the western side of town - more or less due north of the Commission chambers. Lack of funding during the First World War meant that the railway remained incomplete for a long time, and the station became built at the end of this incomplete line.

Though the city of Griffith was named after a notable politician, that person is now largely forgotten. The name of Griffith is usually associated with the city plan and vision of Walter Burley Griffin's design office. As in the other two towns he designed, Canberra and Leeton, much of the development took a different path than originally envisaged. But all plans by their nature are subject to change. It is Griffin's vision that is in some ways recaptured in present day Griffith. The vision also offers opportunities for the future. Three key elements of Griffin's design are significant to the city: a Civic Precinct, a Public Open Space Corridor, and the wide, tree-lined boulevard of Banna Avenue (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

Civic Precinct

The Central Precinct was a major feature of Griffin's town plan. Wide boulevards with central medians dominate Griffith's Civic Precinct, generating a grand statement that is rare amongst rural centres throughout the state. Burley Griffin's plan was to have a grand circle (now Benerembah street) and for seven main avenues to radiate outwards from the central precinct (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Even though the footprint of Walter Burley Griffin's layout is still evident in the street pattern of the Civic Precinct, the quality of some streets is quite different to the way it was originally proposed. This is an opportunity for long-term planning to reinforce the streetscape, and promote Griffin's affirmation of streets as vital places for culture and commerce (Clouston 1993).

While the commercial focus of the city shifted to the shopping strip along Banna Avenue, the street pattern footprint of Griffin's original layout is still evident. Its core is the circular streetscape of Benerembah Street. It is ironic that while the designated "light industrial" area of Banna Avenue became the shopping precinct; that much of the core of the Civic Precinct became a light industrial area.

The Benerembah streetscape is in need of rejuvenation and refurbishment. It contains important civic and educational buildings on the hill, but the remainder of the street is little used, containing vacant lots and gaps in landscaping. With long-term planning, Benerembah Street could become consolidated profitably and attractively.

A local grant scheme, available from NSW Heritage Office, could be targeted at the repainting of building frontages. Land might be allocated for community groups to establish their core buildings on Benerembah Street: for example a mosque and a Sikh temple. . The low chain wire fence encircling the TAFE provides no additional security and could be removed.

A unified street tree planting scheme would probably do more than any other measure to consolidate Benerembah Street and provide it with some of the quality that was originally envisaged by Walter Burley Griffin.

Public Open Space Corridor – the role of Canal Bridges

The Public Open Space Corridor is the most significant landscape feature of Griffin's original town plan, documenting his concern for community and a vision of the 'city beautiful'. It incorporates parklands along the main canal, which skirts the civic centre, and the four canal bridges.

The Public Open Space corridor was subsequently overlaid by the main canal, constructed as part of irrigation works for the area. The main canal follows the path of the Open Space Corridor, which is flanked by relic areas of public gardens and parkland.

With careful long-term planning, this precinct could be used to restore a major part of the Griffin vision; promote tourism; and enhance community land and lifestyle (Clouston 1993).

The four main canal bridges at Willandra, Murrumbidgee, Walla and Griffin Avenues are the significant examples of old canal bridges in Griffith. Of these, the Willandra Avenue bridge is particularly elegant, its small size and arch reminiscent of old bridge designs seen in places such as Venice. A drawing of it from the design office of the Commission, signed "Frank Brewster, Designing Engineer", is dated 29 November 1915, showing this structure to be very early in the development of Griffith.

This early date raises the question of which came first: Walter Burley Griffin's plan; or the main canal and bridges? Marion Mahony Griffin's design drawing entitled "Griffith, New South Wales, Australia, General Plan" is signed Walter Burley Griffin, Landscape Architect, and is dated July 1914. The first delivery of irrigation water to Griffith had been on October 1913, so it seems that Griffin's design and the engineering for the path of the canal were a closely coordinated effort.

The three other bridge designs are similar, if not identical, and are straight rather than arched. They were "type" bridges, of a standard design, where the main variation is in the span (length). Perhaps for this reason, they are locally remarked upon as being of lower aesthetic value than the Willandra Bridge. They are however, rare surviving examples of an early twentieth century "pattern-book" bridge design, and make an important contribution to Walter Burley Griffin's layout for Griffith's Public Open Space Corridor.

The wide boulevard - Banna Avenue

Burley Griffin's plan was to have a grand circle (now Benerembah Street) and for seven main avenues to radiate outwards from the central precinct. Banna Avenue, running between the railway line and the main canal, was one of these. The area was designated in the plan as a goods interchange area and light industrial area with electricity and gas factories.

The story of how Banna Avenue came to be the commercial centre is interesting. Banna Avenue, running between the railway line and the main canal, was to be just one of the seven main avenues. The area was designated in the plan as a goods interchange area and light industrial area with electricity and gas factories. However, authorities, when auctioning the first business sites in July 1926, ignored the surveyed sites in the grand circle area and sold all the blocks on Banna Avenue. As the sale continued, the sites became cheaper. Local speculators bought the cheaper sites and built on them. Banna Avenue became the focus of commercial growth, and resulted in the conversion of Griffin's centralised plan into the familiar main street shopping so typical of Australian country towns (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Today, Banna Avenue is the commercial and community focus of the city. Griffith is well known for its divided main street and central shaded grassed areas. Historic shopfronts make an important contribution to the streetscape.

As Griffith's commercial boulevard, Banna Avenue attracts major yearly events. Food and Wine Festival is the major event in Griffith held every Easter. The festival focuses on Banna Avenue for its street procession, mardi gras and various carnival activities.

Plane trees in the central island provide shade, and have replaced a double row of Kurrajongs that were the first trees planted in the street. The London plane tree, a hybrid of *Platanus orientalis* and *Platanus occidentalis*, is one of the most widely used avenue trees in England, USA and Europe. Until recently a double row of Camphor Laurels at the western end (now removed) gave a good impression of this earlier planting. Trees are significant feature of Griffith city, creating a rare sense of enclosure and protection in the midst of a busy traffic zone (Clouston 1993).

Both of Walter Burley Griffin's designed cities, Griffith and Canberra, had a similar growth pattern. Despite an optimistic design start early in the twentieth century, both cities had stalled and misdirected development due to bureaucratic handling. There was a short growth spurt after the First World War, but within a few decades the Great Depression intervened, and then the Second World War. As a result, most of Canberra carries the 1960s footprint of suburban expansion. Griffith was developed in fits and starts in the interwar period, but then slowed. If Griffith were to be characterised, it might be as the city of re-development, because much of the interwar period commercial building and housing has gone through short periods of demolition or re-facing.

The residential areas are now gradually being redeveloped, and examples of once-common cottage types (such as the "fibro" cottage) are soon to become rare relics of the past.

The Banna Avenue commercial precinct still contains a strong theme of mainly interwar period

architecture. Much of it has been "modernised" by cheap re-facing of shopfronts. During the last few decades of increasing prosperity, however, consumer demand has grown for atmospheric cafes and carefully presented retail areas. Buildings such as the Vita's Italian restaurant show that good contemporary design, in keeping with the interwar period of the building, is also good for business.

With the growth of the city of Griffith there has also developed a vigorous urban and professional class. Italian successes in Australian business often began with serving an Italian "enclave" but came to expand their clientele to include the general community. Italian retailing and hospitality businesses provided centres for Italian community and catered for immigrant tastes. They also provided employment for Italians. Winemaking and fruit and vegetable vending grew out of traditional Italian village-scale farming practice, and were expanded into large businesses.

Formerly, in villages in Italy, commercial venues for community gathering such as the bar or cinema were the exclusive domain of men. Women, seen as the primary transmitters and practitioners of the Catholic faith, gathered publicly in the pews and on the steps of the village church. Some of these distinctions would might have remained preserved in the Italian migrant population, had it not been for constant replenishment by more recent immigration from Italy, which brought many of cultural changes in Italy back to the local emigre community (Pesman 1998: 16 edited excerpts).

The interwar period saw the consolidation of Banna Avenue as the commercial precinct. All of Griffith's imposing public buildings (with the notable exception of Griffith High School) appear on Banna Avenue and date from this period, as do most of the commercial buildings. A few of them are described below:

Shops

Banna Avenue's growth over time

The original Pritchard shop and boarding house, at the top end of Banna Avenue, where Mrs Lee's craft shop was later located, is now the oldest surviving shop in Banna Avenue, built in the early 1920s.

In 1928, when the famous Tango Joe was forced to give up his cordial making business because of ill health, Pritchards milk bar took it over. A 1921 photograph, in the Library collection, shows that Banna Avenue only went as far as Pritchard's shop. Stilts had to support the rear of the shop, because the top end of the street in that area was artificially raised, built up with bricks and stones. The lower part of the shop was later "concreted in" and a ten-room boarding house was created underneath for the Pritchards.

At this time, Banna Avenue was only gravelled, although it did have kerb and guttering. It was later asphalted, but this didn't work and it had to be concreted. The double row of trees down the centre were kurrajongs, and the ones down the sides, silky oaks.

The vacant land next to Pritchard's shop was to become the original Memorial Hall. Pioneer Park volunteer, Gwelda Hicken, remembered saving her lunch money as a schoolgirl to go skating there with her friend, the late Connie Foote (nee Bond), around 1940. On the foreground side Pritchard's, were to be house of the Samios family (later Viatour Travel), who owned the "Garden of Roses" cafe, and next to it Andrew Martin's, who had the distinction of being the only person to own four blocks in the main street.

A high set of towers, looking like a silo, were the water towers on the railway line which supplied steam locomotives. A small building nearby was the then railway station, on its current site, the railway having reached Griffith in 1916. According to Burley Griffith's plan, the station should have been further up, near the Koorngal Street crossing, with an overpass - but that was a more expensive site to develop, and with World War I in progress, money was in short supply.

The Water Commission's workshop at Crossing Street was a large building similar to the Commission's Mirrool House "barracks" where the Exies Club is now, on Jondaryan Avenue, built around the same time.

The city water reservoir was once the town cricket pitch, where Clive Pritchard remembered playing as a schoolboy. The longest hit from the pitch was recorded by Mr Tom Moore, who hit from the reservoir to Shaw's farm, now the Leagues Club (Robyn Oliver, interview with Mr Clive Pritchard, 1995).

Battaglia family shops

In the top end of Banna Avenue there is a distinctive Art Deco style group of three shops, with their original tiling and curved glass. Their special European style, and the continuous use of one of the shops as a hair salon for the last forty years, is all part of the Battaglia family story.

Early Italian settler Francesco Battaglia left his home village of Patrizzi, Regio Calabria in 1927 for Australia with a plan to bring out his wife and two children (Antonio, then two years old and older daughter Josephina) when he became established. Francesco arrived in Sydney with only five pounds in his pocket, the minimum amount of money that migrants had to have in order to disembark at Sydney harbour. He lived homeless for six weeks under the Harbour Bridge, while it was being constructed.

Francesco found a contact in Queensland where he travelled to cut cane. Hearing of the new irrigation area, he visited Griffith in 1932 to work over the picking season. For years he continued moving between the cane fields and the picking season in Griffith, until in 1939 he decided to stay in Griffith.

After applying for naturalisation in 1932, Francesco returned to Italy in 1935 and stayed for six months, until there was talk in Italy of the coming war with Abyssinia. Rather than be sent to war, Francesco returned to the cane fields of Queensland. Back in the home village his wife was pregnant with their third child, but lost Josephina, who was suddenly struck down with tetanus.

Several years later, at only 15 years of age, Francesco's son Antonio opened up a hairdressing salon, "Salon Battaglia" in the home village. Antonio recalled the arrival of the Second World War in the village:

I was shaving a fellow in the salon – while outside on the road a tank drove by. It exploded and I cut the man's face, because BOOM! He got six stiches on his face. That couldn't happen here, though. There are no tanks here in Griffith (Antonio Battaglia, quoted in the Area News July 18, 1997)

Francesco moved to Griffith in 1940 where he bought and worked on a 10-acre property, saving for a shop. He then set up a grocery with *paesan* business partner Tom Apolloni on the premises of the old Mirrool Café on Banna Avenue, renamed "Battaglia and Apolloni General Store". It was the first continental grocery in Griffith and well before Italian foods became fashionable among Aussies in the 1970s, the grocery catered for the Calabrian community.

Then in 1948 the war had finished in Europe and Francesco had saved up enough money to bring out his wife, son Antonio and youngest child Janice. Antonio was then 22 years old, and ready to continue in hairdressing, which he did for the following eight years, working for Evans' salon in Griffith.

Later, when Antonio wanted to set up as a hairdresser, they sold the business to Tom and built the block of three new shops: liquor store, a pharmacy and Antonio's salon.

Francesco contracted an architect from Belgium, who was staying in Griffith for a few months, to prepare the design for the shops. This might explain the use of curved glass for the frontage, so common in Belgian cafes of the art deco period, but so distinctive in Griffith. The architect then returned to live in Canberra.

The shop construction started in 1955, with Francesco and Antonio working at the hairdressing business and doing their own sub-contracting. When completed in 1957, the other two shops were rented, used as a pharmacy and doctor's surgery, until the Battaglias were able, after several attempts to obtain a liquor selling licence. From then on, one of the shops became a liquor store, which Antonio ran while his son Frank ran the hair salon.

Antonio married Lina Bortolin in 1959 and had two children, Francesco and Olga. Almost half a century later in 2004, Francesco was a long established partner in the salon, and Antonio, who had been cutting and styling hair for over 60 years, still worked at the Battaglia Salon. Antonio's daughter running the café Dolce Dolce next door.

In 2000 the family bought a set of three shops in Yenda, attracted by their style and type. The shops have a tiled and boxed glass front, reminiscent of the Banna Avenue shops except that they were built much earlier,

possibly the 1930s (Olga Vico; Area News Friday 18 July 1997).

Griffith as an Italian City

The post-war wave of immigration brought families in sufficient numbers to create a demand for imported foods from Italy. In Australian cities there developed specialised Italian grocery stores that catered not only to the immediate community but all lovers of Italian food. While in the 1950s, Italian food was considered "smelly," by the late 1960s and early 1970s, everyone was beginning to love things Italian. Other cities have successfully promoted a "Little Italy" area.

Where a significant Italian presence has remained in Australian inner-city areas, Little Italies have become a draw for visitors and community members alike. The buildings and streetscapes may resemble those of any Australian city but the stores and restaurants are a treasure trove of Italian products. Italy can be tasted and seen. Other community buildings such as churches and Italian cultural centres add to that sense of the "exotic" in our own land. While in the past redevelopment would have erased these remnants of the past, it is now desirable to maintain the ethnic flavour of our inner-city communities.

In Griffith this represents a future opportunity for developers, town planners and tourism promoters. The Italian Forum in Sydney's Leichhardt is the best known recent example of such co-operative business approach to a "Little Italy" development. Though many of the businesses of Banna Avenue are covered up with badly designed renovations, there is a critical mass of Italian run businesses that give Griffith's inner city an Italian flavour. While the majority of Italians do not live in the inner city, they do come in to shop or meet. Griffith, even though it has the population to warrant a "Little Italy," currently lacks the required juxtaposition of residential and commercial development.

Utilities

How electricity came to Griffith

Looking at early electric fridges and irons, one wonders when access to electricity made these appliances available to the citizens of Griffith.

The first electric light was demonstrated in Sydney in 1881, but gas was already well established as the main power source. By the turn of the century, not more than a 100 homes in either Sydney or Melbourne had electricity connected. It was 1911 before the Melbourne Electric Light Co. made a profit and the tide turned in favour of electricity over gas.

Just before World War I there was talk of the all-electric house. Electric stoves had been available from the U.S. since 1907 and fridges since 1912. By 1930 electricity had generally replaced gas in most houses and streets for lighting, and was gaining ascendancy for heating and cooking.

While little is known about dates for the establishment of electricity in rural areas, I have a hunch that the M.I.A. may be among the first. Its relatively late establishment meant that it by-passed the gas versus electricity debate - and went straight to electricity.

Electricity was first generated on the M.I.A. at the Yanco Powerhouse, which was nearing completion in 1912. Its first transmission line was to the Leeton Butter Factory and a model dairy farm. Lines to the Cannery, Bacon Factory and other significant industries followed soon after.

In 1919, the year the first shop opened in Banna Avenue, a small generator was transferred from Yanco and installed at the back of Mirrool House, the Water Commission accommodation complex in Jondaryan Avenue. It was operated by Frank Rhead, powered by a Hot Bulb Kero engine boosted by a tractor. This generator serviced Mirrool House, the Water Commission offices, and some adjacent businesses.

Between 1919 and 1920 preparations were made for a larger temporary Powerhouse, located on the site of what became the Commercial Refrigeration premises, in Hams St., Mooreville Industrial Area. Frank Rhead lived, as well as worked, in the steel and galvanised iron building. The German Wolf generating plant was fed by coal, unloaded from a railway spur ramp, and water from a purpose built dam.

Extension of lines was rapid, first to the centre of town - Banna Avenue, Commission offices and some houses. However, with WWI soldiers returning and the town expanding rapidly, the Griffith Powerhouse capacity was inadequate. In 1922 it closed down and was replaced with transmission from the Yanco Powerhouse.

The now obsolete Wolf generation plant was sold to McWilliams Wines. The steam engine was used at the Yenda Winery to drive crushers, presses etc. In 1972 the Wolf generating plant, which had provided power to Griffith in 1919, found its resting place at McWilliams' Hanwood Barrel Museum.

Increasing demand for electricity made the original Griffith Powerhouse obsolete after a brief operation between 1919-1922, and Griffith was hooked into supply from the Yanco Powerhouse. There was a long waiting list of customers when the original 5,500 volt transmission line, terminating at Yoogali, was upgraded to 33,000 volts in 1925.

During the 1920s, 128 miles of new power lines were built in Griffith, Hanwood, Yoogali, Lake View, east and west of Yenda, Wilbrigee and Tharbogang. In 1926 a large shop in Banna Avenue staged a very successful exhibition of electrical goods - clearly still a novelty.

In 1927 street lighting for the Griffith and Yenda was installed at the request of Wade Shire Council - 60 street lamps in Banna Avenue, and 16 at Yenda, divided between the town centre and outlying streets. In 1928 Griffith business houses arranged for a "White Way", comprising 183 lamps, ten feet apart, as cheap and effective window lighting and advertising.

In the 1930s, bulk rates for electricity, continuous water heating, and additional sub-stations were introduced. Early lines were also replaced. In 1936, ten "modern" Mercury vapour lamps installed in Banna Avenue shopping area - a new class of lighting.

A further 19 miles of line was extended to farms south of Hanwood, Myall Park Road, large blocks in the Bilbul district and towards Ballinal.

All the pre-1940 line work was done by hand - holes dug with crowbar and shovel, poles lifted by staff with "pikes". Extension ladders were used for climbing. Pine for the poles was obtained from all around the area.

Then around the Second World War the M.I.A. was connected to the NSW electricity grid system, although the Yanco Powerhouse continued to supply electricity during peak periods well into the 1950s (Robyn Oliver).

Venetian Carnival on the old reservoir

The town water reservoir is a large body of water in the heart of the City, held by a huge rectangular tank. In 2004 it was unfortunately totally screened from view by a grass embankment and fence. In the past, however it was recognised for its scenic and landscape value. It certainly has potential to make an important contribution to the city, visually and in terms of emphasising the theme of water - one of the principal tourism themes of Griffith.

The reservoir and pump station were a Commission project, which according to the design drawing was designed for a capacity of 250,000 gallons by Mr Waugh, resident engineer in 1927, with works completed in 1928.

The pump station appears to be a "type" design, standard for such installations. The original design drawings for the reservoir were found in the office of State Water in Sydney, but the pump station drawings appear to have been lost. In 2004 the site was scheduled for redevelopment. Planner's efforts to incorporate these heritage items into the redevelopment were rejected by council, so both the reservoir and pump station are likely to be destroyed.

As a tailpiece, possibly the most surreal event in the history of Griffith was the Venetian Carnival. This

was held on the water reservoir in the early part of the twentieth century. A local resident's reminiscence and a newspaper article from that time are reproduced below, recorded by Wendy Polkinghorne:

"A lasting memory I have always had is of a magical night of fireworks and water floats in a large pool of water at Griffith. The front page of The Area News of March 18, 1938 at the Griffith Library has refreshed that memory and the following extracts may remind others of a truly memorable night.

NIGHT OF LIGHT AND BEAUTY

VENETIAN CARNIVAL A BLAZE OF SPLENDOUR

Floats, Fireworks and Bathing Belles: Thousands present.

History was made in spectacular entertainment for inland Australia by Griffith's Venetian Carnival at the huge storage tank in Jondaryan Avenue on Tuesday night, when a crowd of 4,000 watched the most brilliant and novel display which the Area has known.

The Carnival opened with the pool under a mantle of darkness. All the lights had been extinguished, then a rocket soared up from the Northern Bank, burst in a rain of golden fire; under a focused spotlight, the Australian flag was broken out on the flagpole over the official enclosure and the band played 'Advance Australia Fair'.

The first parade was marked by an impressive ceremony. The floats were headed by the entry of the Griffith Sub-branch of the R.S.S.I.L.A. Drawn by a sombre and veiled figure, it came slowly to the official enclosure and there halted, with the spotlight focused on the float, its poppy canopy, its uniformed soldiers and sailors and its nurses, and its central symbolic figure bearing aloft the torch made traditional by the lovely lines of John McCrae, who himself sleeps in a soldier's grave in Belgium.

As the float halted before the enclosure, the announcer through the loudspeakers, quoted these lines:

"Take up our work, for as we go,
To you, from falling hands, we throw
The Torch. Be yours to lift it high!
If you break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep though Poppies blow
In Flanders Fields."

and back came the response delivered by Mr John Goldrick, quoting the answer of the Legacy Club.

"Fear not that you have died for naught.
The torch you threw to us we caught,
And now our hands will hold it high,
Its glorious light will never die
We've learned the lesson that you taught
In Flanders Fields."

There was a hush for a moment over the great pool and its packed crowds of spectators, then as the float slowly resumed its way, a wave of applause swept over the water."

Housing

Griffith contains houses and hotels that symbolise and encapsulate strands of its history. These places speak of migration, ethnic nostalgia, a hard start, later prosperity, and a good future. There were also cottage and housing "types", such as the triple fronted brick veneer, the "fibro" house and the Edwardian bungalow. And no matter what logical progression or historical scheme is constructed, there are also the "outliers", the notable exceptions to any rule or scheme. The hermit caves were one such housing exception.

The Ceccato House

Two Ceccato brothers, Giovanni and Antonio, came from the village of Cavaso del Tomba in the Comunita Pedemontana del Grappa group of villages, Provincia di Treviso, Veneto region of Northern Italy - source of most pre Second World War Italian settlers to the MIA. At the time the area was experiencing extreme economic hardship, having suffered greatly during the Napoleonic Wars and World War I - and still coming to grips with the loss of traditional industries such as silk and wool industries.

The two Ceccato brothers were miners who left the Veneto at a relatively young age (possibly following their father) to work in mines elsewhere in Europe, Alaska and South America. They married girls from their home village - their wives remaining in the village - children appearing after periodic visits from their husbands. The children's names reflected ships their fathers travelled on or countries where they worked, such as Florida and Alaska. During the early twentieth century, families in the villages tended to have a trade as well as self-sufficiency farming skills.

Initially the brothers Ceccato came to Australia to work in the Broken Hill mines. When the MIA was opened, they saw the opportunity to establish themselves and their families and walked from Broken Hill to Griffith with their bicycles, arriving circa 1916.

The establishment of the Ceccato farms coincided with the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Antonio was a big fan. His daughter recalled him listening to the opening on the radio. In honour of this engineering marvel, the front verandah of the house he built himself for his family featured the arched frames inspired by the bridge.

The Ceccato family home was to be important in the social life of pre-Second World War Griffith - a place where Italian families gathered for bocce, music, dancing at weekends - where the picnic parties to the Murrumbidgee took off.

The Ceccato children were keen photographers and there is an excellent photographic record in the Griffith Library Collection of their home, family & wider social gatherings at the house. They are still a prominent family among the Griffith Italian community.

Their home is typical of homes of early Italian settlers in the sense that they built it themselves from whatever materials were available - and they reflected more closely than a third party built house, the background, circumstances, aspirations and interests of the owner. The Harbour Bridge arches also reflected Giovanni's feelings about Australia as the place he finally chose to put down roots (Robyn Oliver).

Griffith's fibro heritage

Up until the property boom of the 1990s, Griffith contained some of the earliest examples of fibro cladding in Australia. There were original Water Conservation & Irrigation Commission (W.C. & I.C.) fibro houses, as well as other very early fibro houses dating from the 1910s and 1920s. Most of these have since been clad and had their verandahs closed in, or been demolished to make way for standard brick veneer housing.

The Commission's 1916 housing brochure set out the price and plan of each of the standard designs. It seems that the fibro houses offered to early irrigation settlers by the Commission were very early in the history of fibro houses in Australia.

The brochure offered six styles of house. Types D, E and F were all made of fibro. Each had four rooms plus bathroom - all opening off each other. There was no hall. They had wide verandahs on at least three sides, and hipped galvanised iron roofs. The unusual feature of their construction was that the timber framework of the house was left exposed on the outside - they were only lined with fibro on the inside. This gave them an attractive Elizabethan half-timbered look, but provided very little insulation! Pioneer Park has a fine model of a Type E fibro house, in its "Griffith Through the Decades" exhibition in Sharam Hall, made by the late Dug Hardy.

The price of the fibro houses ranged from 350 to 400 pounds, more expensive than another line of smaller houses offered in the brochure, which were clad with galvanised iron and lined with cypress. The Commission added the cost of each house to the farm debt.

With three camps busy erecting settler's houses, H.A. Taylor, the Commission's building supervisor from 1912 to 1922 was very short of tradesmen. After many requests, the Labour Department finally sent him six German carpenters who had just got off the boat in Sydney. The only one who had a few words of English was a man named Shultz, "a very good tradesman". Shultz went on to found Griffith's longest standing business, the Area Builders, and was an early stalwart supporter of the Salvation Army. Loreley, his Wunderlich clad Swiss style house, near the Army headquarters, is still a feature of Binya Street.

Mr Taylor also mentions that Henri Morel built the first cottage in Griffith, under contract to the Commission. Henri Morel was also to become a well-known Griffith identity, establishing the Lyceum theatre, the first picture show in Griffith.

After World War I, H.A. Taylor was based at the Beelbanger barracks for returned servicemen, where there was considerable demand for soldier settler houses. Extenuating circumstances for jumping the queue were given due consideration, but at one stage Mr Taylor realised that he had been shown the same photograph of "my wife" in the last stages of pregnancy by three different men - as proof of the urgency of their housing needs!

Mr Taylor's account of his problems with the first Australian manufactured asbestos sheeting ("fibro") explains some of the early problems of what was regarded as the miracle building material up to about the late 1950s. The sheeting they had used previously was imported. It would season and dry on its way out to Australia, in the stable conditions of a ship's hold. The first Australian fibro, however was sent "more or less green". When it was stored here, outside in the sun, as they had done with imported fibro, the outer edges shrank dramatically, and the sheets were cracked and useless. He then had try to find other work for his construction teams while they waited for replacement supplies to arrive from 400 miles away. (Robyn Oliver).

Ugly two storey flats now replace a row of old cottages beside the railway in Wakaden Street. An early photograph dated 1915 (reproduced in Kelly 1988: 72) shows the completed cottages in a line near the railway, prior to the construction of Banna Avenue. The last of the three of these "railway" cottages (which may in fact have been housing for Commission staff) remain. They are a type design, conventional timber cottage, but with distinctive asbestos "slate" roofs (diagonal pattern shingle roofs).

This early use of "fibro" is historically significant. Around the time of federation diagonal asbestos tiles began to be used, simulating the appearance of slate but at a cheaper price. The asbestos "slate" was imported from France in the early twentieth century and made its first appearance in the journal *Art and Architecture* in 1907. Appearing under the unfortunate trade name of "Titanic", they were promoted as being available in colours of red, blue and grey and offering "proof against fire, heat, cold, germs, acids and vermin". The First World War curtailed shipments from France, forcing local manufacture in 1917 (Fraser 2002). Significantly, these cottages represent some of the earliest use of fibro in Australian housing.

Soon after, the Marseilles pattern terracotta tile (also initially imported from France then locally made) became universally popular; producing the well-known phenomenon of the red-roofed suburb in Australian cities.

Fibro housing continued into the 1930s. Number 27 Carrathool Street was typical of the standard of fibro housing of the time. Built by the Prendergasts in 1939, its timber floor, iron roof, and timber windows identify it as a standard cottage. Externally, the timber frame windows and iron roof indicate it as standard construction. The 10' high ceilings had decorative plasterwork. The original wall and ceiling plaster would have been reinforced with horsehair; later with hemp. Since about 1975 this material was superceeded by paper-faced gypsum board (plasterboard). A concrete porch on timber columns was added in 1946 (Pamela Gulloni).

In contrast to this standard fibro housing, is the house opposite number 27. It was specifically designed for its corner location. The bold and elegant Art Deco masonry entrance of 25 Carrathool Street makes an important contribution to the street. It is flanked by fibro clad wings, cleverly "solidified" in appearance by a prominent masonry chimney on the main street frontage. Designed by the architect Lance Slade, this fibro

house was built by the Prendergasts in 1942 during the war, when labour materials were in short supply. The house has had only three owners since it was first built: S Palframan (1942-1966); Col Gribbin (1966-1982); and John and Ruth Robinson (from 1982).

It is well maintained and though built in a later period, is one of the few houses in Griffith built in the 1930s Art Deco manner. Its cypress pine framing is camouflaged under a tiled roof. Later additions were a 1966 carport that allowed conversion of the garage into a family room, a 1982 garage and an extension of this family room in 1987 (John Robinson).

A “medieval English” cottage and garden

Fibro cottage construction appears in the most surprising places. Cotswold Cottage is the romantic name of a cottage and gardens built to imitate an old English village property. Surprisingly, the postcard image of the vernacular English cottage blends well into the Griffith context of lush orchard farms and irrigated gardens.

The cottage was part of a plant nursery completed in 1954. It was built as the office for Weare’s Nursery, designed by Patricia Weare, wife of Arthur, a second generation irrigation pioneer. Built by local builder John Whiting in the style of the architecture of the Cotswolds in England, it is particularly interesting for its substitution of materials. As it was built early post war, materials were scarce. Timber frame and fibro were used instead of stone and render. At the time the business was thriving and a large area of the property was covered with bush houses made of bamboo and glass houses to germinate seedlings and to produce frost tender plants. The business employed about 36 people in the 1950’s, many of them Italian migrants.

Pat Weare also designed the garden, with its stone walls and paving. In the 1970’s her son Ian who used the cottage as a home for about 10 years and planted all the trees on the west side. From 1980 the cottage has been used as a gallery and gift shop (Lee Shaw, nee Weare).

Binya Street House Group

A group of interwar period houses remain in Binya Street. Though each one was individually styled, they are not outstanding individually. As a group, however, they speak of prosperity and prestige among a select minority of Griffith’s early residents. Each built on two residential blocks, they represent the highest quality local housing built during the 1930s depression.

Completed in 1938, **number 95 Binya Street** is the best known example of an early house built for the town gentry of Griffith. Its distinctive semi-circle and shell motifs make a contribution to the street.

This fine double-brick house was built sometime before 1938 for Mr W. Donaldson and subsequently occupied by Dr McFadzean, Mr M. Twadell and Mrs Gillespie among others (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

It is a double brick and tile roofed house. The semi circle is used as the dominant geometrical form of decoration. Casement windows are grouped in threes. On the front forward wall they are surrounded by rocaille lunettes (shellwork). This design is repeated on the verandah windows. The semi-circle denoted by the shellwork is repeated on the wide-arcaded verandah (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Number 97 Binya Street, of a very different design, is said to be built by the same builder (as the house next door at number 95), for a Mr Fred Eardley. It is a restrained design, with minimal ornamentation, with the verandah and high pitched tin roof for summer ventilation marking it out as a “typical” Australian house

Certain features, though, mark it out as housing for the gentry. These are the solid brick walls, wide roof overhangs, a deep verandah, and the polygonal bay window (which has been described as “Queen Anne” style). The extra design features connect it with emerging housing fashions, rather than with the prefabricated housing seen in places such as Wakaden Street. The overall appearance, reminiscent of many Edwardian period houses, may also have been influenced by the California Bungalow house designs, which were being heavily promoted and copied in Australia by the 1940s.

Number 99 Binya Street was built for Mr Alf Abrosio in 1934 and then owned by Mr Tom Hayes, owner of a butchery in Banna Avenue (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

This is an attractive and well-maintained 1930s house with Federation and Edwardian elements, which makes an important contribution to the street. The house is symmetrical about the central forward gable facing the street. The entrance is reached by brick steps, flanked by urns. Ornamentation on the front walls and porch is of Art Deco geometrical forms. Timber brackets between turned wooden posts provide a filigree effect that reduces the heaviness of construction. Turned wooden posts on the porch, and the turned spindles at the roofline of the gables show elements of Edwardian and Federation styles. The recent wooden picket fence is appropriate to the style of the house. (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

"Loreley" at number 101 Binya Street was built in about 1934 by Frank Schultze of the firm Area Builders Supply Co.

The gambrel shaped terracotta tiled roof immediately identifies the designer/builder as European, possibly German. This was in fact the case. The roof matches nothing built in the city before or since (except perhaps the roof of the Pizza Hut restaurant).

Interestingly, the timber-framed walls are clad in pressed metal sheets decorated to represent brickwork, invented by another countryman, Ernest Wunderlich.

Ernest Wunderlich imported the first stamped metal work, as pressed zinc windows, into Australia in 1885. In 1890, Wunderlich began pressing his own steel sheets instead of zinc. Production continued for about forty years, copying wooden decorative styles ranging from art Nouveau to Art Deco. Wunderlich sheets were a popular external cladding material in the 1930s, also cladding The Area Builder's Shop and the Palais de Dance.

Number 100 Binya Street fits in with the pattern of individualistically designed houses for the gentry established by the other houses in the Binya Street group.

Brick veneer comes to town: Kookora Street Cottages

A beautiful small group of cottages, characteristic of their period, are the Kookora group. They contain the first brick veneer house in Griffith. Though built in the early 1950s, the cottages are notable for the earlier period of their style (1940s), which includes multi-tone-patterned brickwork and curved walls. Each cottage has elaborate metalwork, all made by Tony Colla. Their manicured gardens and frontages are also of ethnic nostalgic and aesthetic merit. Particularly interesting is the patriotic sentiment of the topiary of a kangaroo and emu (the animals on Australia's shield).

The cottage group contains three representative construction types. Two cottages are traditional full brick, one is brick veneer; and one is fibro, later re-clad in brickwork. The same bricklayer built all this group of three cottages at the same time in 1953-4.

The bricklayer was Redento Cunial, who built the brick cottage at number 103 for himself. He also built cottages at 105 for Frank Bastianon and at 101 for Tony Colla. Tony Colla's cottage differed from the other two, and was unique in Griffith, as it was the first brick veneer house. Tony Colla made the ornate metalwork as after-hours work in the Colla Bros blacksmithing and steel engineering workshop.

Other houses in the post-Second World War period were mainly asbestos cement (fibro). For example, Tony's brother Alcide built his fibro house next door at number 99 (the fourth in the row). He only bricked it in much later, in the 1980s (Tony Colla).

Ethnic Nostalgia

While wanting to function in Australian society, the Italian community did not want to forget the proud heritage of Italy, going back to classical times. The grass-roots sentiment for this is expressed architecturally

through “ethnic nostalgia” in buildings. References to a romanticised Italian past may include classical statues in Mediterranean style garden settings, as in the Scalabrini Village. Or it may include Italian naming, coloured tiles or polychrome brickwork, as in Fontana and the Kookora Street cottages. At times, a full-blown neoclassical treatment has appeared, for example at the Sergi Winery family vault and the Capella Della Pietà at Griffith Cemetery.

Fontana

Fontana is the romantic name of a bricklayer's own home built in 1956, in the style of an earlier era, named after a place at Cavaso Del Tomba.

Angelo Salvestro, born in Cavaso Del Tomba 1901, in northern Italy, completed his national service with the Alpini regiment then, with no job to go to, left Italy. He arrived in Griffith in 1922, and was going to go up to Queensland to do the cane-cutting, but was directed to Griffith. He was directed to Jack Ceccato's farm and he joined the other men already encamped there. Angelo worked with Tony Ceccato and Redento Cunial from whom he picked up the bricklaying trade. From bricklaying he went to tiling. Then he took up farming at Yoogali, where the Scalabrini Village is now. He sold the farm and built his retirement house.

He went back to Cavaso in 1929 to marry a local girl Maria Stefanin, who was working as a house servant and in the silk factory. They then travelled back to Griffith. For a year they shared a rented a cottage together with another family at the rent of a pound per month. Angelo's father Luigi had also come out to join his son, but after a few years went back to Italy.

Money was scarce when in 1930 their first child Bianca was born. The baby crib was a “Nanda” spaghetti box. But Angelo learned how to lay bricks and travelled to work around the district. After saving hard, they bought Farm number 650 in 1936.

He also built the Yoogali Service Station in about 1946, and continued to own it and lease it out to the Beltrame brothers, Guido (Peter) and Charlie, who ran the garage. Charlie Beltrame was a sculptor after he retired, and did the soldier settler memorial (he was a returned soldier).

He helped build the Lady of Pompeii Church, for which he donated the bricklayer's sand.

He also helped build the Yoogali Club, giving endless hours of work. His daughter Eda De Martin said "he spent so many hours doing the tiling there, and enjoyed it so much, that his family called the Yoogali Club his home away from home". He was very proud of the Club, and was not only a founding member but also the first to be made a Life Member.

When Angelo retired in 1956 he sold the farm, subdividing eight blocks along the main road. He also and built his own house, Fontana, named after the rockery fountain in the front yard. Though a conventional brick and tile house, the curved brickwork of the chimney is reminiscent of the art deco style. There also is a striking panel of coloured tiles on the front wall (Eda De Martin).

The house is seen when entering the outskirts of Griffith at Yoogali. It is also significant because it is associated with the life of Angelo Salvestro, tiler, bricklayer and farmer, and early Italian pioneer of Griffith. The house has aesthetic value for its brickwork detail and ethnic nostalgia.

In their old age, Angelo and his wife moved to the Scalabrini Village, which is on land once part of their farm (Eda De Martin).

Accommodation

Hotels

Hotels are the characteristic landmarks of Australian towns. Until about the 1960s, Australian hotels (“pubs”) were part of the gender segregation typical in Australian society, providing a focus for the drinking men in the community, while women gathered separately. Pubs were required by law to provide

accommodation, but their cultural significance lies in their roles as “watering holes” and meeting places. Out of Griffith's three interwar period hotels, Griffith, The Area and Victoria, only the last two survive. When the Griffith Hotel was demolished to make way for redevelopment, the City of Griffith lost one of its only three pubs.

Area Hotel

"The Area" was a shortening of "Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area". As a result, many places in Griffith were called "Area", including businesses such as Area Builders and the Area Hotel.

The Area Hotel was created on paper by a licence transfer from the Royal Hotel in Narrandera. The building, designed by architects Rudder and Grout, was constructed in 1938 and the licensee from The Royal was installed.

Wherever people travelled in NSW, city hotels tended to be familiar. Hard linoleum floors and glazed tile walls made any spilt beer, cigarette ash, spittle and blood easy to clean. Men sat in the Public Bar, while ladies drank beer watered down with lemonade ("shandy") in the Ladies Lounge. For those wishing to take alcohol away, there was usually a small, and rather seedy, Bottle Shop directly accessible from the footpath, and divided off from the Public Bar.

By the late 1960s, this hotel customer base had aged. To try to appeal to a wider range of customers many hotels began a process of renovating - a process which was still continuing in 2004.

The Area Hotel was among these, renovating with a new cocktail bar and lounge in 1971. A reward of \$10 dinner and drinks was offered to the customer who came up with the "most apt name" for the bar. The renovation was designed by architects John Graves and Associates of Narrandera in what the Area News described as a "Spanish-Mediterranean theme". The old glazed tiling, much liked by old regulars, was removed. Later in 1987, the main bar received carpet and the wall dividing the Bottle Shop was removed to extend the main bar (Area News, 12 February 1988).

Yet the Area Hotel's upper floor street frontage and interior are highly intact. The original timber staircase leads to passages with dark-stained timberwork. Original details are everywhere: hand painted signs for customers; art deco hand basin surrounds in the hotel rooms; yellow and pale-green glazed tiles in wet areas.

Victoria Hotel

The Victoria Hotel is a dominant and important structure. It is two-storey in brick with render, parapet in bays (rendered) and roughcast rendered band under eaves. The façade is conventional Edwardian style, showing chunky dark red brick pilasters, supporting the suspension ties of a cantilevered sheet roof. It was opened in 1925 although both dates, 1924 and 1925, appear on the façade. The hotel was built for a company that owned hotels in Leeton as well as the Hotel Griffith.

The Victoria was the first hotel built in Griffith, when limited trading hours were operative. The arrangement of the bar was characteristic of that unusual licensing period. The bar length was maximised by being a U-shape, and practically occupied the whole of the ground floor. Dark red, three-inch vitreous tiles with green and cream strip tiles used to cover the ground level façade.

Then in 2002, the Victoria Hotel received a ground floor renovation that swapped its original, and highly representative, public bar and wall tiling for an all-beige interior with "heritage" internal detailing, in a tedious all-over beige colour scheme. The exterior above the awning, however, is highly intact.

6

Educating and governing

The one-teacher schools

The irrigation construction camp Bagtown had a school called Bagtown Academy of Learning - known officially as the Griffith Provisional School - a galvanised iron building measuring 20' x 26'. The first teacher received his appointment with the instruction to 'pitch his tent'. But well before Bagtown was constructed, there was a system of small remote-area schools. Often constructed as light-weight structures, such schools tended to be relocated from place to place as the need arose. This system of one-teacher and "Provisional" schools was well established in NSW.

Wumbulgal School

Wumbulgal School is representative of the large number of one-teacher schools on the M.I.A. Before the days of the farm car, it was impossible for families in this closely settled rural area to get their children to town schools.

It is uncertain when the Wumbulgal School building was built. In 1909 it was a Provisional School at Euroly (or Uroly) on the Murrumbidgee River, but a former Euroly teacher suggests that it was previously at Gobagaula near Narrandera. The Euroly School officially closed in 1912 because of low attendance.

In 1929 as irrigation reached the Wumbulgal, some 16kms from Griffith towards Yenda, five local families put in an application for a school. The local inspector wrote in support of the application: "Wumbulgal is the latest part of the Irrigation Area to be opened up. A great deal of channel work is in progress, as well as extensive clearing of new farms. Sixteen pupils will be enrolled immediately and the future prospects are bright as the families are young."

The depression intervened however, and it was not until 1931 that Euroly School was moved to Wumbulgal - apparently much to the annoyance of the Euroly people who were still running a subsidised school in it. Mr W.A.J. Hunt from Farm 2339 donated five acres of land for the school at Wumbulgal. The Hunts had eight children of their own, but Mrs Hunt still managed to host all meetings and functions for the school for many years.

The first teacher, Ces Rubie, stayed six years, riding his bike to school every day from Yenda on a gravel road. He later distinguished himself as the first Director of Public Relations for the Education Department, earning a British Empire Medal for his extensive community service.

Most teachers only stayed at Wumbulgal for one to three years but the teacher who made Wumbulgal School such a memorable experience for so many, Miss Mona O'Meara, was there from 1949 to 1963. Miss O'Meara came from one of the pioneering irrigation families of the district and was a veteran of one-teacher schools. She taught every subject from kindergarten to sixth class with great skill.

When she started at Wumbulgal the school had been vacant for seven years over the war period when pupil numbers dropped. The building was semi-derelict. There was no furniture, and campers had used it as a slaughterhouse. A minimum number of nine children started, but within a few weeks there were 17 and by 1954 the numbers rose to an all time high of 45, spilling out of the small class room onto the verandah. Many of the children were ferried to school by Miss O'Meara, who operated her Chevvy like a mini-bus, the older boys outside on the running boards with their heads stuck in the windows with due deference to safety. No seat belts then!

It was local farmer, Bertie Worfolk, who got the school started again. He had no children of his own, but was concerned about the lack of educational opportunities for local children. He was one of the school's Santas. One child once wondered why Santa was wearing Bertie Worfolk's gumboots.

Another memorable Santa was Griffith businessman, Perce Taylor, famous for his impressive arrivals. One year he outdid himself. Parking his helicopter on Ron Carlon's woolshed roof, Santa Perce made a truly "smashing" entry through a window, which had been thoughtlessly closed.

Past pupils have a wealth of memories about the school - of the boys who spent long periods "irrigating" the playground for novice city teachers, of grass huts made when the grounds were mowed, the damage done

to the long drop as an unofficial highlight of Cracker Night and homemade pies warmed on the open fire place under the blackboard - experiences never quite matched by the modern school, however well staffed and equipped.

The school closed in 1969, a year after the Department of Education erected a new brick toilet block. The school building was moved to Pioneer Park in the 1970s, but it is said the toilet block still remains in situ in solitary glory (- Robyn Oliver).

Catholic schooling

The Sacred Heart Group

The significance of these as buildings lies in being an exemplar of the evolution of Catholic buildings in the early twentieth century. They form a coherent group that makes an important contribution to the streetscape. Their detailing, which includes front red brick, areas of contrasting cream colour smooth render, and roughcast render, is characteristic of Edwardian and Interwar period style.

The Sacred Heart Group of buildings are best understood as part of the Irish Catholic tradition in Australia. The school was named after the patron saint of Ireland and the church was established in 1928 with minimal Italian involvement. It did not offer Italian mass until 1971.

In 1921 the Sisters of Mercy answered an urgent call by the parish priest, Father O'Dea, to take up the task of teaching the Catholic children. The group, led by Mother M. Dominic arrived on the freight train from Albury to be met by Father O'Dea on his bicycle, and some hundred parishioners assembled in the just-finished St Patrick's schoolhouse. O'Dea vacated the new presbytery in favour of the Sisters, who then used it as their convent for the next 17 years.

St Patrick's School opened with an enrolment of 80, prominent among which were local Irish names, reflecting the mainly Irish origin of the Catholic community. In 1928 - the year in which Sacred Heart Church opened - the school began taking secondary classes, a new convent was built and Fr O'Dea moved back into his old presbytery.

The need of a separate secondary school became clear over the following decades and in 1950 the Marist Brothers came to Griffith to open St Brendan's Boys School. St Brendan's expanded and relocated to Wakaden Street in 1962 to become the co-educational Catholic High school, taking in secondary school girls.

Father O'Dea was the quintessential larger-than-life Irish Catholic priest, who got his own way and paid scant attention to regulations.

A story retold by Kelly (1988) explains O'Dea's reputation. The local police constable held a position of considerable authority in Griffith. Some time around 1920, Constable John Ford - also known as "sudden death"- had the distinction of backing down before Father O'Dea, whom he accused of running an illegal game of chance (the chocolate wheel at the Catholic Church bazaar). When he threatened to "put O'Dea out" the reverend gentleman removed his clerical collar and responded "I've slipped a lot if you think you can put me out!"

Though Italianate in some aspects of their style, this group of buildings is of a type typical of Irish Catholic communities in rural NSW in the early to mid-twentieth century. It speaks of schooling by Irish nuns and priests, and similar building groups may be found at other towns such as Young, Temora and Harden. The Italian community Catholic buildings at Yoogali, Hanwood and Scalabrini are of a different type. Both groups of Catholic properties add to the rich multi-cultural tapestry of Griffith.

Yenda

Another Catholic priest of great energy, Fr Gallagher, was based in the newly established parish of Yenda. Under his leadership, the community raised enough funds to complete Saint Theresa's Convent and the school during the peak of the Depression in 1936-1937.

Fr Gallagher had requested the Sisters of Saint Joseph to run the new school. It opened with an enrolment of over a hundred students.

Italian Catholicism at Yoogali

Catholic schooling at Yoogali began in 1949 in the hall at the rear of Our Lady of Pompeii Church. The new school was called St Mary's and was first served by Sisters of Saint Joseph travelling each day from Yenda. This daily commuting continued until a convent was built at Yoogali. But the Irish Catholic brand of schooling was not catering well to the Italian population.

The various Catholic Church buildings at Yoogali form part of a well-maintained, highly intact street group which includes the key landmarks of Yoogali village: the general store/post office, with the garage, club signboards and Fontana as contributing items on the main road nearby. These buildings make important contributions to the streets and identity of Yoogali, as a location in its own right.

The convent, later a presbytery, was built in 1954 and has an unusual frontage of high aesthetic value.

Led by Father Nicholas Simonazzi, in 1955 the monks of the Capuchin order arrived to teach. They also travelled from Yenda until a monastery was built in Yoogali in 1962. St Mary's School was completed in 1964 under their guidance. The order left in 1987.

Public Schooling

Griffith Infants School

Starting out as Wickham's Camp Provisional School in April 1920, the school was a tent with duckboard flooring and about 30 students. It soon became overcrowded. In July the students moved to new premises at the Lyceum Theatre, which was the only building of suitable size.

A new building with accommodation for 200 was completed in 1921. Later the need arose for secondary schooling. These early buildings of Griffith Public School were the predecessors of the current Infants School and Griffith High.

The present Infants School building is a small, brick and tile school built in the Interwar style, completed in 1941.

Many Griffith residents have fond memories of their time in Infants School, and of the teachers who cared for them. The CWA Park commemorates one of the best remembered teachers in a 1958. The small plaque reads: "A well loved teacher of small children". Mrs. Kathleen Aiton was a teacher of the infants' class at Griffith Public School, "who throughout her long teaching career showed an intense love and magical charm for the children she taught". The Memorial was built in her honour by subscription from local school children and parents (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Mrs Eileen Marriot, teacher from 1928-1932, recalled the different conditions of that time:

"I came up here as a teacher, direct from Sydney Teachers College. The train, the Temora Mail, was about three hours late. My arrival was memorable because it was in the middle of a dust storm, and I wondered where I was going to. On my first day at school, Kathleen Aiton had eighty children in her class. Half of them came to me, because I was an extra teacher.

I remember the heat in the old wooden rooms with no cooling. The children were level with the windows, so they did not get any air, unless they stood up and walked around. We used to take them out for a few minutes a couple of times during the afternoon when it got too hot" (edited excerpt, Griffith Public School 75th anniversary 1920-1995).

Mr Clive Prichard attended as a student in 1923-1930 and recalled the basic level of education expected at the time:

"School here in the twenties was generally the three R's. There wasn't any Science or other things like

today. There was the Depression and drought, and parents never had any money.

The younger generation were pushed into the workforce when they were fourteen, no matter what marks you got. If they could get a job, they left school. Now it is a different kettle of fish. The higher the education now; the better the chance of getting a job. You have to look at the time, the circumstances, and everything that goes with it" (edited excerpt, Griffith Public School 75th anniversary 1920-1995).

Griffith High

Completed in 1933, just prior to the Great Depression, the building is an elegant structure, reminiscent of American Georgian revival. In contrast to many of Griffith's severe styles of early building, this is a fine example of an interwar period Georgian revival style building that has aesthetic, social and landmark value.

Griffith High School prepared their own history, which gives a detailed account of the internal changes to the school from its earliest days (www.griffith-schools.nsw.edu.au):

Secondary classes were first conducted at Griffith Public School during the 1920s. In order to give the school status in this connection, it was raised to a District School in February 1929. Two years later the school was reclassified and raised to the status of an Intermediate High School. New buildings were erected for the post-primary pupils in 1933. The Minister for Education, the Hon. D.H. Drummond, laid the foundation stone in March 1933.

In 1939 the secondary section of Griffith Intermediate High School was raised to High School status and the primary section reverted to Primary School status. The school then consisted of only 6 rooms located in the old wing of A Block. The classrooms usually contained no less than 40 students, often having 2 classes in the same room. With the change to a High School the school uniform also changed from dark and light blue to green and gold. In June 1956 a new science block was occupied. Then in March 1962 a new wing was officially opened which contained 13 classrooms, an administrative section, an assembly hall, changing rooms and other amenities. The sports fields were also further developed with the creation of 3 hockey fields and 12 basketball courts set amongst more than 200 young trees and shrubs.

Following a review of accommodation needs, it was found that further facilities were required at the school. In May 1962 approval was given by the Minister for Education, the Hon. R.J. Heffron, for the erection of 2 science laboratories, an art room and some extra general classrooms. By February 1964 further additions were incorporated in the original plan. The new plan prepared for the erection of 6 classrooms, a double art room with pottery annex and 2 stores, a music room, 3 science laboratories, a metalwork room, a senior study centre, 2 staff studies, toilets and stores. These new additions were occupied in November 1966, and the building was called B Block.

The pressures of a growing population meant that further planning for expansion had to be explored. This led to the building of C Block. With the completion of this building in the early seventies, the English faculty was relocated to the bottom floor and had 6 classrooms. The Science faculty was moved to the first floor and had 4 new laboratories together with a science prep room. The top floor exclusively housed the School Library.

To complete the picture, in 1997 the School Foyer was expanded and redesigned to act as a showpiece to the School. Student works, awards and trophies that are proudly displayed in this area now greet visitors to Griffith High School (www.griffith-schools.nsw.edu.au).

Defence

The Hanwood Cloth

The Hanwood Cloth is significant as a relic of women's social and service groups of Griffith which played an important role in local social history (the "social" and "service" often combined). It also was part of war-time defence contribution by women at home.

The cloth, donated by Mrs Nesta McWilliam in 1986, was made by the Hanwood War Workers Group in 1940 to raise funds for the Australian Comfort Fund. It is exhibited in the old Nurses Quarters building - part of Griffith's first hospital complex, originally located on the site of the present Government Office block.

The Cloth was made in 1940 by the Hanwood War Workers Group to raise funds for the Australian Comfort Fund, which provided extra "comforts" for Australian troops in World War II, especially those serving overseas. The cloth is covered with the signatures of a large number of local identities of the time, who paid sixpence for the privilege - the signatures later embroidered by Mrs Alice Pedley assisted by Misses Winnie and Marjorie McWilliam.

An undated Area News cutting provides a background to the Hanwood War Workers Group.

While the Group was established in 1940, it "grew from a nucleus of women who lived in the Hanwood district in the early 1920s, worked for the Hanwood School P. & C. Association and were a close band of friends and neighbours helping each other in the early days." Among the early participants in the afternoon gatherings in each other's homes were Mesdames Eileen Murphy, Davies, Forrester, Paul Delves, Dave Stark, Mackay, Singleton, Roberts and McGann.

When the War Workers Group was formed, other Hanwood residents joined. Office bearers at this time included Mesdames Stark, C. Connor, Clarry Stark, Harry Stokes, Pedley and Percy Cox. Mrs Davies and Mrs Guy Neville Snr. were in charge of first aid and home nursing classes, and other "stalwart workers" named were Mesdames Scobie, Bowditch and Gladman.

The Group's fundraising activities were aimed at defraying costs and providing contributions to the Australian Comfort Fund. As well as the Cloth project, they catered, ran fetes and street stalls, "and all the other various tiring efforts of community moneymaking".

They also made garments and knitted clothing - "they sent hundreds of parcels to the Comfort fund for the serving troops".

Robyn Oliver remembered how her father, a returned WWII serviceman, began during old age to wear a pair of fine, handknitted khaki mittens to bed - to protect his hands from bruising as he felt his way along the corridor in the dark, he had explained. He had kept the mittens through many household moves, after receiving them during the war from the Comfort Fund - but as he was serving in tropical New Guinea at the time, they did not come into their own until some 50 years after the war (Robyn Oliver).

Italians in the war years

During the First World War many Italians living in Australia served in the Italian or Australian armies. This did not impact on the status of Italians in Australia. The Second World War however did have a dramatic impact. The influx of Italians in the 1920s combined with the rise of Fascism in Italy provoked discussion of Italian immigration in the various Australian parliaments. Italian immigration was construed in a negative light and unemployment figures were drawn on to bemoan the rising number of Italians in Australia.

In the same period Mussolini was clear in his insistence that Italian emigrants, naturalised Australians or not, were to remain Italians. Social clubs and celebrations reinforcing fascist ideals were strongly supported by Italian authorities in Australia. When news of the declaration of war reached Australia on June 11 1940, most Italians had been forewarned that Italy would enter on the side of Germany, which meant that their status in Australia was liable to be jeopardised in new ways. Many were not surprised when Australian police and security officers came to arrest Italian men. Internment was carried out on a large scale. In most areas Italian blood ties was considered reason enough for arrest. In 1942 the number of Italians interned in Australia reached a wartime high of 3,651. But thereafter as the danger of Japanese invasion subsided, they were gradually released, and by September 1944, only 135 hard core fascists remained in the internment camps. Generally, reports suggest that the treatment of internees was reasonable and that life in the internment camps was not physically gruelling. Nevertheless, those interned were forced to leave their wives and families to fend for themselves in a hostile Australia at war with their homeland.

The other large group of Italians to be held in captivity during the Second World War were prisoners of war (POWs). Thirty POW camps were spread across the continent, the nearest to Griffith being at Cowra and

Hay. June 1944 saw the beginning of employment of POW volunteers, unguarded, on individual farms and in rural industry. A strong fear of the bush and reasonably comfortable living situations meant that the chances of attempted escape were minimal. On return to Italy, many POWs who had been stationed on farms applied to return to Australia (Pesman 1998: 29-31 edited excerpts).

Commemorating Australians in the Second World War

The "aeroplane on a post" is a well-known marker for road directions in Griffith. The story of how it got there is involved. It says as much about local understanding of conservation, as about the depth of sentiment to commemorate Australian servicemen.

The Fairey Firefly was designed and built in Britain during the Second World War as an aircraft carrier borne fighter-reconnaissance aircraft. These aircraft were procured by the Royal Australian Navy in June 1949, for use on HMAS Sydney, and operated in Korea for four months from October 1951, and again in late 1953 until the Armistice. The Fairey Firefly Memorial to Airmen was donated by citizens of Griffith with a major part of funds provided by the Council.

It was a generous acquisition between friends; former Federal Government Minister David Fairbairn and Griffith businessman Charles Beltrame. Mr Beltrame and a small committee of returned RAAF servicemen and aeroplane enthusiasts in Griffith were supportive of the concept of an aeroplane monument.

The Fairey Firefly at Bankstown was chosen from among the last few planes procured for the Australian Navy, from about 150 original units. It was purchased for 200 pounds at a time when the remainder of the demothed Fireflies were sold for 20,000 pounds each. Mr Beltrame initiated plans in Griffith to have the aircraft trucked from Sydney.

This idea was scrapped when it was realised that it would have been nearly impossible to pass over small bridges and country lanes without partial demolition. The Committee were in favour of an alternative plan of an historic flight home and decided to enlist the deployment of the RAAF and RAN to get the plane airworthy.

The biggest hurdle - so it turned out - was not the preparation of the Firefly for its one flight, but finding a skilled pilot who could safely guide the plane at a designated height from Sydney to Griffith, with only partial instrumentation and with wheels fixed in a landing position. Mr Beltrame located a former Fleet Air Arm Lockheed test pilot who agreed to fly the plane.

A large crowd gathered at the Griffith Aerodrome in March 1967 for the arrival of the Fairey Firefly, which thrilled onlookers with a victory roll before landing. Over 1967-8 the Firefly was housed in the engineering workshops of Collier and Miller, Griffith where it was prepared for display. The memorial was unveiled in 1969.

The aircraft is no longer whole but a composite. This is well illustrated by the saga of the engine: First the engine was removed for training apprentices at Griffith Technical College. Then, it was exchanged for a similar type of engine in poorer condition for the sum of 300 pounds paid to the committee to agree to the exchange. The original engine was then used to power a speed boat, while the exchange engine was put on exhibition at Pioneer Park.

Some time later the engine went missing, and was found to have been sold to a purchaser in Queensland. The undercarriage and instrument panels were also removed to lighten the weight. Volunteers removed the original paintwork to repaint the aircraft. Fabric covers for the rudder and elevators were removed, and replaced with metal sheeting (Kelly 1988, edited excerpts).

Griffith Soldier Settlers Memorial

The Memorial, located on the median strip in Banna Avenue, depicts a First World War soldier settler, with one hand resting on a plough, the other handing a rifle to his son, who is depicted wearing Second World War battle dress.

The symbolism is clear: the father is passing on the responsibility of sacrifice to the son. The Memorial was unveiled on Saturday April 14 1990 by Mrs Belinda Kayess, widow of a First World War soldier settler, and mother of a soldier killed in the Second World War.

The figures stand on an oval base on a large boulder with four plaques. Part of the inscription reads:

In proud and honoured memory of some 2,000 returned soldiers of the AIF who came to this area at the end of the Great War 1914-1918...

The memorial also signifies the debt we owe to those of their sons, many of whom were raised in poverty

and adversity, who gave their lives during the World War of 1939-1945. At the going down of the sun and in the morning, we will remember them. Lest we forget.

During Australia's bi-centennial year, a group of people in Griffith decided to erect a memorial to the soldier settlers of the First A.I.F. Such belated recognition had been canvassed previously, but the self-effacing war veterans had balked at the suggestion.

By 1988 however all the original soldier settlers, and indeed all but very few of the First A.I.F. veterans had passed on, and the concept was raised again. There was a growing realisation that Griffith unique, in being the only large city in the world to be substantially settled and developed by former volunteer soldiers, returned from the First World War. A need was felt to commemorate their conditions of extreme hardship and adversity.

A committee called The Soldier Settlers Memorial Trust was formed from a wide community cross-section, with the sole purpose of creating a life-size memorial cast in bronze to commemorate the soldier settlers.

It took 30 months for the Committee and local community to raise the necessary \$73,990 funds for the Memorial.

For months the committee could not agree on where to put the Memorial. Firstly it was going to be placed right in front of the Council Offices, in front of the Memorial to Pioneer Women. This resulted in an uproar from many women that a soldier settler statue was upstaging the pioneer woman. Instead of paying tribute to all pioneer women, and the harsh and primitive conditions with which they had to cope, the statue might obtain an identity simply as "the soldier settler's wife".

Some committee members even felt that three memorials next to each other "might" be overcrowded. Finally it was decided to locate the statue in the central area of Banna Avenue - a position which had been reserved by council for a structure of "significant importance".

Charlie Beltrame was exuberant when his offer to sculpt the memorial was accepted. Charlie was a retired car mechanic and businessman, who took up sculpture as a hobby. He studied with three sculptors, including Australia's most renowned architectural sculptor, Tom Bass. The Memorial figures, which he described as his most challenging task, fulfilled an ambition for Charlie. The figures were made in plaster, then cast in bronze at a foundry in Melbourne Twelve years prior he had lodged an unsuccessful tender for the Pioneer Women statue, and the Soldier Settler Memorial represented a second chance.

Charlie seems to have had an enthusiasm for all sorts of memorials, as he also was a great supporter of the Fairey Firefly Memorial to Australian Airmen.

It is one of Griffith's little ironies that an Italian settler would become the chief supporter of memorials to the Anglo-Australians. Yet Charlie was himself a returned soldier. He passed away in 2000 at the age of 80 years.

Government and administration

The Sir Dudley de Chair Lookout is one example of the tendency of government and administration to name places after persons of perceived importance.

Sir Dudley de Chair Lookout

The natural landscape of Scenic Hill forms a backdrop to the city, a feature that formed part of Walter Burley Griffin's landscape plan. The best known places on Scenic Hill are items in its cultural landscape: Pioneer Park, the hermit's caves and the lookouts. The natural values of Scenic Hill are largely taken for granted. One of those little ironies of Griffith is the rather poshly named Sir Dudley de Chair Lookout. The name for this lookout appeared some time around the mid-1970s, about fifty years after Sir Dudley, a now-forgotten state dignitary, paid a several-hour visit to Griffith. It is not an assigned name with the

Sir Dudley de Chair, then Governor of NSW, was invited to open the Griffith Annual Show by the Griffith Agricultural Society on the 20 October 1926. He arrived with his wife Lady de Chair and daughter Miss Elaine. After opening the show, the de Chairs proceeded to the luncheon booth, and then that night attended the Show Ball. This brief visit to Griffith by the Governor included a stopover to view Griffith and its surrounds from the lookout on Scenic Hill (Ibis Links pp 14–18, November 1996).

The main significance of the lookout is aesthetic. It is on Scenic Hill, which itself a bit of a cultural icon to Griffith, as it is the only hill in the city. The lookout is perched on a rock shelf, below which are sweeping views of two cultural landscapes. The first cultural landscape is that of suburban Griffith. The second landscape, which encircles the city, consists of green vineyards and orchards, created by the artificial phenomenon of river irrigation. In the distance is the natural landscape of the Cocoparra Range.

Law and order

Griffith's prohibition era

By the time Henry Lawson (1867-1922) arrived at the MIA in January 1916, his national reputation was well established. As Australia's best-known ballad writer, Lawson was a recognised living national treasure. But he was also an alcoholic ballad writer, and was sent into the MIA firstly to "dry out". He was also offered a cottage in Leeton and employed as a publicist for the MIA. The cottage and two-acre farmlet is a rare heritage item, as it is one of Lawson's few known dwelling places. Henry Lawson's early newspaper articles comment on the shortage of liquor outlets:

It's a prohibition area, and the driest and thirstiest

I ever struck in spite of the abundant water supply...

Yes, but all things are here that are in most country towns - and more; but, lo and behold! THE PUB IS NOT HERE, my brethren (Chessbrough 1982).

The experiment did not work out. Lawson continued drinking and returned to Sydney in September 1917. He died five years later of alcoholism.

How and why early Griffith came under an era of alcohol prohibition is a story that requires further research. The backdrop was a post-colonial population prone to alcoholism, sprinkled with a tiny minority of vigorous adherents to the Temperance Movement. Conditions of tightening control of populations led to the development of dictatorial governments in the Western World during the interwar period. This was accompanied by government experiments in social engineering, such as the Prohibition era in the USA.

The irrigation area was set up for leasehold and contained a lease condition that:

The lessee shall not apply, nor authorise any person on his behalf to apply, for a licence to sell wines, spirituous, or fermented liquors...unless the written consent of the Commissioner shall have been first had and obtained for that purpose...(Chessbrough 1982).

As in other prohibition situations, an alternative economy quickly developed. Men would travel to the pubs in Whitton and Narrandera to stock up on supplies of liquor. Trade in unlicensed alcohol "sly grog" flourished. Each drinker had to rely on a supplier or "grog runner". Aboriginal residents at the Wattle Hill camp at Leeton still remembered grog-running occurring in a much later era.

The drink preferred by Anglo-Australians was beer. Wine and fortified wines ("plonk") had a low reputation and were drunk by "winos" - alcoholics. By contrast, the Italian irrigation pioneers were accustomed to daily wine with meals. Cesare (Ces) Bonomi recalled how wine-making in 1918 was an "Italian thing", little understood by the Anglo-Australians.

I used to help Dad. I'd take off my boots, jump on the wine barrel and have a great time crushing the grapes. It was a dead secret between us. I never told anyone of my Australians friends that we drank wine, otherwise I would've been outlawed for life! (Chessbrough 1982).

The local feature of the MIA was that a government construction company ran it. In some ways, The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission (W.C. & I.C., referred to in this text as the Commission) was a territorial government, as it was vested with very wide powers. It controlled supply of electricity and water, constructed housing for settlers, and ran a number of agricultural processing plants. It constructed and operated some railways. It built all the roads and canals. (Chessbrough 1982: 38). Its charter was greatly narrowed when it was reconstituted in 1976 as a Water Resources Commission.

The main pastime in colonial Australian society had been alcoholism. So it was a unique feature of local

law and order that the Commission administered a prohibition era in early Griffith. Bagtown was designated as a "dry" construction camp. Local liquor licences were not available. This explains the great demand for "cordial" brewed from hops, available at one of Tango Joe's drink shack.

Clubs in Griffith could not obtain liquor licences until after the Second World War. The so-called "locker system" was invented to get around these regulations. Each club member's subscription paid for a private locker, which would be stocked with alcoholic beverages. Members could then gather round and drink, without breaking the law.

These regulations made Griffith's three interwar period hotels a local phenomenon. Their lucrative liquor licences were not obtained locally, but obtained by transfer from Narrandera. Local businessman Joe Gleeson, through his company Riverina Hotels Pty Ltd gained all three hotel licences in the town, for the "Griffith" and the "Victoria" in 1926, and for the "Area" in 1937. All three were then sold to Tooth's brewery, which leased them back to Riverina Hotels. It was suggested that Tooth's had provided the purchase money in the first place. These deals to create a monopoly for alcohol supply in the town were brought to the notice of the Royal Commission into the Liquor Trade. After much local discussion, Tooth's were obliged to sell one of the hotels (Hotel Griffith) for redevelopment into a "community hotel" (Kelly 1988: 255).

Once alcohol was legalised on the MIA, the sly grog trade all but ceased. It is ironic that a one-time prohibition area now processes most of the wine in NSW.

Griffith's drug era

The war-time experience of internment and cultural assimilation happened a long time ago, though the issue of "stereotyping," as in notions of all Italians being marijuana growers or mafiosi, do continue to surface (most recently as a result of the successful television drama *The Sopranos*). Some community members are extremely sensitive to this and it goes back to the 1970s period of the murder of local anti-drug campaigner Donald McKay. This dark episode in terms of the Italian presence in Griffith has provided fertile ground for continued stereotyping of Griffith as the Italian "drug capital" of Australia. This stereotype is found offensive by many in the community, and not talked about in Griffith, because it challenges the basic honesty and integrity of the majority of Italian immigrants and is something that they find it difficult to see humour in. They view it as a means of reinforcing negative stereotypes that they have had to contend with.

Griffith's 1970s drug era may be contrasted against its interwar period of alcohol prohibition. It has been discussed in detail by Kelly (1988: 261-268), and so will only be summarised here.

The stereotypical view of Griffith, now ingrained in the public imagination, is that it is a place made wealthy, not from hard work in agriculture, but from the illicit marijuana trade. There is an expectation of finding the town sprinkled with the palatial homes of drug dealers and growers ("grass castles"). Local dealing in illicit drugs was accompanied by bribery of police and politicians, intimidation, assault and murder. This culminated in the assassination of anti-drug campaigner Donald Mackay in 1977 in the car park of the Hotel Griffith. His body has never been found.

Although Justice Woodward's Royal Commission on Drugs cleared the Calabrians as a community, the involvement and conviction of several local Calabrian drug dealers was nationally publicised. Kelly (1988: 268) notes that "As a consequence, Griffith may have become enshrined in the national consciousness as the drug capital of the nation."

Buildings representing law and order

Buildings representing law and order appear both in the Pioneer Park Museum and in Griffith City. Pioneer Park contains several small lock-ups, which were relocated. The courthouse and police station are the two main law enforcement buildings in the city of Griffith.

Moving the Bagtown Gaol to Pioneer Park

Visitors, and especially children, have a morbid fascination with any kind of lock-up. So the story of Griffith's early gaols is not only of general interest, but also highly relevant to tourism.

As an unplanned construction camp, there are no original maps of Bagtown that might show its location. However maps drawn from memory in the 1960's by former Bagtown residents, Stan Cummings and A. Pedley, show a "Lock-up" adjacent to the police premises. These were located in Water Commission area, near the Cheese Factory and Dr Watkin's residence on the east side of Willbriggie Road and north of Research Station Road.

The temporary Bagtown station, established in 1914, was replaced in March 1915 by a "two roomed building (including a cell) with two tents for washing and sanitary purposes. A month after Constable Ford arrived in 1916 the station is said to have been moved to "new Griffith", probably to Jondaryan Avenue (Kelly 1988).

But there wasn't much in "new Griffith" to be policed in 1916. Former Bagtown resident Stan Cummings drew the "Lock-up" adjacent to "Constable Ford's tent" at Bagtown on his map. As a childhood fan of Constable Ford's, he remembers the way this constable dealt with drunks - handcuffing them to the nearest tree and emptying out the rest of their liquor. With this in mind, Stan is inclined to think the Gaol wasn't much used!

In 1922 the police station was established in rented premises in Benerembah Street, later the Neighbourhood House building. It had "a cell and stables attached" and must have served until at least 1927, when the search for a permanent site began.

Antonio Ceccato remembered using his bullock team to shift the old gaol from Bagtown to Benerembah Street. Pioneer Park acquired the gaol in 1993 as a result of development on the Benerembah Street site.

The Police Department has no records of the Gaol. It is very different from the standard pattern portable gaol from Gunbar, which had been moved to Pioneer Park earlier. Bagtown Gaol is an unusual little building, higher than it is wide or long, possibly to provide ventilation, since it has no windows. Its red gum construction and metal security door make it very heavy for its size (Robyn Oliver).

It is now situated in Pioneer Park near the Gem and Mineral Club building. Despite its unusual height and length, it is recognisable as a "type" building, somewhat typical of the prefabricated, transportable lock-ups that were installed and used in many early settlements (for example, in Gundaroo) during the nineteenth century. As this item dates from the early twentieth century, it is an unusually late example of its type.

Discovery of a second Bagtown Gaol

After Pioneer Park acquired "the Bagtown Gaol", the curator at that time, Robyn Oliver, had a number of phone calls from Ian Spry, Don Oslington and Ann Stevens to say that this was not the first gaol in Griffith. An earlier "Bagtown" gaol was remembered in Irrigation Way behind the present Griffith Auto Transmission premises, site of Griffith's first police station.

The two gaols appear to have been moved to Griffith at different times, one in 1916 and the other around 1922.

This first station was located in Irrigation Way on Farm 920, having been moved from Bagtown. It subsequently became the home of Griffith's first Water Bailiff, Donald McEachern and his wife until the 1960s. It was very much like the gaol moved to Pioneer Park - a tall narrow building, about 6ft square, pine lined, with only one small window and a government padlock on the door.

The key to the story of the two Bagtown gaols is probably that police presence was needed in Bagtown well after 1916, in spite of the "official" move. Although the Barellan to Griffith railway line was completed early in 1916 and "new Griffith" was officially gazetted in August that year, there was very little in Griffith. Construction work slowed down during World War I and there was little interest in purchasing land until 1920. Government offices were under construction in 1917, but Mirrool House, the first hospital and the first shop were not built until 1919, followed rapidly by other businesses and services.

Meanwhile Bagtown continued to thrive until at least 1920, its residents sceptical about the future of the official town until forced to move. Stan Cummings, who didn't arrive in Bagtown until 1916, as a boy of nine years, retained vivid memories of the continued police presence there, kept busy by the single men's camp. He was a fan of Constable Ford's and followed him around, watching his techniques. The plans he later drew of Bagtown from memory in the 1960s show a police tent and "Lock-up", clearly still there after the official move.

It seems likely that a police station was established in Griffith in 1916, in line with the beginning of land

sales. Settlement did not take place as rapidly as expected. De facto policing of Bagtown continued as long as the majority of the population remained there. So far, researchers have failed to find any records of portable gaols which might assist, but on present evidence both the Irrigation Way and Benerembah Street gaols may reasonably claim to be "Bagtown Gaols" (Robyn Oliver).

The Police Station

The police station began in the temporary construction camp called Bagtown. By 1920 Griffith had only received its second police officer. The police station was a tent and the lock up a sapling with chain attached. The police station, under canvas in Bagtown in 1912, moved into weatherboard in 1913 and graduated to brick in 1923. This first official Police Station in Griffith consisted of the police residence and a lock-up. Staffed by one policeman, the office was established on 11th November 1922. It was located on Benerembah Streets in the Civic Precinct.

The present Police Station also consisted of a residence and station, which began functioning on 13th February 1934. In 1976, the residence was converted for use as an office for detectives.

It was built in a functional 1930s style. This residential-type brick and tile building shows no signs of prosperity or wealth, being constructed during the peak of the Depression. The police residence to the north is of the same style, suggesting a similar date of construction.

The Courthouse

The Courthouse, in contrast to the police station, is a fine neo-classical building of interwar Georgian revival style. To maximise symmetry on three sides, the south, west and north elevations are developed with classical porticos. On the west side, the arcaded portico is headed by an entablature and pediment containing the British coat of arms featuring the lion and the unicorn. Set back from the arcaded portico is a cupola and urns. The vents incorporated into the base of the cupola represent the Union Jack.

This important building was constructed in 1927-28. It is thought that plans for the courthouse were destined for another town, but were accidentally interchanged. At the time of building, very few other buildings were being constructed. For example, the Rural Bank was not built until 1935 (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2)

Welfare

Scalabrini Village

Scalabrini Village, the hostel and nursing home run by the Italian community, is an important local symbol of co-operative effort and care for the elderly.

The Good Shepherd Chapel is not the oldest part of the village (built 1996), but the most culturally symbolic. The Italianate style and formal grounds are essential features of the village, but are best seen near the main entrance and chapel. The Scalabrini Village represents a huge effort in community cooperation and fundraising by the Italian community. It helps to maintain the high self-image of the Italian community (which has been rocked by the drug trade scandal of recent decades) by its altruistic and self-less objectives. The foundation stone was blessed and laid by Father Luigi Favero, Superior General of the Scalabrini Congregation. In a piece of cultural parallelism, there is also an Anglo-Australian plaque relating to the chapel's official consecration by the local Catholic clergy.

The Scalabrini fathers became important in the life of the Italian community from the 1960s. Their order was set up in the late nineteenth century in Italy to tend to the spiritual needs of Italian immigrants. They realised that care and respect for the elders was a way of building community and preserving Italian traditions and customs. Thus, language, religion, concern for the elders in the community is becoming the vehicle for the continuation of cultural traditions whether individuals are religious or not. This is particularly

clear at Scalabrini Village, which combines an Italianised setting with Italian speaking staff to care for the elderly in a hostel and nursing home. As well, there continue to be clubs where community life is continued.

In 1982, Griffith resident Elsa Dal Nevo saw the need for further nursing home accommodation for Griffith and in August 1982, convened the first meeting to discuss the project for a home and realise her dream. Elsa Dal Nevo, John Piazza, John Vardanega, Nico and Lena Torresan, Mick Plos, Jim Appolloni, Nico Salvestro and Vanee Rech attended that first meeting. Subsequently, a steering committee was formed and Elsa Dal Nevo was elected President, a position she held until 1984.

It soon became apparent that this was going to be a large and costly project that needed and soon had the support of the Griffith Community. There were many difficulties to overcome and realising the huge task and uncertainty of procedures, committee member Nico Torresan, suggested approaching Fr Nevio Capra of the Scalabrini Order, well known in Sydney for his accomplishments for the care of the aged and in particular the ageing Italian Community. As a result Fr Nevio and his committee gave Griffith their total support with financial and administrative help.

In 1984, Griffith became officially affiliated with the Sydney Organisation. Subsequently, a parcel of land comprising of 3 hectares was acquired on Oakes Road, Yoogali.

In 1984, a formal Scalabrini Village Committee was formed, John Dal Broi was elected President, a position he held until September 1991 when Elsa Dal Nevo was elected Vice president. Upon John Dal Broi's retirement, Joe Catanzariti was elected President, a position he still holds.

Also in 1984, the first Ladies Auxiliary was formed. Elsa Dal Nevo was elected President, a position she held until 1990. After her resignation due to ill health Rosa Mackenzie was elected President and held this position until 1997, after which Bruna Codemo was elected to the position and Rosa became Vice President.

Sadly, Elsa Dal Nevo passed away, after a long illness in 1992.

The Griffith Committees were able to raise the amount required for its aims and goals through various fundraising functions and donations from the local committee, the backing of the Sydney Organisation and contributions by State and Federal Governments, provided as Ethnic Grants.

Stage one of the 30 bed nursing home was officially opened by the then Papal Nuncio, his Excellency Franco Brambilla and Member for Riverina, Noel Hicks, on the 16 October 1988 at a cost of \$1,500,000. At about this time, through Fr Nevio's involvement, the Village was able to obtain the services of four Religious Nuns from the Order of the "Daughter of St Anne", then based in Peru. We are still fortunate to have the help of these wonderful, dedicated sisters, who, together with Fr Raffaele Beltrame, provide the much-needed spiritual needs of the residents and their families.

The Nursing Home became so vital that a further need of Hostel Accommodation had to be met less than two years later. The second stage of this project was made possible through an agreement with Griffith Legacy, to cater for their needs, both in Nursing Home and Hostel Accommodation. As a result Griffith Legacy donated \$400,000; being a bequest legacy had received from the Estate of the late Bill Wood. A further Government Grant and a loan from the Diocesan Provident Fund saw the completion of the 22 Hostel bed complex and new kitchen/dining and administration block. The NSW President of Legacy officially opened this in 1990. A member of Griffith's Legacy was invited to join the Scalabrini Committee and that position still holds.

Another milestone was reached with the completion of stage three. The Chapel of the Good Shepherd and the Day Care Centre was officially opened in April 1997 at a cost of \$400,000 with further funds donated by the Sydney based Organisation and various contributions by the local community.

On this special occasion the Bishop of Wagga, William Brennan, performed the consecration of the Chapel, whilst President, Joe Catanzariti performed to unveiling of the Day Care Centre.

The Ladies Committee has been major contributors to the fund raising for the Village, having raised in

excess of \$200,000 over the years. The funds provide many essentials such as indoor and outdoor furnishings, watering system, curtains, special lifts, painted murals in the Nursing Home, a beautiful glass mosaic of the Good Shepherd for the Chapel and the erection of the Gazebo.

They have put a huge effort into a wide range of fundraising activities. Although festivals were held in previous years, it has only become a regular annual feature since 1995. The event has become a major fundraiser as well as creating a wonderful opportunity for the residents and their families and the local community to get together in an atmosphere of fun.

Griffith Scalabrini Village has been very fortunate to have had the support of various local businesses and organisations, too many of them to mention, however a special mention should go to the late Deen De Bortoli and his family, who have been major contributors over the years and the Trevisani Nel Mondo Association, who donated and erected the BBQ and recreational area at the Village.

The Village owes much of its success to a very dedicated, hard working committee (18 members in the main committee and 19 members in the Ladies Auxiliary Committee) but most importantly to the large number of volunteers and helpers to Fr Nevio Capra and Carl Melvey (Chief Administrator and Board Chairman, Scalabrini Village NSW respectively) and the Community at large for their continuous support over the years.

Several committee members have been awarded life memberships for their contributions over the years.

They are: Nico Torresan (the “backbone” of Griffith Scalabrini and Vice President since 1991), Elsa Dal Nevo (deceased), Rosa Mackenzie, Joe Catanzariti, Leo D’Aquino, Bruna Codemo and Albert Ravanello.

The efforts of several members have gained government or international recognition. Nico Torresan received a special Certificate by the Scalabrini Organisation for his tireless work over the last 20 years. Nico was presented the award at a special function at the Vatican on the occasion of the beatification of Mons Giovanni Scalabrini, founder of the Scalabrini fathers.

Joe Catanzariti was awarded a Papal Knighthood in the “Order of St Gregory” by the Bishop of Wagga Wagga, William Brennan, for his contribution to the Scalabrini Village and the Griffith Catholic Community.

Rosa Mackenzie was the recipient of the Year 2000 Federal Government Centenary Medal, for her invaluable services to the Scalabrini Village.

To date, the Village is fully occupied and is currently under the capable management of Directors of Nursing, Andrea Miller. It has recently been given full accreditation by the Aged Care Standards Agency and is one of the best aged care centres in the area.

The Village currently comprises of 30 Nursing beds and 22 Hostel rooms. Because of the long waiting list, the organisation has envisaged a further addition of 10 Hostel beds, to meet these needs by the year 2004/05 (Rosa Mackenzie).

9

Developing a cultural life and marking the phases of life

When the irrigation area around Griffith was first being constructed, a construction camp was thrown together and operated as the temporary settlement called Bagtown. Soon, the usual range of Anglo-Australian cultural activities began to be formed and continued to develop as the town grew.

Between the wars the area had been predominantly set aside for Australian-born soldier settlers. But it also became populated by a second group, the Italian immigrants. These two groups rarely mixed socially, had separate churches and a history of unease in economic relations (Bosi 1977: 53). In the 1950s these tensions were compounded by the strong ex-servicemen's league and the rising number of Italians immigrating to the area. In addition, relations were not always good between the northerners and southerners within the Italian population. In this climate it is perhaps not surprising that in addition to Anglo-Australian cultural life, that Italians maintained a parallel life of Italian organisations and activities.

For migrants, one of the processes of coming to terms with a lack of a sense of belonging to a new country has been the construction of community, a group that shares experiences and supports its members, so no-one within the community feels themselves to be a stranger. Both Anglo-Australians and Italians sought out their own kind to emphasised familiar patterns of life.

The post 1960s era saw new government policies of integration and tolerance for types of cultural expression ('multi-culturalism'). Generations of Australian-born people of different ancestry, including Aboriginal and migrant, gained greater acceptance in the host population, while retaining some of the cultural diversity that makes Griffith so attractive to visitors.

Domestic life

Any discussion of domestic life will touch on a wide range of topics. Everyday details might easily be ignored in an "official" history, but are vital in understanding past lives of people. Domestic life also touches on important historical themes such as migration, politics, pioneer survival, gender roles, and incorporation (or non-incorporation) into the host community.

1930s Christmas with the Salvestro family

Santo Salvestro emigrated to Griffith in 1924 from Cavaso del Tomba, Northern Italy. He married Regina Cadorin, also from Cavaso del Tomba, in Griffith, 1927. Natalina was the eldest of the family's five children. She remembered what Christmas was like for the early Italian families, from the time she was four in the early 1930s.

As with John Hill's late nineteenth century Christmases on a station near Tabbita, and May Fallon's 1910's Bagtown Christmases, Natalina recalls that the Christmas of her childhood was not the big deal it is today.

Her mother used to tell them stories of how, in Italy, "La Befana" used to come down the chimney, bringing presents for good children, and of the "Arbore de Natale" - the Christmas tree. On a farm out from Hanwood in the 1930s, however, there were no trees - the land had been stripped bare - and no-one had any money. These were the Depression years and Natalina's family lived in a shack made from hessian, with tin roof and boarding walls. Her father worked as a bricklayer to support the farm, while his brother developed it from scratch.

So there was no Christmas tree, no cards, no decorations, no presents between family and friends. They

knew it was a holy day - they had pictures of the Madonna and Jesus over their beds, but as children they were too far from a church to experience that side of it. In later years they would go to midnight mass on Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve, Natalina and her sister Iole, 12 months younger, used to hang up an old sock - trying to stay awake as long as possible, waking up early next morning to see what was in it. Typically the sock would contain some fruit, a few nuts, boiled lollies, possibly a pretty dress or apron their mother had made from cut-down clothes, and the most exciting thing - a new rag doll. The dolls were made from a stuffed sock, with a face embroidered in wool. It wasn't much by today's standards, but they were in 7th heaven!

At lunchtime, they would pack a picnic, and join a great convoy of Italian families travelling in old jalopies and farm trucks to Noble's Beach, Darlington Point. There they would eat chicken, homemade salami, bread (from the baker, like everyone else's), Madeira cake their mother had made - a rare treat, and wine, often shouted by her father.

A *bocce* court would be made in the sand, and even the kids played. Others would play cards. There would be swimming, although this could be a dangerous mix of non-swimmers, rips and alcohol. Someone always brought an accordion or guitar, someone else had a good voice to lead the singing. Sometimes these picnics carried on right through the night - by the morning they would be singing like larks! The "tremendous selection" of Italian families that joined in these gatherings, families like the Bagatella's, Andreazza's, Ceccato's, Bastianon, Rossetto, and Rizzardo, became very close.

Behind the Salvestro's house was an avenue of shacks, a sort of boarding house for new migrants, many without work. In those days the family eked out their other income by keeping a sort of open house - her mother providing meals, and her father wine and *grappa* - before the days of stricter licensing laws. They also had *bocce* courts. On Christmas evening her mother would come back from the river picnic and cook for her "boarders" - so they had a meal - selling plates of chicken, spaghetti, that sort of thing.

The lively social life of Griffith's Italian families came to an end with the start of the Second World War when Natalina was eleven years old. Unlike in the First World War, when Italy was a British ally, it was now the enemy, and Italians in Griffith kept a low profile - there was no more mixing and gallivanting. It was a very confusing and difficult period for them. Some, like Natalina's father, who had fought alongside the allies in World War I in an *Alpini* regiment, had left Italy because of anti-fascist sentiments. The partisans of the north hated the fascists: a whole battalion from the North, to which one of Natalina's Italian uncles belonged, was taken prisoner of war by the Germans because they refused to co-operate!

Santo Salvestro, a naturalised Australian, worked hard to be a good Aussie and had good friends among the Australian community. He grew vegetables for the Australian forces, and shared his petrol rations with soldiers on leave. Some of Natalina's contemporaries remember being ostracised at school and called names. Natalina said this wasn't her experience - at the age of eleven she was becoming unusually competent in legal matters translating for Griffith lawyer, Gary Blumer's father - but the climate for Italians in Griffith had changed (Robyn Oliver, from interviews with Natalina Murray, 1994).

The architect Stephen Murray, Natalina's son, designed the Italian Cultural Museum, a building that makes reference to both Italian and Australian vernacular traditions.

"With this Ring": The Wakely Wedding Dress

One of the oldest wedding dresses in the Pioneer Park Collection dates back eighty years to the wedding of Gertrude Grace Smith and Marcus (Mark) Wakely. The couple met in late 1912 when the first Australian flagship, "The Australian", on which Mark was serving, pulled into Sydney Harbour. Gertrude, on holiday from Tamworth with a friend, met Mark on a visit to the ship. Things must have moved quickly from there, because Mark left the navy (then the British Navy) shortly after, and the couple were married in Tamworth on April 16th, 1913.

Gertrude's white silk wedding dress is richly decorated, with applied roule bows, seed pearls, pleating, pintucking and lace. The cuffs and front and back panels are encrusted with pearls and tiny glass beads on

net and the front features a cluster of delicate fuchsia like flowers made of chiffon with bead stamens. While the dress itself is machine sewn, all the beading and decoration is done by hand - some of the pleats are still neatly tacked into place.

Apparently the dress, bought in Sydney, only arrived in Tamworth the day before the wedding. It was hung overnight, but the creases from packing are still evident in the wedding photographs. It was presumably thought better to leave them there rather than risk attacking the delicate creation with a primitive iron heated on a wood stove.

After serving in World War I, Mark moved to Yenda in 1919 as a Soldier Settler. The family, now with four children, eventually settled in a two roomed hut on Farm 1479, where Gertrude lived until the mid 1970s.

Her granddaughter-in-law, Edna Wakely, recalled in "Griffith and District Pioneers", Series 2, that 'Mum' Wakely did it the hard way for most of her life. Until the mid-1960s she carried hot water for baths by bucket from a copper in the laundry which was about seventy yards or so from the house. This continued until she bought a washing machine that heated the water. This was installed in the bathroom as this was the only room in the house to have a tap to the water tank.

The richness and delicacy of Gertrude's wedding dress seem to stand in stark contrast to tough circumstances of the married life that followed. But through it all she kept the dress, and apparently also her sense of humour, "Though times were hard for her, 'Mum' Wakely could still be happy and have a good laugh."

The dress is now very fragile. The silk from which wedding dresses of the period were made, was impregnated with metallic salts to "weight it", but these ultimately cause the fabric to break down and crumble. The process is irreversible - storage away from heat, light and dust can slow it down, but the damage can be neither fixed nor stopped. "

Many brides, especially during the war years, were married in street dress, and these are also of interest (Robyn Oliver).

Lace making in Possagno

Traditional Italian handiwork is being revived in Italy, in areas where it had almost disappeared. As well as the home country, places such as Griffith had émigré communities that brought traditional skills and practices, transplanting them into Australia.

The names of the lace makers of Possagno are mentioned below because these women have relatives in Griffith. With the Italian Museum now set up, it would be interesting to see examples of these laces come to Griffith, and whether there is still a chance that the skills involved can be passed on here to a new generation

When Robyn Oliver was growing up, her mother had a cream, sort of netted lace bedspread, which always looked rather handsome over its apricot taffeta underspread. She had never thought much about how it was made, or read anything about this type of lace. That is until, as Curator of the Pioneer Park Museum in 1996, she was invited to the women's traditional lace making group in the small town of Possagno in the Veneto region of Northern Italy.

There Robyn found this form of lace, traditional to the Comunità Montana region, and known as *filato*, being taught to a new generation of young women, meeting in a local kindergarten room.

The lace is made on a frame (which made Robyn realise think what a huge frame would have been needed to make my mother's double sized bedspread!). The first stage is to construct the base net - lines of threads laid out around the frame in one direction, and then knotted into place with a needle at each junction, as the lines are put into place in the opposite direction, ideally producing an even grid. It's not as easy as it looks. This could be seen from the differences between the work of the beginners and the teachers - Armida Dal Favero and Cecilia Biron (related to Griffith's Biron families), and I'm sure this must be the most tedious

stage. The thread used is strong, tightly spun cotton or linen in natural white.

The fun starts with the second stage, when the grid is embroidered with fillet style patterns, copied from graphed paper patterns. All kinds of designs are used, from simple scallops to more elaborate floral patterns and cherubs - anything in fact that might be done with fillet crochet. A variety of threads and stitches can be used to provide different textures.

There is a further stage of intricate knotting to produce the final firm scalloped edge before the cutting begins (as it must, to remove it from the frame).

Some women in the group brought in some old and fine examples. Anna Rita Vardanega and her mother brought items made by Anna Rita's grandmother, Eugenia Vardanega, approximately 70 years ago, including an exquisite baby's dress and bonnet, entirely made in *filato*. Lucia Basso brought in a square *filato* cover, with a hole in the middle, designed to cover the old fashioned plain white conical light shades. There were obviously many uses for the lace - a very handsome example, in the household of the Cavarzan family, was made to cover a small foot quilt (*copri piumino*) - with magnificent tassels in each corner, gold over the burgundy quilt, it was very handsome.

Italian handicraft magazines in the Griffith Library show the beautiful handiwork designs, especially the white work, and intricate cutwork designs, often on curtains. The work was extremely time consuming. These same curtains are found in many of the private homes of the Comunità Montana area. They are plain, ungathered white cotton drops over the long shuttered windows, with beautiful cutwork centres. They can now be purchased, and young people there, as here, no longer have the time their mothers and grandmothers had for handwork. But also, as here, that there is a revival of interest in traditional craft work - a new appreciation, with some homes also featuring the lace or cutwork covers over the plain white conical light shades.

The Comunità Secretary, Marcello Cavarzan, was very proud of the white embroidery done by his wife and daughters - some of it designed along traditional lines by himself. His enthusiasm even extended to having a go at it himself, and the women of the house showed his lace work with a mixture of pride and mirth.

At the lace makers group in the town of Possagno there are other lace and embroidery styles, as well as the *filato* described above. The *sfilato* lace crossed the boundaries between cutwork and embroidery. One set of doyleys, again from the collection Anna-Rita Vardanega and her mother, had a series of intricate borders of drawn thread work, which many will remember from their school sewing lessons. Threads are removed in one direction, so that the now loose remaining threads in the opposite direction can be twisted and clustered to create lacy strips. A photograph in an old English embroidery book showed just this style of embroidery, captioned as - "examples of sixteenth-century Italian drawn-thread work in the Victoria and Albert Museum in England".

In the corners of Anna Rita's doyleys were larger fillet blocks. Robyn wasn't sure whether all the threads were cut from these sections before it was filled with a needle made net base. Or, possibly only some of the threads were taken out and the others used as the base for a net created with drawn thread stitches. The result in the end was embroidered fillet style, similar to *filato* lace. Plain sections of the doyleys were embroidered with other motifs in satin and other stitches, white on white, creating interesting contrasts of texture.

Several women were working drawn thread work borders with amazing speed, as they talked with equal speed. The name for one kind of drawn thread work was *gigliuccio a giorno*, which roughly translates as "day lily". It is probably a stitch name, like "coral stitch" in English, which bears no particular resemblance to coral.

Another lady in the group, Wilma Zancanarro, was creating fine diamond net using knitting needles. She sent greetings to her Zancanarro relatives in Griffith (Robyn Oliver).

Libera Battocchio's lace

The late Mrs Libera Battocchio of Yenda was a well-known local lace maker. Examples of her work

include filato lace doyleys and a fine wool filato lace dress made for her grand daughter, Mrs Ada Snaidero of Griffith, when Ada was 9 years old. Mrs Battocchio demonstrated the lace at a Carnivale exhibition of International and antique handicrafts held in the Griffith Study Centre in 1981.

Mrs Battocchio, nee Michelin, came from the town of Pederobba, with a population of 6,589, very close to the town of Possagno, where the lace work group is based, and one of the eight towns which make up the Comunità Montana, Griffith's Sister City. She learned to make the lace from the nuns when she was at school, and later when she worked as an assistant at an orphanage in Pederobba, earned part of her living from it.

In 1933 she immigrated to Australia to join her husband, Girolamo, who had been in Australia for "quite a few years" - the couple having married by proxy. They made their home on Farm 1482 Yenda, where they were to spend the rest of their lives - becoming loyal Yenda residents and in the end choosing to be buried there. Mrs Battocchio died in 1991.

Libera Battocchio had three children, sons Ado and Adino, and one daughter Ada, on whom she lavished her enthusiasm for lace. Ada said, with photographs to prove it, that her childhood clothing was extensively trimmed with the lace, and she even had whole garments - dresses and bolero's made of it, to the point where she didn't appreciate it, wanting to look like everyone else, as children do. Consequently, although her mother tried to teach her, and although she now has all her mother's books and equipment, she never mastered it, about which, with the distance of time she has some regret.

Libera loved making the lace, and continued to do so until she died, "winning all the show awards" whenever she entered. She made lace for all her friends and relatives, including beautiful trousseau lace for her granddaughter, Denise Castellato, and lace for a dressmaker friend in Wollongong - insertion, trimmings for clothing, and doyleys.

Although Ada did not learn to make the lace, she was able to provide a few clues about her mother's techniques. Unlike the *filato* in Italy, her mother made the base net without a frame, using a netting shuttle. It was only put on a frame at the embroidery stage. Her mother used a variety of coloured and textured threads to create different effects using simple filling stitches - sometimes producing almost a finely woven effect, sometimes very open. The edges were always finished with a very fine button hole stitch, almost invisible.

Ada plans to donate part of her collection to the Italian Museum including samples, patterns and equipment. It would be lovely then, to find someone who can teach the lace, to carry on the tradition - if not locally, then perhaps on a future visit by one of the Italian lace makers during a Sister City visit (Robyn Oliver).

Knitting machines from Italy

When Mrs Erice Zillioto went into Pioneer Lodge Nursing Home in 1993, one of her knitting machines was donated to Pioneer Park Museum at the wish of her family and friends.

At the time Pioneer Park already had more than one knitting machine, and, given their bulk and the shortage of storage space, was reluctant to accept another one. Robyn Oliver, then curator of the Park, began talking to Mrs Zillioto's sister, Bianca Michelin, from Sweden. She looked at the collection of order books, patterns, work samples, yarn and yarn catalogues in the house, and realised that this material told a story of importance about the crafts that Italian women brought with them to Australia.

Some time previously when reading reminiscences of Italian women who migrated to Australia, Robyn was intrigued to discover that some had arrived with knitting machine in tow. In fact all of Pioneer Park's knitting machines had come from Italian families. Robyn began to wonder why these women took the trouble to bring such a cumbersome piece of equipment such a long way. Could they represent a traditional source of income?

If Erice's story is anything to go by, the answer appears to be yes. It seems that in Italy home machine

knitting was a career rather than a hobby, possibly more in the north than the south. If the quality of Erice's work is anything to go by, the standard of workmanship was extremely professional.

Erice Zillioto (nee Baratto) was born in Cavaso, Treviso Province, Italy in 1913. Her mother, born in 1893, was a home machine knitter, and Erice, the eldest daughter, had learned the craft from her mother by the time she was 11. Her sister Bianca, as the youngest daughter, also learned, but at the local convent, and was more enthusiastic about music than knitting.

As an adult, Erice moved to Rome, where she had her own home based machine knitting business, employing 2 to 3 girls. Her clients included the nuns of the Vatican, and there was also reference to biretta for the priests.

In 1962 while on a holiday with her sister in Wollongong, Erice met her future husband, also on holiday, from Griffith. When moved to Griffith, she brought her two knitting machines from Italy, one for "coarse" work and one for fine. By account, and from the neat records of measurements in her order books, she built up quite a clientele for her work in Griffith.

When Robyn was first told that a certain brown courtelle dress was knitted by Erice, she frankly found it difficult to believe, until shown the evidence of sample pieces in the same yarn and remnants of the yarn in the cupboard. It was not only extremely fine, high quality knitting - but there was nothing handmade about the finish. When finally convinced, I was impressed. Somehow it was difficult to believe that work of this quality could be produced outside a factory.

Other samples of Erice's work were even finer - T shirt fine. Complete examples donated to Pioneer Park included underwear and both men's and women's swimming costumes. Italy certainly had a very high reputation for fine knitted garments, but Robyn had never imagined its source to be the home knitting industry. Unfortunately, with different lifestyle, expectations and fashion values in Australia, this imported skill is dying out with women of Erice's age (Robyn Oliver).

Creative endeavour

Creative life of Griffith people has many and varied aspects. The two foremost cultural icons are the Pioneer Park and Italian Cultural museums. The art gallery is a local symbol of high culture and creative endeavour. There are also individual artists, the one with greatest local notoriety being Harold Thornton.

Pioneer Park

Pioneer Park is a museum village situated on 18 ha of bushland about 2 km north-east of the town on Scenic Hill, a spur of the McPherson range. The complex consists of an array of about 40 relocated or recreated buildings. There is a station homestead, an old school, church and shearing shed, large collections of horse-drawn vehicles, steam-powered machines and antiquated examples of working engines, farm machinery and newspaper printing machines. There are recreations of the early 20th century Bagtown, a pub, post office, blacksmith's, stable and shop of the late nineteenth century, a chemist's dispensary, saddler's shop, and 'Fairview' cottage. There are relocated buildings such as the coach house, a transportable type of gaol much used in the early settlements, Griffith's first hospital and Goolgowi Railway Station.

Pioneer Park is an outstanding example of the type of display village built in the 1970s. It taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche, symbolising the life struggles of the pre- and post-irrigation white pioneers. Some of its collection items are possibly of state or national significance. But the most interesting aspect of the Park is the founders, who had their roots in the pre-irrigation period, and were themselves irrigation pioneers.

Among old-timers who were there at the start, the establishment of the Pioneer Park Museum is generally attributed to Charlie Sharam - a retired farmer, who was inspired by the Pioneer Village at Swan Hill - and perhaps also his mate Roy Rathbone.

Charlie had a curiously eclectic idea of what the museum could be - apart from collecting old farm machinery and buildings (including the Victorian log cabin that had been Roy's childhood home), he also collected things like a Tongan outrigger canoe and other souvenirs of his overseas travels! He was, I heard, a very persuasive and determined man.

Pioneer Park was one of many such villages established in rural NSW and Victoria - and indeed elsewhere in Australia and New Zealand in the 1970s by local communities. There are many possible reasons why they took off at this particular time: approaching bicentennial nostalgia; a coming of age; a look back at the past.

Its inspiration had little to do with the formal history or integrity of the buildings and objects as a museum professional or social historian would understand it.

The avowed intention of Pioneer Park is blazoned in wrought iron just inside the gate - TO COMMEMORATE LIFE OF THE PIONEERS / OPENED APRIL 12 1971. Although not actually stated, implicit in this is not so much the life as the struggles of the pioneers. It is in this that The Park really taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche - where it gets its strength and ongoing community support - way beyond the Theatre or the Art Gallery (and this is not necessarily typical of rural towns).

The early years of Griffith settlement were especially tough. People with no agricultural background, many either invalid WWI vets or overseas migrants, were lured there by pictures of lush orchards. They arrived to find it a dust bowl: stripped of its natural vegetation; irrigation not yet in place; no infrastructure; no buildings; no transport; agricultural experts who had absolutely no idea of what was going to work; crop failure after crop failure; and stinking, stinking hot - or freezing in winter. It was at the end of the world. It was the pits. It was heartbreaking. And at the back of it all - WWI, the 1918 influenza epidemic and the Great Depression. The place didn't begin to find its feet until World War II when suddenly the products of their farms were in great demand to fuel the war effort in the South Pacific and beyond.

As already noted, the core of people who established the Museum had their roots in the pre-irrigation period, and were themselves irrigation pioneers. They were the last generation to have experienced both a rural life pre-irrigation, as well as those terrible early years of the irrigation scheme. In the pace of growing prosperity and civilisation of the region, it seemed very important to them that the hardships and colour of what it had taken to get it off the ground, be not forgotten.

Many of the buildings and features in Pioneer Park are replicas, or at best fanciful reconstructions. Bromfields Cottage never in its working life had the wide verandah, which is now the most obvious feature. The Dumossa Inn was constructed from a couple of farmhouses - it was never an Inn. The architect who tried to oversee the accurate relocation of Fairview Cottage gave up in despair (the Italian bread oven on this nineteenth century pre irrigation cottage is a nice touch!). Myall Park Hall in its day was a bare ripple iron rural community hall - with none of its current half log "colonial" charm. The Pioneer Park Post Office, in much diminished format, was reconstructed with anachronistic machine cut bricks. The rustic saddlery was built on site to a notion (possibly reasonably accurate) of how saddleries used to be.

Still - for all that - the people who did this work, beyond their own perspective of themselves, were marvellous repositories of disappearing rural skills. A lot of their work has its own integrity. The collection of "make-do" items is outstanding and possibly of national significance, from machinery, to furniture, to items such as the counter-balance gate and the meat-smoker. The collection of tractors is legendary, and although not so well maintained as those of Temora, are nevertheless dear to the hearts of those who have used them beyond any normal relationship with machinery (usually referred to, complimentary or otherwise) in the feminine form. There is what is probably a nationally significant art woodwork collection (tools, patterns, samples) in Bromfield's cottage.

Literal accuracy was not terribly important to the founders of Pioneer Park - nor to the volunteers who worked there every day - nor to the wider Griffith community. The spirit of what they were trying to capture, and maybe the stories, were more important.

Its location on Scenic Hill - as the only hill in Griffith - is itself a bit of an icon. Technically, the Park is eighteen hectares of Crown land leased by Council, and managed on their behalf by the Pioneer Park Management Committee. The Museum collection would ultimately belong to Council, though this is an unwelcome thought around the red dust tracks of Pioneer Park, who are very jealous of their independence.

The other great name in the establishment of Pioneer Park is Perry Howard - who was involved first as Hon. Secretary and then as the first and long term Manager/Director. As an ex-City Councillor, he could represent the Park's interests in the higher echelons of Council & NSW Museum Association, handle internal conflicts with diplomacy and deal with grant applications & long term planning. He wasn't one of the founding farmers, but they couldn't have done it without him.

Much of the reconstruction work was lead by Pioneer Park handyman from 1972 to 1992, John Roberts. John had been a drover in the back blocks of Queensland, but retired to Griffith, which was home to his wife's family. John looked like he had stepped out of the Ettamoooga Pub comic strip. He always had a limp rollie hanging out of the corner of his mouth - he moved slow, but he had a real knack with vernacular architecture - because that was his background (Robyn Oliver).

Italian Cultural Museum

A huge cooperative effort by the Italian community commenced The Griffith Italian Museum and Community Centre early in 1997. Over 120 Italian descendants of Griffith participated in its construction, as well as several Anglo-Australian community members and business houses. Much of the building material was donated, and with free labour, the building was completed at about half of its budgeted cost of \$250,000. The building was completed at the end of 2000 and is currently being fitted out with displays (Tony Colla and John Piazza, interviewed 2003).

The establishment of the Italian Museum as part of Pioneer Park is an important step for a community which has had its divisions - as a symbolic recognition of a shared past.

On its symbolic meanings, Robyn Oliver, former curator of Pioneer Park, says:

"As the Museum was being planned, I noticed two quite distinct understandings among the Italian community about what their museum was going to say. The older generation, who had struggled from the lowest social and economic status - intended it to say loudly and clearly - look how far we have come - to be something impressive for people to see on their way in from the airport. The younger generation intended it to say to the wider Griffith community - see, we shared the same struggles you did - we have earned the right to be full members of this community - we are the same as you."

This is a well-maintained building of architectural and aesthetic merit, highly significant to the Italian community. It represents community pride and cooperation within the Italian community of Griffith. It embodies many symbolic meanings, including the passion felt by Italian descendants of Griffith that their early migration memories and experiences - pre Second World War - be recognised, and preserved for posterity.

The collection is being developed with a touch screen computer presentation of the names, photos and history of approximately 120 pre-war migrants. It also houses a collection of tools to illustrate the technology used by Italian pioneers in Griffith.

War Memorial and Gallery

Possibly the only public building in Griffith that exhibits an intact architectural style representative of its date of construction, the art gallery is also a local symbol of "high" culture and creative endeavour. Its Art Deco detailing is a fine example of the streamlined style of the 1930s. The building was completed in two stages. The front portion was completed just before the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939, and the rear portion was completed just after the war in 1946.

Local architect, newsagent and sometime Engineer for the Shire of Murrumbidgee A.B. Long prepared the plans, and construction was carried out by the local builders O'Meara and Drummond (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2). Community hall of Interwar functionalist (Art Deco) style. Moderne building elements include rendered facade with parapet, rounded corners, round columns at recessed entrance porch.

The front of the building is characterised by a series of front walls, with each corner being rounded. This series of rounded steps was known as a waterfall, and is a reflection of the streamlined styling fashion of the mid-1930s.

Characteristics of the style are the series of rounded corners, usually of a two foot radius, and decoration grouped into a "pattern of threes". Three front walls on either side of the columned entrance are stepped back consecutively, whilst three vertical lines in relief on the two most forward walls reduce the flatness introduced by the strong lineage horizontal band that creates a distinct level along the front walls.

Even the rain water guttering and downpipes repeat the vertical decoration in a "pattern of threes". This "pattern of threes" was continued through to the front fence. The brick fence posts incorporated three levels, whilst the curved metal pipe was of the same curvature as the corners of the building. Windows opening onto the columned entrance contain stained glass and lead inserts represent the eternal flame. This motif is

repeated in relief on both doors leading to the main rooms of the building (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Harold Thornton

The artist Harold Thornton painted murals at both the McWilliams wineries and at Yenda Hotel. As a local celebrity and eccentric, he was remembered by the older generation in Griffith. His legacy of mural work is a celebration of this local notoriety. The murals contain images that are humorous, irreverent and bawdy.

Peter Ceccato remembered Harold Thornton as an “amazing character” that lived and worked in Griffith from the 1940’s to 1960’s. His arrival in Griffith was during the heatwave of 1939, with an offsider known as Sarge, on an Indian motorbike and sidecar costing 7 pounds 10 shillings (unpaid for). Harold and Sarge were signwriters looking for work. Sarge left a year later, but Harold stayed on.

Peter came to know Harold through football and wrestling in Griffith. Among the wrestling circle, Harold was known as Signwriter Brave. Peter also met Harold through their involvement in the annual Waterwheel Festival – Peter on the committee, and Harold as an entrant.

Harold was commissioned by McWilliam’s winery at Hanwood to paint the murals there during the war years. Jack McWilliam, the winery founder, features in this mural as Bacchus. Later, murals were also painted at the winery and hotel in Yenda.

George Louis of the firm Louis Brothers in Yambil Street also commissioned Harold to paint a mural in the front window of his premises. Because of Griffith’s prohibition of alcohol at that time, George was able to supply Richmond Tiger beer at an excessive price. The mural featured a figure of George sitting on a pile of coins, stroking a tiger. Harold finished the mural during the night, painting the coins black as a reference to the black market. George was furious with this public embarrassment and had Harold repaint the coins a silver colour, but not before everyone had seen what he had done.

For the first or second Waterwheel Festival in the mid-1950’s Harold obtained a mannequin from which he constructed a nude figure. With plaster he accentuated the breasts hugely, painted on pubic hair and lipstick, and placed it on a small trolley attached to his pushbike. He met at the assembly point and tried to enter the procession but was told he was not allowed to proceed as it was felt his entry was offensive. He then snuck off and rejoined in the procession further down the street, where the police were called to try and remove him and his obscene entry. Upon seeing the police, he tried to outrun them in his pushbike. He crashed, the dummy falling apart with limbs scattered everywhere. He was not arrested but there were a few letters to the editor of the Area News calling Harold a devil and suggesting he should be run out of town. It was rumoured around the town later that a petition had been taken up to have him removed, but this turned out to be a hoax.

Just prior to the next Waterwheel festival (either 1957 or 1958) Peter came across Harold again during his involvement as Manager of the Yoogali Club. The Club was entering a float for the procession and asked for assistance from Harold to decorate the hessian covering the wheels of the trailer. Harold had plans of his own for another float to try and ‘get back’ at those that had ruined his previous year’s entry. He wrote to the Wade Shire Council, addressing his letter to Councillor Claude Devil (instead of Neville) of Weird Shire Council (instead of Wade Shire Council) and inviting them to meet Roslyn Norton at Griffith airport on her arrival by aeroplane from Sydney. Miss Norton was a well-known Sydney underworld figure who ran brothels. She was equally well known in Griffith, as she was often written about in the local newspaper. Harold wrote to the Council and the Waterwheel Festival President offering to lead that year’s procession with Miss Norton on his float. As word quickly spread around town that she was arriving on a particular flight, a crowd of about a thousand gathered at the airport to witness the arrival. The councillors did not attend, but instead sent the police. Peter remembers Harold out on the tarmac as the plane landed waving his arms madly and calling out “Roslyn, Roslyn”. He also called out to the local policeman, Sergeant Anderson “You’ll love her Sarge, when you see her”. Of course, Ms Norton didn’t arrive and was never on the plane. It was all an elaborate hoax that Harold had concocted to get back at those for the year before. Several people were in on the fact that she wasn’t ever coming, including Peter Ceccato.

Harold did however, enter a float in the Festival. He rode a pushbike dressed only in skimpy bathers, his

lips painted bright red and his teeth painted all different colours, which he apparently did quite often. On his head he wore bull's horns with a sign saying "The Devil Returns".

Peter also recalls that Harold returned to Sydney during the early 1950's briefly and on his arrival back in Griffith returned with a hearse and a coffin on top. He painted the coffin with flowers to look like wreaths and used this vehicle as his work vehicle and put all his paints supplies and brushes in the coffin. He had an operation on his gallstones at some stage. Following his recovery, he decorated the hub caps of his hearse with smooth stones, which he attached somehow and told everyone they were his gallstones that had been removed during his operation.

Harold lived and worked in Griffith for about thirty years - on and off. He would stay for long periods in Sydney, where he owned a house, but always came back to Griffith. There was obviously enough work here to keep him occupied painting murals. He also painted many portraits for people, including one of Peter Ceccato's mother. Although very eccentric, he was generally well liked in Griffith for his practical jokes. Even after returning to Sydney to live permanently, Harold still visited Griffith during Easter for the Vintage Festival, where he would set up a tent on the grass in the main street and sell his artworks, painting during the day. Harold spent a lot of time in Holland in later years, where his particular brand of art was more appreciated than in Australia. From there, he sent postcards to his Griffith friends, including Peter Ceccato.

Harold, now in his late eighties, lives in Sydney. It was reported by the ABC in 1997 that "Harold is confined to the outer fringe of the art world, working out of a dingy apartment in inner Sydney but intensely alive, mischievous and fiercely independent"(Oral account by Peter Ceccato to Margaret King, 2004, edited).

Leisure and recreation in early Griffith

Griffith High school students have produced a history of leisure in early Griffith (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au) from which this section is written.

Sporting activity in early Griffith was limited by a lack of transport. There were home made tennis courts built between people's homes. Football and cricket was also played, but they were not very competitive because there were few teams to compete against.

Men went to Darlington Point, where the Murrumbidgee River runs, to go fishing. They used a sugar bag with some leaves in the bottom and a stick at the top to prop it open as a sort of net. On the way home from Darlington Point, the bag with the fish inside was hung out the side of the horse and sulky or later on the motorcar. When they got home, the fish would be hard as though it had been placed in a freezer.

Darlington Point was also a favourite destination for families to go swimming on a weekend. Every summer, most of the people living in Griffith (Bagtown) congregated on the beach on the shores of the Murrumbidgee. This is where all of the children taught themselves how to swim, as the parents of European origin usually were not strong swimmers.

Another pastime enjoyed by many residents of the local community, especially the men, was horse racing. The first race meeting was organised by Pat Boyle and was run in 1916. A highlight of the day was the alcohol license obtained from the Narrandera Hotel. Ladies helped in the kitchen, and horses were raced on a "cross-country" track.

One of the most popular forms of entertainment though did not exist at the river or on the sporting field. Instead, it usually happened in a theatre or hall. A group of women (Mrs Hawkins, the pianist, Mrs Lasscock, Mrs Cox, and several others) taught all children, from the age when they could walk, how to dance. They taught the children how to dance the waltz, the shocking barn dance, quadrills, lancers and laleta, square dance, maxine, two-step, tippy toe and the fox trot.

This group also ran fancy dress balls for children with competitions for the best dancers in each age group. They also held balls for adults in the Hanwood Hall. Closely related to this was the children's concerts and plays held at the end of each year. These were organised by the school principal, and involved many adults playing pianos, conducting choirs and the like.

For the adults in the community, a musical and dramatic society was formed. Some of the shows staged included "Trial By Drum", "The Mishook Of Holland" and "The Quanterville".

This was a welcome outlet for the musical and talented people in the community (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

Local community organisations are advertised in club boards which are posted at the main entrances into Griffith. Two leisure activities are distinctive to the local area. The Italian sport of *bocce* has been a regular Sunday event for many Italian men. The Area Hotel Fisherman's Board documents the record sizes of

Australian native fish such as Yellowbelly and Murray Cod caught in the Murrumbidgee River.

Although there were a range of leisure venues, the three most important historic meeting places symbolising old-style leisure were the Hanwood Hall, Palais de Dance, and Lyceum Picture Theatre.

Hanwood Hall

Hanwood Hall was the first multi-purpose meeting hall in Griffith. Originally built by the Commission in about 1915 for Bagtown, it was a very important early facility. It was used for settlers association meetings, dances, vaudeville shows, church services, and as a small hospital during the influenza epidemic.

The Hall was a modest, functional structure framed in cypress pine and clad in fibro with an iron roof. A small porch at the front provided a cover for a double entrance door. As Griffith City grew, new social venues were expanded and centralised, and the Hall became absorbed into the structure of a private house. It was renovated with a new roof added in 2003 (John Robinson).

Situated on the northern corner of Wilga and Andreath Road, much of the original Hall building fabric remains intact, though now attached to a house.

Souvenir of the Palais de Dance

The Pioneer Park has a beautiful little ticket to a ball at the Palais de Dance in Griffith. It was found among the effects of a lady who would have been too young to have attended the ball herself. The ticket is in the form of an R.S.L. badge in red, white, blue and gold, and was a "Souvenir Ticket" to the ANZAC Ball on the 25th April, 1949.

The Palais, now known as Woodside Hall at the Showground, was then located in Yambil Street. Swiss born Griffith builder and entrepreneur, Henri Morel built it, in 1934. Some of his other well-known buildings are the Lyceum Theatre, St. Alban's Hall and Garden of Roses Cafe. Copies of the original construction drawings are held in the Griffith City Library. The building is of warehouse type construction, and the specification prepared by the architect G.W.A. Welch, of Leeton, contains a detailed description of the timber sizes and joints to be used in its construction.

With its elaborate pressed metal facade, the Palais is a true Art Deco building. Over the middle years of the century it was THE place in Griffith for balls and large functions, even after it was moved to the Showground.

One of the early events, which was written up in the "Area News", was the Coronation Ball in May 1937 - on the occasion of the crowing of Edward VIII (later the Duke of Windsor), which was attended by around 600 people and raised funds for the Hospital. "The decoration of the ballroom, which had been undertaken by Mr Morel, who is a member of the Hospital Board, transformed the ballroom into a fitting scene for the function and occasion. Carried out in red, white and blue, the decorative scheme embraced the entire ballroom, creating a gay inner pavilion, which reflected something of the pageantry associated with the historic occasion."

May Fallon told Robyn Oliver what a difficult building it was to make cosy. They used to fill the ceiling with streamers, have palms around the sides and greenery twined around the uprights. With the addition of balloons and floral decorations it would look good by the time they finished, but a lot of time and effort was involved. Tables were arranged around the sides, leaving the centre free for dancing.

She recalled the Crack-a-jacks as a "wonderful orchestra" which performed there often in the 1940s and 50s - they were in fact the orchestra for the 1937 Coronation Ball. Members included Tommy Simpson, Chick Fowler, Val Harris, Arthur Leitch, Bert Gilliard, Mr Couchman and members of the McCudden, Trenerry and Denham families. According to Mr Morel's daughter, Margaret Campbell, in "Griffith and District Pioneers", the entrance fee was two shillings for almost continuous music, with popular dances such as the Quick Step, Jolly Miller, Pride of Erin, Swing Barn Dance and Gypsy Tap.

Alex Morris, involved in ballroom dancing in Griffith, remembered the time when there were balls at the

Palais every Saturday night - some continuing well on to the next day - all of them raising money for a good cause, with a bit aside for the next ball. There was the Diggers Ball, Commission Cabaret, Hospital Ball, Police Ball, Show Ball, Masonic Ball, Oddfellows Ball, Bachelor and Spinsters Ball, and the many church balls - including the Anglican Church's Blossom Time Ball - to name a few. Margaret Campbell says that the Catholic Ball was the first to be held there, Father O'Dea making the booking twelve months in advance.

May and Merle Fallon also remembered that fashion parades, "very in after the war", were held at the Palais. The building would be packed, with "as many models as possible roped in", and Myrtle Worfolk "very much involved".

The Palais was moved to the Showground early in 1959 and renamed in recognition of the services of long time Show Society President, John Woodside. It was officially opened with the Show Ball in July that year. The hall was especially repainted for the occasion - internal walls light blue, end wall nasturtium, front wall saxe blue, ceiling ivory - with a different coloured ceiling for each of the alcoves "giving them a feeling of separate rooms". "The newly appointed kitchen" which was to be a "joy to caterers" rejoiced in pale blue walls, deep pink ceiling and jade doors", while the outside was pale gray with "parakeet" entrance porch and claret doors.

Although this riot of colour would make a 1990s person blanch - it must have been the latest thing at the time, a break out from the more restricted colour range of earlier years! In an ironic twist, the old Palais was re-painted in the 1990s using the muted palette of so-called "heritage" colours (Robyn Oliver).

Lyceum Picture Theatre

In 1919, Griffith's main outlet for entertainment was built - the "Lyceum Theatre". This was owned and managed by Mr. Harry Morel. The Lyceum showed films 3 times per week.

Other than this, the theatre's hall was used for balls. Typically, these were events with formal dress, elaborate dinners, ushers and programs. A wide range of community groups including the hospital, RSL, Freemasons, the Bachelors and Spinsters (B&S), the Catholic Church and the Church of England hosted balls (www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

Maureen Parker's father had a lifelong association with the picture theatre. Maureen was able to remember many of the changes to the building over the decades:

Henri Morel was born in Switzerland, and was both a builder and theatre owner. My father, Bill Doyle, came to Griffith from Narrandera in 1919 aged 14. He worked on the main canal construction as the "water joey" for about a year, then became an apprentice carpenter with Mr. Morel and his team.

The original Lyceum Theatre was constructed 1920 in Banna Avenue with the Open Air next door on the western side. (There is a photo in The Romance of History ISBN 0 7316 0739 2 by Lillian Vera Chettle Goddard 1987). Bill was intrigued with the projector and watched the projectionist at work, during his spare time. When Mr. Morel stated that his projectionist was returning to Sydney, Bill offered to do it. The Lyceum played an important part in the community in these early days, being the only public hall in the town. It was used for church services on Sunday, with each denomination having its time slot. There were also numerous dances, balls, children's concerts and children's Fancy Dress functions, most of which were fundraisers to establish church halls in the young town.

Many films were screened at the Open Air Theatre during the summer months. If a dust storm arrived, or it began to rain, the side doors of the adjoining theatre would be opened and the patrons would pick up their chairs and move into the building, whilst the projectionist would trundle the projector into the back of the building and get going again.

A big storm on 20 September 1923 caused much damage throughout the district. The Lyceum Theatre collapsed, leaving only the stage area (proscenium). It was thought that the heat of an earlier destructive fire next door had weakened the main wall.

Morel rebuilt on the site, and this is the ground floor of the existing building. At some time (possibly 1930's) he then constructed the present building on the site of the Open Air Theatre, this was for many years The Garden of Roses Café and Milk Bar operated by Jim Theodore and Prineas. The second Open Air was then established directly behind the Lyceum (on Yambil Street). This site is now the Henri Morel Car Park. Also in the 1930's the Dress Circle was added, with a smokers lounge, office and toilets on the second level, and bio-box on the third. Earlier toilets can be picked out behind the stage, when viewed from Yambil Street – these were for the downstairs patrons after the Dress Circle was added. There is also a supper room located in this part of the building.

I should mention a couple of points of interest. When the dress circle was added, the roof was jacked up and the walls bricked. I have photos of the construction. The steel girders used in this construction were leftovers from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The Lyceum seated 1246 and the Rio Theatre in the block to the west seated 996. Before TV we could fill both Theatres and have extras pleading to sit on the stairs, rather than go home disappointed. Then in about 1948 there were coal strikes and theatres were not permitted to use electricity, so a large motor was installed to generate their own electricity. It was so efficient that it fed back into the main grid, I have been told (Maureen Parker).

Yenda Lyceum Theatre and Cafe

Henri Morel built the picture theatre in Griffith, but also had business interests in Yenda. He erected an open air picture theatre in 1921 on the site of the present Lyceum Theatre. Morel's theatre was called the Lyzeum and was situated beside the timber café opened by W. Robinson the same year.

Following the Main Avenue fires of 1926, a brick theatre was constructed on this site by D. Oliver. The Lyceum Theatre retained its name until 1931, when the introduction of "talkies" inspired its renovation. The building then became known as the Regent Theatre. It is now part of a delicatessen owned by George Santalucia.

The Lyceum café was originally built of cypress pine, but was damaged by fire in 1923, then completely destroyed during the 1926 fires. When rebuilt, JJ Wilson laid the brickwork while A. di Avila did the plasterwork and tessellation. The Café also functioned as a newsagency and bookstore for the village. Mr Cassimatus added a small circulating library (Stedinger and McPhee 2003).

Religion

Pre-Irrigation Christian denominations

The period before the land was resumed for irrigation was marked by activities of the different Christian denominations. Colonial Australian society had been split between the establishment, represented largely by the Anglo-Australians or Northern Irish in the government and the Church of England (Anglican), and the Catholics, descended largely from the under-class of Irish convicts and refugees from the Irish potato famine of the 1840s. Separate, but situated closer to the Anglican side of the colonial divide, were the other Christian denominations with a tradition derived from the Protestant Reformation: the Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists. Yet in the local area there have been examples of joint co-operation which bucked the trend in colonial society.

In rural areas there were travelling clerics who ministered to the spiritual needs of the settlers. They were based in the larger towns such as Narrandera. They visited once or several times a year because of the distances and travelling conditions. Reverend Gribble, who travelled to Darlington Point to set up the Warangesda mission, was one of these travelling missionaries.

As far back as 1850s there were Anglican ministers who held services and celebrated marriages at stations such as Hulong, Nerandera, Beremba and Yanco.

For selectors in the local area, both Catholic and Anglican services were held several times a year at Frank Dun's selection at The Cliffs between Yoogali and Bilbul from 1895. A small church (St James) was then built by selectors in 1907 by the combined effort of both Catholic and Protestant selectors (Kelly 1988: 201-212, edited excerpts).

The first church building

The oldest church on the M.I.A. is St. James Church of England.

St. James was originally located on the north-west side of the Griffith-Yenda road, between Yoogali and Bilbul, on what is now Farm 512, then a property known as "The Cliffs". Services are thought to have been held there by at least 1882, when the first Anglican Bishop of the Riverina, Bishop Linton, accompanied the clergyman from Whitton "to a pretty farm among the hills, where a Sunday service is held monthly and well attended by the neighbours."

The church was built in 1907 and opened by the second bishop, Bishop Anderson. Its construction, in common with much of the work in the Diocese then, was supported from overseas, with a gift of fifty pounds from an English lady, as well as local gifts. The huge Anglican diocese of the Riverina has never been wealthy, made up of the "left-overs" of wealthier eastern dioceses. At this time it was a missionary outpost. Early bishops were expected to have private means and to conduct fund raising drives in England to support their work.

In 1913, with the establishment of the M.I.A., the Water Commission paid for the removal of the Church to the more populous centre of Jondaryan, or Hanwood, as it is now known. The removalist, James Harris, achieved quite a feat.

The journey, taking four and a half days to travel six miles in a straight line between the two centres, was made through virgin bush, cutting a path as they went. The church was mounted on a frame fastened to two large green cypress logs, used as skids. (In 1972 these logs were said to still exist as the base for a culvert on Farm 117.) Ted Spry was originally engaged to do the pulling with his steam traction engine, but when this failed, George Spry's two teams of bullocks were added to the pull. James Harris later commented that "it is a wonder that the Lord ever gave his blessing to anything that took place in the Church after it came to rest in Hanwood, considering the amount of swearing and bad language that accompanied the shift".

The first service in Hanwood was held around September 1913 by the minister from Whitton - referring to the location as Griffith. (Hanwood must have had quite a confused identity at this period.) The text for his sermon was "What think ye of Christ?" and Archdeacon Twigg later remarked at the closing of the church, probably with irony, that "There is something prophetic about that text, and this building bears witness to those who cared and those who didn't. It is as simple as that!"

The early Hanwood congregation included Fanny Savage, "the Vicar of Hanwood", who ran the Sunday School and played the organ, "old Mrs Hicken driving her sulky", "old Mrs Abott and Mrs Melville, who worked the alter cloth", the Beverleys, Littles, Saras, Beaumonts, Thompsons, Mellings, Robinsons, Saintys', Crooks, Delves, McWilliams, Pedleys and many others.

Some of the furnishings of the church, now at Pioneer Park, also have an interesting past. The altar was originally located in the Bishop's chapel at the Bishop's Lodge, Hay. It was moved to Hanwood in 1946 when the Bishop moved to Narrandera and the Lodge was sold.

The baptismal font once served in the Chapel at the Warangesda Aboriginal Mission at Darlington Point started by the Rev. John Gribble in 1879. It was later used at Darlington Point, at Hanwood for 30 years, and at the first service in Coleambally in 1965.

St. James was moved to Pioneer Park in 1971. Archdeacon Twigg commented that "They wanted a church of historical value. We wanted this building to be preserved with dignity." In 1993 it received a face lift, with a new coat of paint, and restoration of some of its wooden embellishments. Mrs Nesta McWilliam, the second woman married in the church, was asked about the interviewed about the church's original colour scheme. She recalled that the colours were "nothing bright" - certainly not red or green. There were traces of Brunswick green among early layers of paint around the windows. Skillshare workers under the guidance of retired painter, Charlie Murray did the painting in a buff main colour with chocolate trim. Pioneer Park handyman, David Wright, carried out the carpentry (Robyn Oliver).

Establishment of Christian denominations after irrigation

According to oral tradition, Catholic mass was first said at Bagtown at the blacksmith's shop and at Tom Bone's billiard saloon by Father Patrick Reidy from Narrandera.

From then on, mass was celebrated once a month at Hanwood Hall. When the construction debt for Hanwood Hall mounted up in 1916, the Catholics held the "Hard-up Ball", to which guests wore clothes such as chaff bags and hessian - on pain of being fined. In accordance with Irish Catholic tradition, they also arranged the St Patrick's day festivities.

As in other rural towns, the parish priest, Father Bob O'Dea and parishioners worked to establish a church complex which catered for all aspects of Catholic community, containing a church, school, convent and presbytery. Usually in country towns these were all developed on one block. As a result of actively pursuing these goals, the Sacred Heart Church was completed in 1928, with other buildings completed in later years.

During the First World War influenza epidemic, Hanwood Hall was turned into an emergency hospital. When the land around St James Church was resumed for irrigation in 1912, parishioners had the building moved by bullock cart six miles to Hanwood. In 1971 it was relocated as a display item in Griffith Pioneer Park.

Over the 1920s, the Anglican Rectory and hall were built, but the church (now Cathedral) of St Alban the Martyr was delayed until after the Second World War, being completed in 1955.

The Methodists also used Hanwood Hall as a meeting place, as well as for baptisms and marriage. The church in Griffith was built in 1923, the one in Yenda being completed much later in 1953.

Presbyterians held services in the C.W.A. Hall, building a wooden church in Beale Street in 1925, a Manse fifteen years later, and the Scots Memorial Church in 1958.

In 1977 the Methodists and a majority of Presbyterians chose the path of union, forming the Uniting Church and combining their properties to develop a retirement village with community care and chapel.

Baptist services were held in Griffith in the Lyceum Theatre, until a new Sanctuary was erected in 1925. A hall, kitchen and manse were later added, and the Sanctuary was removed in 1972 as a display item in Griffith Pioneer Park (Kelly 1988: 201-212, edited excerpts).

Anglican Church of St Alban the Martyr

Built in 1955, this is an imposing example of a mid-twentieth century church. It exhibits an interesting admixture of revival styles, and has a severe, fortress-like quality. It is situated within a spacious landscape setting, and makes an important contribution to the streetscape.

Previously, Sunday services were held in the Lyceum Theatre (from 1920), baptisms and marriages in the Rectory (from 1923), and the Church Hall (from 1927). The church of St. Alban the Martyr was opened and dedicated by Bishop Robinson on 16th April 1955 (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

St Alban is a brown brick building of modern and traditional styles of architecture. The Romanesque and Gothic manner can be seen in the vaulted roof-wide nave, the tracery of the rose window over the choir gallery, cloistered aisles, and separate baptistery, choir gallery and chapel.

The architect, Louis R. Williams, described his own design as "20th century Gothic". The furnishings are of mountain ash, the main roof is lined with Marseilles tiles, the baptistery and chapel roofs with shingle tiles, and the tower with copper. It has a prominent tower, rose window, rounded apse and terracotta shingles on a curved roof. (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

The interior has multi-tone face brickwork with exposed timber trusses. The generally restrained use of colour is contrasted by the altar ornaments, which are accented in red, black and gold. It features a "mystic blue" Reredos crucifix and a font carved by well-known female sculptor Ola Cohn. The interior may be worthy of additional research and listing (Parish of Griffith, undated, "The story of the Church of St Alban the Martyr"). The struggles to obtain Cathedral status for the church are an interesting political saga that requires further research.

Methodism is brought to Australia

"I look upon all the world as my parish."

- John Wesley 1703-91, English theologian, evangelist, and founder of Methodism.

Methodist churches are significant heritage items because they recall a time when groups of religious

believers – many of them isolated by geographic distance from other similar communities - settled in New South Wales and built small churches within easy horse riding distance of their homes. Sometimes, the preservation of a Wesleyan Chapel in some abandoned rural area is the only reminder of a once-thriving religious community. The church at Yenda was typical of these small vigorous communities, and the church in Griffith is a monument to the consolidation and dedication of a larger Methodist community. It is also of historical interest that the church disappeared as a separate entity when it was absorbed into the larger Uniting Church.

The Methodist Church's history can be traced back through the origins of Methodism, a denomination founded by John Wesley in the middle of the eighteenth century. Wesley was born in 1703 to Samuel and Susana Wesley. He later attended Oxford University and was ordained a minister of the Church of England. He and several other students at Oxford created a group devoted not only to scholarly goals, but also to prayer and to aiding the less fortunate. As a result of the methodical way they went about their religious business, their classmates often referred to the members of this group as "Methodists".

Methodism, worldwide Protestant movement dating from 1729, when a group of students at the University of Oxford, England, began to assemble for worship, study, and Christian service. Among the Oxford group were John Wesley, considered the founder of Methodism, and his brother Charles, the sons of an Anglican rector. John preached, and Charles wrote hymns. John Wesley quickly won an enthusiastic following among the English working classes, for which the formalism of the established Church of England had little appeal. John Wesley's message as well as his personal activities among the poor encouraged a social consciousness that was retained by his followers and has become a hallmark of the Methodist tradition.

After graduation, Wesley travelled to America, where he unsuccessfully tried to convert the Native Americans in Georgia. It was at this time that Wesley was introduced to and became quite taken with the pious Moravian religion. Then, on May 24, 1738, John Wesley experienced a religious conversion after attending a prayer meeting held on Aldersgate Street, London. This experience led him to found Methodism in England in 1739. Wesley did not set out to create a new church, but instead began several small faith-restoration groups within the Anglican Church called the "United Societies." Soon however, Methodism spread and eventually became its own separate religion, based on the General Rules, when the first conference was held in 1744.

Enthusiastic reaction of his audience convinced him that open-air preaching was the most effective way to reach the masses. Few pulpits would be open to him in any case, for the Anglican Church frowned on revivalism.

Wesley attracted immense crowds virtually from the outset of his evangelical career. His success also was due, in part, to the fact that contemporary England was ready for a revivalist movement; the Anglican Church was seemingly unable to offer the kind of personal faith that people craved. Thus Wesley's emphasis on inner religion and his assurance that each person was accepted as a child of God had a tremendous popular appeal.

An indefatigable preacher and organiser, Wesley travelled about 8000 km a year, delivering as many as four or five sermons a day and founding new societies.

When John Wesley began the Methodist tradition, devout Godliness was both his prime motivation, and his ultimate goal. As outlined in the General Rules, his three basic precepts were:

1. Shun evil and avoid partaking in wicked deeds at all costs,
2. Perform kind acts as much as possible, and
3. Abide by the edicts of God the Almighty Father.

It was not until late in the eighteenth century that Wesley published further doctrinal standards, including his Sermons, Notes on the New Testament, and Large Minutes of the Conference (which had been preceded by Minutes of the Conference). Later, the Twenty-five Articles of Religion (an amended form of a similar document in the Anglican Church) were added. These articles affirmed the Methodists' belief in many universally Christian ideas, as well as denied some ideas affiliated with other Christian denominations.

Though Methodists had many things in common with other Christian religions, there were some aspects that were distinctive. Firstly, was the Methodist teaching that people must use logic and reason in all matters of faith. Secondly, was a great emphasis on missionary work. Thirdly, Methodism isolated itself from religious beliefs in purgatory, predestination, and sacraments other than Communion and Baptism.

Emigrants from both England and Northern Ireland brought Methodism to Australia. Methodism, spread by travelling preachers and revival meetings, advanced with the white settlement frontier. The circuit rider was an itinerant Methodist preacher, who usually travelled on horseback to rural communities that had no churches. During the early nineteenth century, the tolerant doctrinal positions of Methodism and its stress on personal religious experience, universal salvation, and practical ethics made it attractive to settler communities.

The Uniting Church in Australia was formed on June 22, 1977, as a union of three churches in Australia: the Congregational Union, Methodist Church and the Presbyterian Church. Through those churches the Uniting Church, though contemporary, retained its roots in the churches of the Reformation.

During the second half of the twentieth century, church emphasis shifted from the strict pious teachings of original Wesleyan tradition. The Church currently faces internal controversies, grounded in the differing liberal-conservative beliefs within the church, such as homosexual unions and abortion. Perhaps not surprisingly, these controversies are also some of the major topics of debate in society today. Opposition to liberalism within the Church advocates renewal of John Wesley's vision of a devout, pious community whose mission is to strictly follow the Word of God, without subjecting it to broad and unconventional interpretations. (www.religiousmovements.lib; "Methodism," Microsoft® Encarta® Online Encyclopedia 2004).

Griffith Methodist Church

The first Methodist meeting held in the Hanwood Hall in 1915 was followed by cottage prayer meetings, celebrated by the first Harvest Festival. The Griffith Church was commenced in 1922 by a band of voluntary workers and was finally completed by contract in 1923. Later improvements were a kindergarten hall (1924), telephone (1925), front porch (1933), parsonage (1937), and kindergarten addition to the hall (1947).

The minister's work was attached to a circuit, modelled on the nineteenth century pattern of travelling clergymen. Much of the discussion revolved around the controversy of what was the best - and most economical- mode of transport. A minister was appointed in 1921 with the latest means of transport, a motor cycle, though he still kept a horse. When a new minister was appointed in 1925, the old horse was sold, and it was decided that a Model T Ford be purchased. By 1930 the then old T Model Ford was being resold to the new minister. But there was still a lot of parish discussion on whether a horse and sulky or pushbike were a better means of transport than a car. In fact, by 1940 the minister's transport was back to being bicycle.

In 1926 the purchase of Hanwood Hall was approved for alteration into a church, in preference to a new structure.

For years, plans had been developing for the construction of a new church. After a vigorous fundraising drive, it was completed in 1953. The Hall was also rebuilt in brick in about 1973 (Griffith Methodist Church Fiftieth Anniversary 1923-1973).

The building was renamed when, in 1977, the Methodist and Congregational denominations merged to create the Uniting Church.

Yenda Methodist Church

This building of weatherboard walls with corrugated iron roof is typical of many of the small timber and tin Methodist churches that were built in rural communities. It has aesthetic and social value, and contributes to the heritage of Yenda.

It was built as a Methodist Church in 1922 from fetes held in the church grounds to raise money for the building. The roof of the building was put up before the walls were sheeted. This was unfortunate, as during one of the night dust storms that that this area was noted for, the roof was blown onto the ground.

Combined church services were held for Presbyterians and Methodists from 1942. In later years a hall was built on the side of the church (1958) and Sunday school was held in the hall. Improvements were made every decade or so, with a boundary fence (1961), connection to sewerage (1982) and exterior re-cladding (1986).

The building was renamed when, in 1977, the Methodist and Congregational denominations merged to create the Uniting Church.

Italian Catholicism

Whether Italian immigrants were wedded to religion or not remains a matter of interpretation. Historians' observations are not about the spiritual life but, rather, about the power of the Italian church in Italy and opposition to that power, which made some Italians anti-clericalist. Having said this, the Roman Catholic Church is the established church of Italy and its history is intertwined with the history of Italy. It's central role in not only the spiritual life of Italians but also their customs and traditions is unquestionable. This is what immigrants from Italy brought to Griffith.

Italian culture values religion—or generally a spiritual and moral outlook on life. The church blesses all rites of passage in life—marriage, birth, death, and feast days give shape to the seasons and feast days, Christmas and Easter. All hold great both religious and secular significance.

Italian priests tended not only to the spiritual needs of the immigrants, but also generally acted as social

workers. They understood the need to create vehicles for social interaction that would make the church the centre of community life. They, thus, ministered not only to souls but also bodies. The church hall became the location for a range of social interactions, including meetings of clubs, as well as weddings and anniversaries. The priests understood that the family had to be connected to the church so that religious faith and traditions would continue from one generation to the next.

The challenge that the Italian community now faces is the challenge that all established migrant communities now face. How can religion, customs and traditions be kept relevant, when the impetus to bring people together for reasons of being alien in a strange land no longer exist. As well, the general movement away from religious worship to secularisation has had an effect on Italian parishes. Many Italian-Australians only go to Mass at Christmas and Easter when the church is packed. The rest of the time, it is the elderly who populate the pews.

Our Lady of Pompeii Catholic Church

Built by Antonio Ceccato and members of the Italian community, the building is based on a small northern Italian church, and uses similar construction techniques. The walls are rubble-filled brick cavity construction rendered externally and internally. There is a traditional bell tower to the southeast corner of the street facade, and two side chapels. The bell tower is of mixed off-form concrete and brick construction. The church continues in use by the local Italian community.

The history of the Yoogali church has to be viewed against the background of the changing status of the Italian community. The 1930s saw increasing hostility towards Italian settlers in the M.I.A., due to their relative success in maintaining and increasing their holdings compared to Anglo-Australian farmers during the depression. At the same time, the growing Italian community was becoming increasingly self-aware and desirous of greater social and cultural expression (G. Pich 1975; oral sources).

The genesis for the construction of the church appears to have been a decision by the Catholic Church hierarchy to provide an Italian speaking priest - Father Bongiorno - to the Griffith parish in the late 1930s. Apart from the occasional visits by Italian missionary priests, there had been no opportunity for the Italian community to worship in their own language and culture. The Sacred Heart Church in Griffith has been established in 1928 with minimal Italian involvement and did not offer Italian mass until 1971 (Father Beltrame).

Dr. Henschke, Auxiliary Bishop of Wagga Wagga, laid the foundation stone of the new church in October 1939. Construction was completed in 6 months by volunteer labour with materials also donated by the Italian community. The church was opened on 28 April 1940. The Italian Consul General, Sr. Mammalella, attended the opening celebrations, which took the whole day and included mass, formal speeches, confirmation and baptism ceremonies. A crowd of many hundreds participated in the celebrations. A dinner was attended by a large number of both Italo and Anglo-Australians. (Catholic Press, 1940)

A social club - the genesis of the present day 'Catholic Club' - operated from makeshift premises beside the church to the west during the 1940s. This included a bocce court and corrugated iron clubroom. A school was established in the extension to the rear of the church c.1949, later moved to new buildings across the road. In 1953, a hall in Art Deco style (St Mary's Hall) was constructed adjacent to the church to the east. (Oral sources)

Our Lady of Pompeii Roman Catholic Church is historically significant as possibly the oldest church constructed by, and for the sole use of an Italian community which is still in use in New South Wales. Construction of such churches by small and economically poor ethnic communities appears uncommon in Australia.

It is beautiful as an example of vernacular church design of the Veneto region, transplanted in memory to the Australian setting. Both the design and construction reflect these Italian origins and are strikingly different to typical Australian Catholic Church architecture. The unusual construction techniques reflect both Italian practices, and the amateur skills of the volunteer construction force. This particular church played a seminal role in the development of self-esteem by this community at a difficult period in inter-ethnic relations during the late 1930s. (S Lloyd 2000)

Antonio Ceccato prepared a design from memory, similar to a church in the northern Italian town where he and many of the local parishioners came from. G.W.A. Welch, an architect based in Wagga Wagga and Leeton, drew the plans in 1939. Though the main church was completed in 1940, a few years later two chapels were added, one to either side of the church. In 1949 a large room was added at the rear for church functions and club meetings. It also served as the interim classroom for St Mary's school, until the completion of the new St Mary's School building in 1964.

Antonio Ceccato's role was significant. In early 1939 permission was given by the Bishop of Wagga

Wagga Diocese, Most Rev. J.W. Dwyer to build a church at Yoogali. A committee was formed and called for tenders with plans and specifications. The ones tendered by Antonio Ceccato were accepted, because the church design appealed to them very much. Construction of the church building started in September 1939 and completed in February 1940.

The church was well built and has lasted well, though there is currently a threat to the walls from rising damp that is bypassing the damp course. The method used at that time was a bed of mixed and heated tar and sand.

A special Italian community dinner was held in the Coronation Hall (also built by Antonio Ceccato) on 11 February 1940 to honour the efforts of Antonio Ceccato in his successful completion of the church. The Church was dedicated to Our Lady of Pompeii, chosen by the Holy See as the patroness of Italians in foreign lands (Gino Ceccato).

Italians bring The Lady of Loreto to Griffith

In 1294 near the Italian coast, shepherds looking out across the sea saw a house in the sky, flying across the sea, supported by angels. The leader wore a red cape, which they recognised to be St. Michael the Archangel. Mary the mother of Christ and the baby Jesus were seated on top of the house. The house found its final resting spot in Loreto. After it landed, Mary appeared to a hermit named Paul of the Forest and explained the meanings of this event to him.

This is one re-telling of the oral tradition that became a cultural bridge between the colourful traditions of southern Italians, and the bland religion of Australian Catholics in Griffith. Another version has Mary's house miraculously moved by angels from Nazareth to Ancona. The Loreto tradition says that Mary (the mother of Jesus) died in the town of Ephesus (in modern day Turkey) and that the house was miraculously transported to Loreto. Not surprisingly, Our Lady of Loreto is the patron saint of aviators. A historical rationalisation of this tradition is that devotion was transferred from Ephesus to Loreto when a house was built in Mary's honour there during the middle ages.

The link that brought the fragments of the Italian tradition intact to Griffith was transported as suddenly - some might say as miraculously - as the vision of Mary's house, flying across the seas to its new location. It was embodied in a plaster copy of Our Lady of Loreto, a well-known statue in Italy.

Even in 2004, many years after its transportation to Griffith, the statue still features in an annual religious festival attended by Calabrian and Sicilian parishioners. To better understand what the statue brought with it, the tradition of Loreto needs to be further explained.

The honoured dead of Christianity -- real or legendary men and women known for their piety -- are referred to as "saints" (holy persons). The Catholic Church long ago established the concept of the "intercession of saints," the idea that the saints of the Church have "the ear of God," and that prayers made by them in Heaven are more powerful or efficacious than prayers made on Earth by common people. Foremost among the saints is Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Prayers to the Mary have a long history dating back to pre-Christian European Goddess-centred paganism. Many Catholics address the Virgin Mary with direct prayers and do not ask her to intercede on their behalf. Although this is a common practice, technically speaking, Mary is not a deity but a holy person, and therefore prayers addressed to her are called "intercessions." In acknowledgment of her widespread popularity and various manifestations, the Church has given Mary patronage over an assortment of occupations and conditions, as if she were a multiplicity of saints.

In folk-Catholic traditions, information about Mary and the saints, and the areas of life over which they assume patronage is generally passed along through word of mouth. But it may also be printed on holy cards that have an illustration of the saint with a short prayer for intercession on the back, or be carried as statues, or exist in sacred sites.

The village of Loreto, rich in symbols accumulated over the centuries, is an important destination of pilgrimages dedicated to Mary. For 700 years the Basilica of Loreto has been on the ancient route followed by the "romei", the pilgrims directed to Rome. From Ancona to Rome via Loreto there were a series of horse staging inns and taverns, at twelve kilometre intervals to cater for pilgrims. For example, the tavern of the Angel in Camerano was the first station after Ancona.

The legend might have developed in the years immediately after the fall of areas on the pilgrimage route to Ephesus to the Ottoman Empire, with the urgent need to transfer devotion to the West, and whip up religious fervour for the crusades. The testimony of "Paul of the Forest" clearly suggests divine will to embezzle the infidels of such a sacred house. Loreto and the Santa Casa of Mary came to represent Catholic outposts in the fight against the Islam. Confirmation of this came with the victory of the battle of Lepanto over the Moslems, as it was attributed to the intercession of the Loreto Virgin.

In Griffith, two churches were built between the wars to cater for all Catholics in the district, but Italians were reluctant and irregular participants in their parishes. Some time later, in 1939, under the leadership of an Aeolian priest, Father Bongiorno, the Italian community built their own church at Yoogali. A second Italian church, St Anthony's, replaced a timber church fashioned from a relocated army chapel in Hanwood. There were a number of morning services on a Sunday, and announcements and sermons were given in Italian and English.

Following irrigation, the growing population of Italians formed their own Catholic communities, bringing their own style of worship and practice, distinct from the former Irish Catholic tradition in the local area.

The role of religion has been crucial to a sense of community for Italian immigrants in NSW. For many Italians, to be Catholic means to share in the cultural inheritance of their village or area of origin. Some of this Catholic culture indigenous to Italy did not find favour with the Australian Catholic Church. Italians, for their part, found that instead of being something that they could recognise in an alien environment, that Australian Catholic practice seemed remote and strange, lacking in the social life that was part of religious practice in their home country.

The celebration of Saints' days, street festivals, and other aspects of what has been termed "folk religion" seemed to be absent in the Australian setting. In Italy these events often were built around an ancient event specific to a village or town, or coincided with the seasonal cycles of rural life. In Australia some of these transported rituals seemed robbed of these rich contextual meanings. Nevertheless, rituals are to some extent moveable entities, and religious practices have provided a sense of continuity, an anchor for values and emotions, for many Italian immigrants.

On arrival, the Calabresi attended the churches infrequently in comparison to the Veneti and Italians from other regions. Unlike the northern Italians that contained a close community of church-goers, the later immigration wave from southern Italy brought out many people reluctant to participate in the colourless practices of Australian Catholicism.

This changed with the importation of a plaster copy of the Lady of Loreto statue. It was carried ceremoniously into the church by members of the Calabrian community and placed on the altar. One of the men then rushed from the congregation and shouted "Viva la Madonna!" to which the congregation responded enthusiastically "Viva! Viva!".

The arrival of the Lady of Loreto Statue, with all its associated meanings, across the seas to Griffith, sparked a religious renewal among the Calabresi (Cecilia 1985: 99; Pesman 1998: 13-14 edited excerpts; various sources regarding Loreto and the saints).

St Anthony's Catholic Church and Hall, Hanwood

From the early days of irrigation, the increase of Catholic community by arrival of Italian Catholics made the local Catholic priest and Bishop of Wagga realise that Hanwood was an area of special need. Hanwood had no permanent church and parishioners travelled to Griffith for Sunday mass. Occasionally mass was held in the Hanwood CWA Hall, with fruit packing cases as an altar and seating. Local priest Father O'Dea acquired a block of land and in 1947 the bishop obtained a "Cusa Hut" which had previously been used as a chapel at the Kapooka Army camp.

A team of parishioners led by builders Frank Andreazza and Jack Salvestrin transported the building on trucks from Wagga Wagga. Re-erected at Hanwood on the site of the present day church hall, the parishioners went to work lining, rewiring, and repairing the building for use as the church and school. Working bees were held mainly at night, after the end of a long day on farms. The Gates, Barrter, Bugno and Murray families led this multi-cultural effort.

The combined school and church building opened in 1948, with St Joseph's Catholic School being taught by two Sisters of St Joseph from Yenda convent. They travelled to Hanwood each day in their Vauxhall automobile "Josephine", packing in eight students along the way.

The 1950s was a decade of consolidation as the student numbers swelled. In 1950 a cottage was purchased across the road from the school and became the Sisters' convent. 1954 saw two rooms added to the school/hall building, and in 1956 the Capuchin Fathers arrived to serve the parish and school.

As student numbers peaked and declined, the school building also fell into some disrepair, closing in 1971. Students then travelled to St Mary's School at Yoogali. Following the collapse of part of the roof, the building was demolished and burned in 1980. The new hall was then constructed on the site of the old school (A History of St Joseph's School 1948-1971 brochure).

The church and hall that were then built are interestingly styled buildings with an equally interesting history. They are the only Griffith examples of what became known as the "Sydney School" of architectural styles from the 1960s, which features chain drainage set in rocks, mission brown angular roofs, extensive use

of native plantings and natural, stained timbers.

The school bell is now the church bell, and the cross in St Anthony's Church is made out of the altar rails of the old church.

Local people designed the church. Father Anthony Silvano and Tiziano Forlico searched out a church design that they liked, finding a church in Shepparton. As is common in Griffith, the builder (Tiziano) then copied the design, but also made his own modifications. He reduced the church floor plan to about a quarter of the size of the one in Shepparton, and modified the roof form. The result is an individualistic building which though built in 1972, could better be regarded as a 1960s or late 1950s classic.

Distinctive architectural features mark this building. The walls are of locally produced, yellow, dry pressed bricks from the Area Brickworks in Darlington road, Hanwood, no longer in production. There is a distinctive use of mission brown colour bond square profile guttering. Heavy chain was used as a decorative feature instead of downpipes, attached to rocks on the ground. Exaggerated angular and irregular steeply sloping roof was used to add drama to an otherwise ordinary colour bond light-brown roof material. The central roof spire is in copper.

A simple and minimalist freestanding bell-tower at the front of the building consists of only four square steel rods in mission brown colour. The vertical walls feature floor to roof windows. The main entrance is in natural vertical timber panelling from floor to roof, giving a sense of height and mass to emphasise the main architraves for the doorway, also in mission brown, also full height. There are characteristic amber stained glass windows and simple shrub landscaping at the entrance.

The hall was designed by local architect Vic Budd and built by Casagrande and Colpo in the early 1980s. It is a utilitarian and simple rectangular design enhanced with a strong but plain western facade with sloping sides. It is adorned only with a cross. Exposed steel wall and roof trusses continue the sense and impact of the sloping sides of the western facade and are either an intentional or accidental reference to Gothic church designs using flying buttresses. It is made from the same yellow bricks as the church (Jan Morrison).

The Salvation Army is brought to Australia

William (1829-1912) and Catherine Booth (1829-1890) founded their revival mission, The East London Christian Mission, in 1865. The official establishment of the group did not occur until 1878 when the organisation adopted military symbolism, discipline and incorporated charitable activities within their Christian objective. Thus, they renamed themselves the Salvation Army.

The Salvation Army exists in 102 countries and operates on a budget estimated at \$1.5 billion, of which 86 percent goes directly to Salvation Army sponsored community programs. These programs employ 40,000 paid employees, most of whom are involved with clerical work. Yet, the core of the effectiveness and success of the Army comes from the 1.5 million volunteers who work at the local level engaged in a multitude of activities.

The son of a bankrupt small building contractor, Booth was forced from childhood onward into a mean and lonely life. His one solace was religion. Finding peace with religion, early in life, Booth began preaching as a Wesleyan Methodist and insisted that God's saving grace was equally accessible to all, a belief that was not easily accepted by the Anglican Church at the time. This stance on salvation, coupled with Booth's volatile sermons resulted in his dismissal from the church. It is with this expulsion that Booth began to explore and develop his ministry.

Several authors mention varied influences over Booth influencing the development of the Salvation Army. Among the most referred to were the theology of John Wesley, the strong relationship Booth had with his wife, Catherine, and the theology of American Revivalism.

The Booths sought to create a Christian atmosphere not so constricting in character that would push people away. They wanted to appeal to the general, non-church going public.

Thus the pattern of Salvationist worship was set by the preaching service of nineteenth century revivalism. The one thing you had to avoid was 'churchliness.' For the church was felt to be a middle class, formal, snobbish affair, while the mission was a working class, lively and loving concern.

In fact, by the 1880's, the group had expanded into Australia, America, Europe, India and Africa. Yet, growth only occurred in Anglo-American towns, not the slums, which was Booth's original target group. Thus, a social program, in the late 1880's, found incorporation into the group's objectives in order to accommodate this original intention.

In 1878 the Christian Mission turned into the Salvation Army: The Salvation Army was born...the "Great Salvation War" began to add piecemeal: church halls became corps, flags, ceremonials, military badges, ranks, brass bands and the rudiments of uniform and discipline," the Christian mission had transformed into an army -

Immediately, William Booth reassured the readers of the Christian Mission's magazine that simply the name of the group had changed nothing else. But with the increased development and growth, Booth found the need to integrate a rigid sectarian discipline within the Salvation Army. This more structured form of organisations resulted in tensions arose within the group between the old revivalist freedom and the newly acquired denominational discipline. This tension explains the fact that the Salvation Army grew, not out of directly sanctioned expansion, but rather from disenchanted members who had left the core and gone out on their own to start independent Salvation Armies.

By the 1880's, the Army had evolved from a simple structured organisation into one of an imperialist nature. Booth realised the combination of social programs for the "heathen masses" combined with the increasingly vocal working class would weaken the Army. Accordingly, Booth increased his militancy to keep his army from falling victim to more democratic times. This power structure, many argue, restrained the growth of the Army and created tensions:

"Tensions that existed within the Army by 1888, between its revivalists wing, which worked to build the kingdom of God, and its social wing, which gave material succour to the poor to improve the kingdom of man, exist to present. (Murdoch, epilogue pg. 171)

The Salvation Army became increasingly intertwined with an evolving world; thus, General Booth sought tighter control over the Salvation Army. McKinley notes that in July 1884, Booth issued a 'notarised statement' in the War Cry vesting control and protection of the organisation solely to him. Additionally, all properties of the Army were to be 'conveyed to, and held by, the General.' Despite Booth's desire to shelter his Army from the outside world with a cloak of Christian militancy, the Army would not be immune from secular ideas and wealth. This flexibility in preaching and practice provided for the evolution of the worldwide movement in existence today.

We believe in the old-fashioned salvation. Combining Booth's Methodist background with the religious guidelines provided by other teachings of the time, the Army drew up eleven beliefs constituting the Doctrine of the Salvation Army, which a Salvationist must commit to:

All in all, these theologies and Booth's personal background and personal objectives, the Salvation Army articulated its original purpose in the Christian Mission's Report for 1878, which stated:

We welcome every volunteer who is willing to assist the regular forces...arm...the whole population in the cause of Jesus Christ...The Christian Mission is...a Salvation Army.

Today this statement is articulated a little differently, but the objectives and goals remain the same in the current mission statement.

The Organisational Structure of the Salvation Army is set up according to ranks ranging from General, the highest position, to cadet. In 1980 the rank structure dramatically decreased in number to only nine official ranks (from high position to low): General, Chief of the Staff, Commissioner, Colonel, Lt. Colonel, Major, Captain, Lieutenant, and Cadet.

The basic unit of all Salvation Army warfare and the key to its federation of services is the corps. Under the direction of an officer who administers both religious and welfare activities, the corps is the centre for a varied program which includes evangelistic campaigns, regular religious services, pastoral counselling, institutional and family visitation and other local social welfare programs.

Concerning the People of the Salvation Army, they come from diverse backgrounds, yet they all share a common oath to the faith and practices of the Salvation Army known as the Articles of War.

The ethics of the Salvationists are therefore simply another attempt to reassert traditional Christian ethics based on the New Testament...at best they succeed in realising the ideal of the soldier on active service -- equipped not to kill but to save...Salvationist ethics are therefore Christian ethics, teaching honesty, love, loyalty, moderation -- and thrift.

The enormous size of the Salvation Army has made it a popular charity. The vast amount of services and programs offered, membership and overall success are a vivid illustration of the continuing success of General Booth's vision of hope for the hopeless (www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia).

Salvation Army Citadel

A photo of the original Salvation Army Citadel when it was built in 1928, is unrecognisable today. It was built with a turretted facade facing Binya Street. At some stage, the turrets at the front were felt to be superfluous and a problem to maintain - so they were lopped off. Recently the whole exterior was remodelled.

The Salvation Army Corps in Griffith has its origins in the early 1920s. "Cottage Meetings" were held in 1925 at Andrew Martin's house on the corner of Yambil and Ulong Streets, where Coles Supermarket now stands.

There seems no doubt that the turretted Hall opened in 1928, although the Corps' records of the time, curiously, make absolutely no mention of either construction or opening. In 1983 the original plaque was rediscovered with the wording, "This Hall was opened to the Glory of God and the Salvation of the People on 25th October 1928, W. Bramwell Booth, General, and Chas. Sowton, Commissioner".

While some believe that the Hall was moved here from Temora, the evidence currently available indicates that it was purpose built on site in Griffith. Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters wrote to Ann Stevens in 1988, "Our records show that the first buildings that the Salvation Army owned in Griffith were built in 1928, comprising of a Hall, opposite quarters and a sulky shed, at a total cost of 1,198 pounds eleven shillings and ninepence. We have nowhere on record that the Hall was transported to Griffith."

I have since spoken to Mr Brian Clarke of Griffith, who states positively that his father, John Clarke, built the Hall from scratch on the current site. It was painted by Charlie Knight, another old Griffith identity, in a stone colour with reddish brown trim. Meetings are recorded in the Hall by March 1929, and by December that year the recorder was able to say, "Finished the year clear of debt. Hallelujah!"

Between the 1920s and 1950s the Griffith Corps flourished. An Outpost in Yoogali was established in 1926, a mission to the Land Army Girls was initiated during the war years, and further outposts at Tabbita and West-End attracted a great deal of interest in the 1940s. Up to 150 people attended special events in the Hall, which was repainted in 1946.

In 1964, when Captain Mavis Gilbert was at the helm, the first major renovations to the Hall were done. This is apparently when the turrets disappeared, although Corps History entries of the time referred only to "granositing" the front, and putting up a crest and sign.

A later letter from Captain Gilbert, on the occasion of the Corps' 60th Birthday in 1988, makes things a bit clearer, as well as suggesting that there may have been some difference of opinion about the Hall's new look: "THE OLD HALL. What Memories. I put a new face on it which the Property Department didn't altogether agree with, but which we thought looked nice."

A photograph of the 1960's look Hall shows a flat, rendered face, squared off where the triangular pediment had been, and stepped down where the turrets had been. All the original decorative timber elements had been obliterated. The 1928 opening plaque was found under this facade. The Area News reported in 1983, "The builders found the plaque when they took away an outer wall of wood which had been sprayed with a cement-like substance. This had formed the outer wall of the citadel from 1964 when the work was being carried out by Mr A. Venn, who had written on the original wooden wall which he covered."

Other improvements of the 1960s included replacement of windows, relining the interior, new lights, erection of a mural by Fred Shaw (donated by Mrs Schultz), replacement of the fence, purchase of a Bon Air Cooler, donation of two dozen soft chairs by Mrs Ritchie. Also a gleeful entry, "New stove arrived and Hallelujah! Very much needed."

These renovations certainly changed the look of the old hall - but it was still basically the same building. To say the same about the current building, after more radical renovation done in 1983, is, like the Irish axe story, probably stretching a point.

The work undertaken then, designed by local architect Vic Budd, and carried out by builder, Tony Grandi, was so extensive, that although the original building was never completely demolished, only its bare framework was incorporated into a much larger building, as the back of the "Citadel" room. The Hall now faced Anzac Street and included Citadel, Meeting Hall, Amenities Room and Entry Porch. With the removal of walls, windows, old front steps, alteration to the roof line and complete recladding, all traces of the old Hall disappeared from view.

Maybe, however, there are still a few memories rattling around the bones of the old building, incorporated within the new. When I read out an entry from the Corps History about the 1929 Harvest Festival, "Decided not to hold the usual street stall, but try Hall for a change. Worked well, in spite of folk saying it would be no good in Hall", someone commented that opinions are still divided in the same way.

Other entries reflect the colour and ethos of their times. In 1939, "The Hall looked attractive and gay with flowers and ferns. Mrs N. King (Methodist) presented, and various vocal and elocutionary items were rendered by local artists. The Subject was 'Neath Arctic Skies'. Mrs Robinson also took part and a dainty afternoon tea was served by the Home Leaguers."

Captain Mavis Gilbert recalled in 1988, "We had some lovely meetings in that Hall, with Mrs Schultz leading the choruses and we would sing four or six straight off in the chorus section of the song book until they changed key." Sounds like some of the singing you still hear coming from the Salvation Army Hall today, says Robyn Oliver. (Sources: Robyn Oliver; Mr Brian Clarke; "Griffith Corps History Book" of handwritten year by year records, lent by Envoy Philip and Mrs Susanne Martin; 1988 article written by Home League member, Ann Stevens, for the Griffith Historical and Genealogical Society magazine, Ibis

Links).

Social institutions

Before recent changes in gender roles and employment, every town had a wide range of active clubs such as the ex-service club, bowling club, football, golf, tennis and fishing clubs.

Visitors entering Griffith are greeted at each entrance into the city by the club signboards. These are relics of this earlier time of small community life. By 2004 some of these clubs such as the Fishing Club and Lions Club, had wound up. An interesting item is the fishing club board at the Area Hotel, documenting the largest fish sizes caught along the Murrumbidgee by local club members each year. It is particularly distinctive because the catch includes the huge native fish - Murray Cod. Other heritage items are the distinctive entrances to clubs such as the Yoogali and Catholic Club. These reflect the aspirations and building styles of their era. There were many clubs formed in Griffith, and the Italian clubs will be considered first.

Italian Clubs

On arrival in Australia, immigrants often had little English, only a small amount of money and few contacts. It was important for many to utilise the organisations that had been set up by their migrant community. Community organisations gave people a place to gather together, share a culture in a public space, and create a strong physical presence. The Griffith Italian community had sufficient internal divisions to create many social clubs. Italian clubs played a vital role in the consolidation of community life.

Coronation Hall and the Italo-Australian Club

Designed and built by local farmer and builder Antonio Ceccato in 1937, the building at number 11 Edon Street, Yoogali has a fascinating history. In an interesting turn of use, the first Italian social club subsequently became the first Sikh temple. It was formerly the Yoogali Antique Shop and originally the Coronation Hall.

It is a rendered cement block, tin roofed building. All of the cement blocks were made on site. A tin addition to the rear housed a kitchen and drink storage area for wedding receptions. Later in 1985 when the building was bought for an antique shop, it was repaired and re-painted. In 1992 the Sikh community converted it into a temple. Extensions were built onto the eastern side of the hall to provide sleeping quarters for housing pilgrims during two-day religious festivals.

In the period between the wars, a group of northern Italians began to erect their own venue for social activities such as dances and *bocce*. In 1936 a group of musicians who played regularly for Italian weddings and Christmas functions, but had no regular hall to play in, formed the 'Yoogali Amusement Company'.

Three partners, Pompeo (Bob) Vardanega, Antonio Dal Broi and Pietro Pavese, pooled their resources and funded the construction of the hall, operating as the Italo-Australian Club. The building was called the Coronation Hall because it was erected in the year of the coronation of King George VI in 1937.

The club had no liquor licence but the committee set up two rooms on an adjoining block of land, installing 300 lockers for members to store their alcohol. From then on, there was a Saturday night dance in the hall, *bocce* on Sunday and the chance to drink and yarn with friends. It was also hired out for wedding receptions and dances by other organisations. The partners played at these functions.

The Italo-Australian Club functioned well until Italy entered the war, siding with Germany. The Club was promptly closed down and caused the partnership to dissolve with Pompeo Vardanega buying out the shares of his two partners. Although the club was closed, the hall continued to be hired out to wedding receptions and dance evenings. Some of these functions were to raise money for the war effort, such as The Spitfire Fund and the Sheepskins For Russia Fund.

After the war, in 1946, a new Club was formed and called the Yoogali Club. It rented the old vacant Italo-Australian Club. It also sub-let the hall for wedding receptions and to The Continental Music Club and Griffith Soccer Club.

This continued until about the 1960s, when clubs in Yoogali and Hanwood had built new premises with dining room facilities and function rooms. In doing so, they phased out the use of the Coronation Hall.

In 1973, Pompeo Vardenega sold the Coronation Hall to a family who operated it as an antique shop. Then in 1991 it was resold to the Sikh community who converted it into a temple (Gino Ceccato).

Catholic Clubs

In 1946, a group with the support of the Archbishop of Wagga tried to buy out the Italo-Australian Club in order to establish the Catholic Club. They were unsuccessful in this bid, but managed to establish

themselves in new premises behind the Yoogali Catholic Church. The Catholic Club was closed to non-Catholics and to Calabresi.

The Catholic Club finished building new premises in 1954.

Yoogali Club

The Yoogali Club was born in the home of Pompeo Vardanega in 1946. Vardenega and Angelo Salvestro provided capital, and a lease was taken on the former Italo-Australian Club.

From its very beginnings, the policy of the Yoogali Club was non-sectarian and non-racial. It was also possibly the first club NSW to admit women.

The Yoogali Club finished building new premises in 1954. The club entrance, with its faux sandstone facing, archway and detailing, is a good example of 1950s design styles.

Hanwood Catholic Club

In 1955 the Hanwood Catholic Club was established as a spin-off from debates around the running of the Yoogali Club. In the end the Veneti divided into two groups: the less religious went over to the Yoogali Club and parishioners went over to the Hanwood Catholic Club.

Working out of a couple of rooms for almost eight years, the club moved to premises erected by Tiziano Forlico in 1964. According to Griffith historian B. Kelly, it sees itself as a "true family club", where Calabrese and Veneti mix regularly, and the Anglo-Australian membership (10%) are made welcome (Kelly 1988: 221-223; Pesman 1998: 8 edited excerpts).

The club entrance, with its characteristic awning, faux sandstone facing, doorway, entrance lobby and tiling, is a good example of 1960s architectural styles. The first club house was a shed on the original site purchased in 1955 by the Wagga Wagga Roman Catholic Diocese for use by the local Catholic congregation, for after-mass get togethers. While Tiziano Forlico built the first extension in 1964, a plaque at the entrance records the second extension completed in 1977, with G. Plante as the architect and Charlie Warburton as the builder. Lino Zuccatto stated that local architect Steven Murray did further extensions, but wasn't sure of the date (Jan Morrison).

Continental Music Club

In the 1950s the employees of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area Agricultural Service began an integration policy, working at a grass roots level to bridge the gaps within the fractured community of Italians and Australians. In this climate the Continental Music Club was established. The club bought time on the local radio station to produce programs that included a range of Italian music, birthday calls and community service announcements. Through the Continental Music Club the Italians worked on joint projects to improve the life of the whole community. This new phase of cordiality broke down some of the hostility previously levelled at the immigrant population and boosted Italian morale (Bosi 1977: 53; Pesman 1998: 9 edited excerpts).

Country Women's Association

In 1926, a public meeting of women decided to form a Griffith Branch of the Country Women's Association (CWA). The present building was constructed in two stages with the present hall, kitchen and verandah facing east being completed in 1931. The second stage, which consisted of a lounge, office, library, bathroom, toilets and porch, was built in 1936.

The first Griffith Technical College lectures for women were held here from 1946 to 1953. The CWA Craft Rooms to the northeast of the main building were built in 1934. An extra room on the north side was added in 1939. Originally the rooms were used as a Baby Health Centre until 1960 when Wade Shire accepted infant welfare as a council responsibility (Griffith Heritage Walk notes 1981-2).

Jondaryan Club

The club was formed when the Shire Council was proclaimed in 1928. It was a partnership of the Anglo-Australian power brokers in the town. The original group of fifteen men decided to form the club for "mutual fellowship, entertainment and amusement". All membership applications were carefully vetted, and the club became closely tied to the activities of the Shire Council.

Bryan Kelly, whose father Jack Kelly was Wade Shire Council's first President and a club founder, gave an interesting account of the Club's manoeuvring to get a prime site in the town centre. Eleven members individually took up adjoining residential leases in the town centre. As soon as the leases were granted, they were surrendered and the Commission was persuaded to gazette the land for the Club. Shortly after, the

Commission Manager who would have signed off on this decision became Club President.

Despite the Depression, the Club had by 1932 a clubhouse, billiard tables, bowling green, tennis courts and a garden. The Shire was very helpful: the Council Shire Engineer laid out levels for the bowling green and the Shire Gardener did all the planting.

Membership was expensive and tightly controlled, originally limited to 100 men of influence ("property owners and professional men"), and not open to Italians until 1959.

Recent decades, however, saw the expansion of poker machines in clubs. This has had far-reaching effects. Club subscription income is regarded as negligible, and clubs try to appeal to a wide range of people so as to increase the number of poker machine players. Clubs have moved to achieve a wide membership, and the Jondaryan is no exception to the rule (Kelly 1988: edited excerpts).

The Women's Club

The Jondaryan Club had excluded women by Rule Two, which stated "Only gentlemen above the age of twenty one years may be Members".

Shortly after the Second World War in 1947, women formed their own club and rule 2a of its constitution had a familiar ring for it read: "Only adult ladies may be members." The local "locker system" of storing alcohol in clubs was adopted, though later the club obtained a liquor licence and poker machines (Kelly 1988: edited excerpts).

The Women's Club was eventually bought out and absorbed into the Leagues Club.

Ex-Servicemen's Club

With the return of war veterans after the First World War, local branches of the R.S.L. (Returned Soldiers, Sailors and Airmens' League of Australia) were formed. Originally built in 1938 as a club limited to men who had returned from active service, the club later included all who had volunteered for service, and then expanded to allow "associate members". Like the other clubs, increasing reliance on poker machine income has caused the club to diversify its membership and tailor itself to a wide as possible cross-section of the community (Kelly 1988: edited excerpts).

Freemasonry is brought to Australia

The Freemasons are the world's largest fraternal organisation. They reached their highest membership in the 1950's. Today there are approximately five million Masons worldwide. Widely known as a gentleman's club devoted to a moral code, masonry is said to "take good men and make them better".

Brought to New South Wales by Britons, Freemasonry is of considerable heritage significance. Together with convents, churches, monasteries, and Salvation Army Citadels, Masonic Temples represent aspects of a disappearing - some would say extinct - way of life. This way of life consisted of small, closed communities that relied on close cooperation and sacrifice by individual members, for the greater good of the group. Although the twentieth century has been sprinkled with attempts to revive small communities, this way of life essentially predates late twentieth century social movements, which were accompanied by the penetration of media culture into every home.

Most large settlements had a Masonic Temple with characteristic features. These features generally include masonry construction, an entrance with neo-classical elements, high windows so that the public could not look into secret ceremonies and Masonic insignia.

Accounts of the origins of freemasonry are steeped in popular folklore, ranging from historical events to wildly fanciful theories. Masons can be traced back to medieval times when stonemasons formed guilds and unions, but some sources trace them back even further. There are stories of Megalithic origins, King Solomon, Athelstan, the Knights Templar, Medieval Stone Masons, Schaw, Box Charities, the "Invisible College" and the Rosicrucians. Some say the first examples of masonry date back to the Egyptian pyramid builders. Another Freemason legend dates their fraternity back to the building of King Solomon's temple in the Bible. The project, so legend has it, was so large that it required the stonemasons to organise themselves into groups and classes with distinct responsibilities. There is no concrete evidence of Masonry in ancient times, however. Modern Masons can accurately claim a 300-year history from the founding of the first Grand Lodge in England in 1717.

One theory not found in the popular literature is that Freemasonry expanded in order to oppose the forces of the Roman Catholic counter-reformation. Secret societies were also formed on the other side of the religious divide, such as the Knights of the Southern Cross, a Roman Catholic group.

Masonry also borrowed a mystical aspect from the many mystical societies of medieval Europe; Many people were involved in these groups in Europe in the Middle Ages. When political freedom came to Europe,

many of these groups were disbanded, but the esoteric interest in mysticism continued. Many people joined Freemasonry because of their interest in mysticism.

The Bible is the "Volume of Sacred Law" of most Western Lodges. It is one of the three objects comprising "The Three Great Lights," the most common and important Masonic symbol, which must be displayed while Lodges meet. The other objects are the compass and the square, and the sacred volume, which does not have to be the Bible. It may be whatever Scripture is revered by the members of the Lodge.

Freemasonry is not a religion. It is a fraternal order, although many Christian ideas and ideals are important to the Masons and are incorporated in their rituals. To become a Mason one must ask a friend in the Lodge to recommend him, sign a petition stating name, age, occupation, and place of residence, and all the members must vote unanimously on the acceptance. The requirement for membership is a belief in one non-specific Supreme Being.

Freemasonry's basic tenets are:

1. Brotherly love (tolerance, respect, kindness and understanding of others, especially to their Masonic Brothers)
2. Relief (caring for the whole community through philanthropy)
3. Truth (morals)

These basic tenets, when followed, should achieve a higher standard of life for the Masons. Masons build character by contact with the company and shared morals of their "Brothers" (fellow members). It has religious undertones because of this stress on morality. Since Freemasonry is a fraternity, it also stresses the fellowship and enjoyable company of its brothers in social activities such as dinners, picnics, card/chess matches, lectures on Masonic history, etc. Many Masons see themselves as a body of like-minded, men who wish to progress as individuals and share a journey of personal development. The essential qualification for admission is a belief in a Supreme Being, and to be of good repute. Masons enjoy the customs and theatrics within the lodge room which, in an appropriate context, are used to explain symbolic meaning. There is also good humour and a spirit of friendship.

Masons are restricted from talking about religion or politics in the Lodges because these are controversial topics known to divide men. Having a religion is encouraged, although there is no specific one recommended. Christianity, however, seems to prevail.

There are three levels that joining Masons must advance through by memorising a small amount of material that varies from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. The levels are called degrees. The first degree is Entered Apprentice, the second, Fellow Craft, and the third is Master Mason. The head of the Lodge is called the Worshipful Master. There is a set hierarchy with a Grand Lodge having jurisdiction over the Lodges in the same State.

Medieval tools of Masons are still used today to symbolise important ideas of the Masons and as important parts of Masonic Ritual. An example is the level. All Brothers meet on the same level, and are equals. Other symbols can be traced to pagan and Christian religions.

There is also much symbolism in the degrees of masonry. The three degrees represent a three-storey temple. When initiating a member, the Lodge is supposed to represent the ground floor of King Solomon's temple. The ground floor symbolises the initiate's psychological connection with the material world. He is told that there are upper floors of the temple that symbolise his unconscious and as he advances in degrees he will advance psychologically in the understanding of his unconscious. The second Degree ceremony is held, figuratively in the middle chamber of the temple, symbolising the soul. The third degree ceremony meets in the entrance of the Holy of Holies, which has connection with the Spirit.

Freemasonry is known for its ornate rituals. One of the most interesting is the ceremony in which an initiate becomes a Master Mason. In the first phase of the ceremony the initiate must swear to many things including allegiance to God and his fellow Masons. When he thinks he has completed the ceremony and become a Master Mason, his real initiation begins. He is blindfolded and has to act out the part of Hiram Abiff, the murdered master in a legend of the building of King Solomon's temple. There is much action wherein the initiate must refuse to divulge the secrets of the Masons (as Hiram did) and is murdered (hit down) and wrapped in a sheet. At the end, the five points of fellowship are explained to him, along with many Masonic symbols.

Masons themselves claim not to be a secret society, because membership is not a secret and their constitution, rules, aims, and principles are not secret. The secrets seem to be the mysticism that Freemasonry includes in its tradition. These include upholding the debunked sciences such as alchemy and astrology that were important to the fraternity in medieval times. Although they are understood as false today, they are very significant parts of history, and Masons realise this and keep the mysticism alive. Its members do not understand much of the mystical secrets of Masonry today; they have not joined for partaking in these

secrets, but for fraternity. The secrets are supposed to be revealed to an individual Mason as he starts to probe his unconscious and understand it.

There are many controversies surrounding the history of the Masons. Much of this controversy stems from the secretive nature of the Masons. Many prominent figures including founding fathers and presidents have been Masons, and in some cases Masons have been accused of giving other Masons unfair advantages in job promotion, and also controlling decisions in government by being a sort of underground government themselves. And people today sometimes join the Masons in order to advance in their jobs.

Martin Short, author of *Inside the Brotherhood* (1990) argues that the Masons are a secret organisation with rituals and oaths that can put members at odds with community duty. Indeed, Masonic rules state that members must do all they can to support each other, to look after each other and to keep each other's lawful secrets. But they also try to discourage members who use membership to promote personal or business interests.

Social changes in late twentieth century Western society brought changes to secret societies. One social change was increasing emphasis on the individual, rather than the group. Another change was the erosion of authority, previously held by governments and religions, by wide access to the media. Secret society memberships were suffering at the same rate that pluralism was expanding.

Some Christian groups, especially Catholics and Methodists, are historically opposed to Masonry. The bloody oaths and secrets and mixing of pagan with Christian beliefs caused the Roman Catholics to ban membership to Freemasonry and the Methodists to denounce it. Masonic lodges are also numerous in Italy, where Masons have been at loggerheads with the Roman Catholic Church for years.

Like other successful communities with a religious or ethical base, the Masons have adapted to changing circumstances, without giving up their core values. Freemasonry is regarded as a system of morality, not a system of faith or salvation. By the twentieth century, it was evolving into a club of men of influence who provided mutual benefits, and a shared view of the world. Freemasonry has retained its high standing in the community because its members share an ethical code, and are also known for their community service and tolerance of others.

(www.oelodge.uklinux.net; www.msana.com; www.religiousmovements.lib.virginia)

Yenda Masonic Lodge

The Yenda Masonic Lodge is a single storey gable brick building, typical of many small Masonic halls. A police lock-up was once located at the rear of this site. Though built in 1928, the Yenda Place façade has been altered in a neo-Spanish style, concealing some of the original building. Rear amenities were added in about 1980.

Heritage recommendations for the building are to retain the open landscape area south of the hall. Retain the roof, walls, and Masonic Insignia. Retain and conserve metal fence and gates. Any new work should seek to provide an awning or verandah to Yenda Place at its entry way (Stedinger and McPhee 2003).

According to notes compiled by Secretary, Roy Pratt, the Masonic Lodge in Yenda began soon after the First World War. Men arriving at Yenda, some of whom were already masons, formed a group calling themselves "The Yenda Nucleus of Freemasons". In 1923 they applied to the Grand Lodge of NSW for a charter to form a lodge, but were refused. A year later, they reapplied with the support of the Griffith Masonic Lodge (Lodge Ibis No. 361 of Griffith), and were successful, a warrant being granted in the time of Brother John Goulson Grand Master.

The Consecration meeting of Lodge Yenda No. 549 was held in the Lyceum Theatre in Yenda in 1925. On that night, 19 foundation members and 90 visiting masons signed the book. Worshipful Brother O. Hawkins of the Griffith Lodge was installed as the first worshipful Master of Lodge Yenda.

The construction of the Lodge was contracted out, and despite problems with the contractor, was completed in 1928. From this strong start, the period from the start of the Depression to the end of the Second World War saw no increase in membership. The post-war period saw a steady decline in membership.

The turnaround for Yenda Lodge started in about the 1970s, with an increasing emphasis on charity support, community involvement and service. Yenda began to be known as an "initiative lodge", involving both the public as well as the Catholic school in its park beautification projects. The Lodge also provided donations to both schools for their end of year presentation nights. The largest project, and the one most significant from a heritage viewpoint, was the commemoration and identification of graves at Yenda Cemetery, described later in this study.

Though these details are regarded as local history, they also can be fitted into a wider historical framework of fraternal societies that survived and prospered because they adapted to changing situations, while

preserving many of their core values.

Griffith Masonic Lodge (Lodge Ibis no. 361 of the U.G.L. of NSW)

This is a fine example of a large town Masonic hall. It has aesthetic, social and landmark value. Highly detracting building additions to the front and with high metal fencing at the rear might be removed in the future to restore the building. Notes prepared by Roy Pratt describe the history of its establishment:

Discussions for the formation of Lodge Ibis no. 361 began at meetings held at the Yoogali Public School. Meetings continued there on a monthly basis until the lodge rooms were built in Griffith.

In May 1921, Right Worshipful Brother O.E. Hawkins was nominated as the Worshipful Master Elect of Lodge Ibis. He was installed into this position in 1922 and served the lodge as Worshipful Master until 1924. The members of the lodge at this time were mainly farmers and employees of the Commission. Many local identities were members of Lodge Ibis, including Dr Solomon Goldberg and Douglas McWilliam.

In 1921, Commission land was leased for the building of the lodge rooms. It consisted of five lots in Benerambah Street and ran from Banna Avenue to Willandra Avenue. In 1928 the land was purchased for 379 pounds, although two lots were later forfeited as excess to needs.

Tenders were called for the building of the lodge rooms and the lowest tender of 120 pounds from Mr A Barretts was accepted. The tender was for labour, foundations, brickwork and carpentry. A loan from the Australian Bank of Commerce (ABC) for 500 pounds was arranged at an interest rate of 7% per annum. The building of the Lodge rooms commenced in 1921 and the first meeting was held there in August of the same year, there being 28 members in attendance.

Furnishings in the lodge room were purchased for the total cost of 150 pounds. Members of the lodge also donated much of the furniture. Meetings of Lodge Ibis have continued being held at this site from 1922. Over those years many changes have occurred, with additions being added, and two lots of land being sold off to the Griffith City Council for car parking.

Lodge Ibis continues to be a strong lodge, with over 40 members of which 15 attend regularly. In years gone past, some installation meetings had over 200 masons in attendance. Although those days have gone by, installation meetings still attract large numbers of masons, especially visiting masons from other lodges in the district. In 2004 the master of the Lodge was Very Worshipful Brother Alan Power and the lodge continued to meet on the second Wednesday of each month (January excepted).

Sport

An early golf club at Lake Wyangan

Griffith's sporting heritage is recalled in an early photograph, dated 1924, showing the Lake Wyangan Golf Course. The occasion could well be the opening. "The View Back", a booklet produced to celebrate Lake Wyangan area's Diamond Jubilee in 1984, reported some of the Golf Club's early origins.

In June 1923, residents of the area met to consider forming a sports club on the Lake View Reserve - an area around the southern lake, approximately where the Jack Carson Reserve is now. There was then very little water in the lake, and the lessee agreed to allot a portion for a recreation ground. By July the enthusiastic newly formed committee had decided that "a particularly fine golf links could be constructed and tennis courts could be formed in positions which are sheltered from the wind, while a good position was available for a cricket and football ground." All of these were to eventuate, with the possible exception of the football ground.

The exact date of the opening of the golf club is not noted, but it must have been close to the time in September 1924 when "A small party of Griffith golfers spent a most enjoyable afternoon on Sunday last on the new Lake View golf links. The 'Viewittes' were easily defeated, but this was to be expected as they are only recent exponents of the game."

The reporter noted that the residents of Lake View were "to be congratulated on the layout of the links, which are situated around the lake". Also there was comment on the bird life, that there were "hundreds of wild fowl on the lake, and a few pelicans, while round the basin there were plover, galahs, and various species of birds. This is one of the beauty spots of the area making a very fine natural and picturesque course."

Use of the Lake View golf course may well have been seasonal, since in March 1934 the "Area News"

reported another "opening day's play" at the Lakeview Golf Club "amongst grand scenery". Members of the Griffith Golf Club were invited to compete in a 9 hole stroke handicap, Miss Nell Cummings returning the best lady's card, and Mr Eipper the best man's. "After play a delightful afternoon tea was partaken of by the contestants, Mesdames Maegraith and Tompkins doing the honours."

The club house wasn't built until 1939 - which makes one wonder where they had the "delightful afternoon tea"? It was originally small, built with voluntary labour by the members, but a hall was later added and used for Saturday night dances. Around the same time improvements were made to the course, which required Moses Gollan and his steam traction engine to pull out trees.

For many years the Lake View reserve was one of the most popular recreation spots in the district, with all its sporting facilities. Ian Todd, whose parents were early members of the golf club, remembered that on Sundays the ice cream man came in his spring cart with ice cream and drinks. He also recalled that the Reserve was used by local farmers who formed a leasing group to be able to graze four head of cattle each there, as well as rabbiters, and poor people who used to camp there. Clancy Charles remembered it as one of the ten town camps around Griffith that Aboriginal people had lived in before the community camp at Frogs Hollow was started.

The end of the Lake Wyangan Golf Club came as water levels in the southern lake rose, flooding the fairways, as water drained into the lake from newly introduced tile drainage systems, assisted by one very wet year. In Staff Horder's recollections the club folded about 1956. The club house became a fibre glass factory but burnt down around 1962. In 1966 Mr Jack Carson established an Arboretum and Wildlife Refuge around the southern lake, undoubtedly attracted by the same natural beauty that had appealed to the golfers (Robyn Oliver).

The rise and fall of the Fishing Club

Shirley Norris says that the Fishing Club evolved 'around a mob of blokes who were devoted patrons of the Area Hotel'.

Before the Club's conception, a few of the older men would meet on a Friday afternoon at the hotel with some "out-of-townners" who joined in about once a fortnight. This group were Joe O'Connor, Shirley's father Keith Norris, Gordon Brown and Col Browne. Gathered at the Area Hotel, they would discuss and plan their next fishing trip. Most of these men had sons, and, like father like son, were very keen to fish and become a part of this knowledgeable fishing team. The elder men's discussions usually involved organising supplies and equipment such as bait, food, tents, mosquito netting, ice and plenty of liquid refreshments. In those days, (the mid-1970's), only Col Brown owned a boat with an outboard motor. Much of the planning was based around Col's availability. Anybody who was keen on the sport was welcomed to join in.

Keith Norris recalled "Us older blokes would be settled into our river camp. And then the young blokes would turn up, sometimes fifteen or sixteen of them would arrive. It was never a problem though. Everybody got on well, and we always had a good time."

The big catch of October 1977 was reported in the Griffith Times. A forty-pound Murray Cod was among the hundred or so fish landed by the Griffith fishing party on the Darling River, and the twelve men who landed at least four fish weighing over 20 pounds were all were members of the group which met at the Area Hotel. "They have acquired the name of the Kookaburra Club" said the same newspaper article. In those days there was no limit to how many fish one person could catch. Today a fishing license allows 4 fish per person according to size and seasons.

In 1980 Jock McDonald became the Area Hotel proprietor. He was also a keen fisherman, and realised that the fishing blokes were not only good customers, but also quite serious about their fishing. So he came up with the idea of the Area Hotel Fishing Club Board. The Kookaburra Club - so named because whenever this group of men got together there was plenty of raucous laughter, fished in competition with the other two fishing clubs formed at the Area Hotel, the Pelicans and the D.O.G.S.

At its peak the Kookaburra's boasted forty to fifty members. Keith Norris explained that it was "never a

real serious affair". The club raised funds by fining each other \$2.00 for fishing "mistakes". This money went into a kitty, which was spent on items such as humorous trophies, the Fishing Board and the Christmas beer keg.

The only rules for being immortalised on the Fishing Club Board were that the fish had to be a Murray Cod which weighed over forty pounds, and had to be caught in a NSW inland river. The 1982 Board entry of an eleven and half pound Yellow Belly was an exception, because of the rarity of the size of this native fish.

It was a general rule that the catch was packed on ice and brought back to the Area Hotel for a public weigh in. This was done with set clock face scales that hung from the rafters near the fishing board. The scales were no longer there in 2004. Once the fish had been weighed in, they were divvied up amongst the members, with any surplus given to other Hotel customers.

Each year, the record size for a fish was recorded on the Board. Especially large fish had their head mounted above the bar for public admiration.

For a change of fishing camp, the members began to attend the community-fishing trip, "Fisherama", held annually at Lake Wyangan. Then in the late 1980's, after one of the clubs members moved to Moruya on the South coast, deep sea fishing clubs began to join Griffith members on the river trips. On reciprocal visits, the Griffith members visited the coast to try their hand at deep-sea fishing.

The biggest catch of 1981 saw Alan Bretag, Pud O'Connor and his son Jamie bag a huge 72-pound cod. Jamie was a lad of twelve and was all excitement when his Dad said he could net it. Pud didn't realise how big the fish was, but when it got within net reach, Jamie caught sight of it and yelled "Dad it's a shark."

When Jock McDonald sold the Area Hotel in 1998, the members strayed from their favourite drinking hole. The club was losing momentum. Combined with the sale of the Area Hotel was the opening of the South Side Leagues Club, which caused some of the fishing men to change their drinking venue. The Kookaburras, Pelicans and D.O.G.S faded out of existence, to be replaced by the Leagues Fishing Club.

The Fishing Club Board (1970-1995) is made of colourbond with hand painted black lettering. The sign writer was John Kupsch, however the lettering style changes two thirds of the way down the board, indicating the use of a new scribe. Documentation of Fishing Club activities is in the hands of various former members. It includes videos, photographs, newspaper clippings, poetry by Henry Gibson (which is thought to be a pen name as nobody remembers who Henry Gibson was), and taped songs, written and compiled by Don Mitchell.

On interviewing several of the fishermen and their wives, it is very clear that the trips were not for women, and that most wives were only too happy to have their men away for a period of time. Often the eldest sons accompanied their fathers, thus relieving mother of another male to look after. When asked what the women did whilst they were away on the fishing trips, a fishing man's reply was 'I don't know. Stayed home and prepared the batter I guess' (Shirley Norris).

Bocce

There are sports that break down on generational lines—bocce, which is a game favoured by older men, and soccer. Bocce is traditionally very much a "male" only activity with those who are not playing on the bocce courts playing cards and drinking espresso. Italian clubs in Griffith started out playing bocce outside, but recent decades saw the construction of indoor courts. The sport is now an established part of Griffith Italian community life.

Significant people in the community

In Koori, settler as well as migrant communities the knowledge of named persons who helped form the community is preserved either in oral history or written record. The stories of some of these significant people have been recorded in this work. There will, of course, be many more people who made significant contributions, but who are not identified due to space limitations.

From the nineteenth century there are memories of the early pastoral families and their properties. These

are often remembered and preserved in place names. From the early twentieth century there were the struggling irrigation pioneers, but even up to the present day, the "firsts", such as the first member of an ethnic group to arrive in the local area, are often well known and recorded. Community leaders, elders and people embodying the artistic, moral or leadership values of a community - the leaders or elders - are remembered by their deeds and sometimes or the places in which they lived.

There is a small set of significant local people, drawn from a very broad range of backgrounds and economic standing, who yet have one thing in common. Each is regarded as a larger-than-life figure; a living legend; a living saint or local treasure. Into this strange communion have entered figures, some living, some passed on, such as "Tango Joe", Henry Lawson, Valerio Ricetti (the Hermit), Bro. James Ronaldson and Fr Raphael Beltami.

It is well to remember people or groups that made important contributions to the community, but the construction of public memorials in their name poses particular problems.

"Memorialised" Griffith

Early in the twentieth century, a cenotaph was placed into a beautiful city park that serves Griffith as a formal garden. Recent decades, however, saw the proliferation of memorials along the main street. As a result, the commercial area of Griffith is now very heavily "memorialised", with memorials to soldier settlers, women settlers, irrigation, the CWA, and Nancy Blumer. The Dethridge Wheel is a memorial to the MIA pioneers. This device measures the volume of water which a given farm draws from the MIA canal. But is rightly placed, removed out of context, on a brickwork pillar in the commercial centre?

A city design study of Griffith (Clouston 1993:8) commented that memorials in Griffith give "mixed messages to visitors about Griffith's identity". The memorials have significance as movable heritage items, and should be placed in a suitable landscape setting such as the Open Space Corridor originally intended in Griffin's town plan. Commemoration of people or events is an important part of civic life, but should be pursued with restraint.

Public memorials can sometimes be interpreted as an attempt at one-upmanship by a particular sector of the community over others. As the city grows and as more communities are added to the area, then a wider range of historical concerns appear in the community. The city's past would be better memorialised by its heritage places, identified by footpath plaques and guided walks.

Memorial to pioneer women

Situated in the garden surrounding the Griffith city Council chambers in Benerembah Street, this memorial was erected by public subscription. It is of high local social significance, as it symbolises the struggles of early women irrigation settlers, particularly (by implication) the wives of soldier settlers.

The sculptor was Diana Hunt, born in England and arrived in Australia in 1950. She studied in London and Sydney, and has other public works at the University of NSW, Moore Park and Sir Lionel Lindsay Memorial Park at Wahroonga.

The statue was unveiled by Sir Roden Cutler in August 1977 (Area News, 10 August 1977).

Birth and death

The phases of life, birth, growing up, growing old and death are universal human experiences. Of particular importance to communities is to memorialise birth and death, the beginning and end of personal experience.

Local cemetery monuments reflect contrasts between groups in Griffith. Recent Italian memorials in Griffith cemetery can be contrasted against the soldier settler graves at Yenda cemetery and Bagtown cemetery. Cemeteries typically show up some of the differences in burial traditions, economic standing, and world-view of their communities.

Bagtown cemetery

Bagtown had an unofficial cemetery, near present day Hanwood, covering an acre in which sixty-four people were buried between 1912 and 1921, half of them children under ten.

According to oral tradition, the first person to die at Bagtown had a coffin organised out of scavenged timber. The body of Surveyor Carnsey, a Commission employee, was to be taken to Willbriggie to be buried. In fact he was buried on a piece of unused land, when the coffin carriers tired of the trip, half a mile out of Bagtown. This was later fenced off and used as a town cemetery. Sixty-three more people were buried in the same cemetery up to 1921. This explains Bagtown cemetery's unplanned location, surrounded by farm subdivisions (Kelly 1988; www.ghs.detwebawards.nsw.edu.au).

Bagtown cemetery is of considerable social significance, symbolising the life struggles of the pre-irrigation Bagtown settlement before the creation of Griffith.

Yenda soldier settlers' cemetery

Yenda Cemetery is of very high social significance, as it taps into the grass roots of the Griffith psyche, symbolising the life struggles of the early irrigation white pioneers, particularly the early soldier settlers.

Yenda Cemetery was gazetted in November 1922. The need for a cemetery was the result of the establishment of the soldiers' settlement after the 1914-18 World War.

The soldier settler descendant's world-view is most clearly expressed in historical notes prepared by Roy Pratt. It is the familiar story, of survivors feeling duty-bound to tell their history to an uncaring world:

"The M.I.A. was established because of a promise by the Australian Government to men who volunteered to serve in the armed forces, that if you were lucky enough to come home after the war, there would be land available for settlement. The M.I.A. was started in 1912, but because of the war it was put into mothballs. After the return of men from the war, the M.I.A. was seen as a great opportunity to develop farming in Australia.

But what the authorities did not see was the coming World Depression. The years 1928-1940 were a time of great despair for soldier settlers who had taken up the farm of their choice, and who had planted fruit trees, grapes and cereal crops, only to find that there weren't any markets for their produce. On the average two out of three settlers walked away from their dreams, with what was called a golden handshake from the then Rural Bank. You left your farm, house, machinery and livestock for a sum of 300 pounds, and then took your personal possessions and furniture and left the district.

During this time of misery, children were being born and many soldiers were affected by the horror of the war they had been subjected to. If your child contracted an ailment such as pneumonia, pleurisy or whooping cough there was a strong possibility that they would not survive. The unmarked graves are a product of a time when parents had no money and graves were dug out by relatives and friends of the deceased children.

It is therefore our aim to record the names of the people who paid a very dear price for the early settlement of Yenda" (Roy Pratt, historical notes, edited).

Yenda cemetery, containing many unmarked graves, and infant graves marked by lines of stones or small timber markers, speaks of babies reared under canvas in summer heat. It reminds us of canal water used for drinking, of dust storms and poor nutrition. It speaks of traumatised young soldiers, trying to establish farms in an unfamiliar environment.

Edna and Alan Wakely said that most of the graves were marked with a simple timber cross and fence of cypress pine, which disappeared with age. Family or friends carried out the burials. Most were buried the same day, or the day after they had died if it happened to be summer time, as the area had little or no refrigeration, and soldier settler families could not afford to pay for an undertaker to come out from Griffith. In this respect the cemetery is similar to many small pioneer cemeteries where families may have accidentally dug some graves outside the technical boundaries of the cemetery. There is one known instance of a child's grave being outside the cemetery boundary; moved in later years.

Over 1998-2000 the Yenda Masonic Lodge carried out a project of identifying and commemorating the unmarked graves at Yenda cemetery. The historical connection with the Lodge goes back to the founding of the cemetery. Lodge member, Brother James Ronaldson, was a cemetery trustee and made his own detailed maps of the early burial section of the cemetery. They were used to identify almost all of the 103 graves in this section.

The project involved tracing surviving family descendants to verify information, many of whom had moved away from the area. Each small brass identification plaque measures 150 x 200 mm and is attached to a concrete block. The cost was shared between the Council, families that could be traced and the Lodge. A plaque affixing ceremony at the cemetery and an afternoon tea at the Yenda Masonic Lodge marked completion of the project. Lodge members built a flagpole and circular planting bed at the cemetery entrance, so that a flag could be raised when a burial takes place.

Italian family vaults

The extremely well maintained, and highly intact, family monuments in Griffith Cemetery, reflect the local consolidation of Italian economic wealth and Catholicism in the district.

"In Italy", said funeral director Tony Zorzanello "all the well-do-do people went into crypts. All the poor went into graves. In the stormy weather, in the rain or cold, our people feel safe if they know they will be above ground in a crypt".

A whole street of these "houses for the dead" runs along one boundary of Griffith cemetery. Each family vault is individually constructed, and reflects the time and prosperity of the families. The earliest example, situated beside the Capella Della Pietà, appears as a simple brown texture-brick house with a tiled roof. The most recent and most elaborate, are the streamlined abstract designs which are totally lined in polished granite. Most are small neoclassical buildings with portico and columns, the Sergi Winery vault being a good example.

The Capella Della Pietà Mausoleum

Located at the end of the family vault "street" in Griffith cemetery, this iconic structure took three years to build. It was completed in June 2002, and had the first interment by early 2003. This was partly because the large mausoleum represented an unexpected precedent for local planning authorities. Original plans for the Capella saw it as a concrete and brick building with 360 crypts. The finished Capella has a concrete floor and roof, faced internally and externally with polished granite.

A commercial partnership between a quarry, a builder and the Zorzanello family created the structure. Designer Ron Layton of Layton Granite Industries travelled the world to research the best examples of mausolea. The builders were Lau Bros Memorials, and the third partner was Griffith and District Funerals.

The Capella was designed in Melbourne. each of the 140 crypts it contains is individually drained, with a 50mm fall to the back. Each crypt is fully lined internally in polished granite.

As a piece of ethnic nostalgia, the Capella is a shining example. The neoclassical facade contains granite columns, and a portico. Inside the pediment is a gold coloured reproduction of Michaelangelo's famous marble sculpture La Pietà. It is an image of the Virgin Mary holding her son, the crucified Christ, and reflects the affection that Italians hold for Mary.

Funeral director Tony Zorzanello said that an average price for a crypt is about \$10,000. When a funeral is held, friends of the deceased often approach the funeral director to reserve crypts for their own relatives. Or someone may buy a crypt and tell others in the streets, who then buy up crypts. Tony expects that all crypts will be sold within three years.

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Editing note: All quotes, including those of interviews and historical notes, are edited excerpts.

Appendix

Places Inventory

Community-based heritage study prepared for
Griffith City Council and NSW Heritage Office in 2004
by Peter Kabaila and the people of Griffith: