

1970

U.S.C.

THE STORY OF COLEAMBALLY

THE STORY  
OF COLEAMBALLY

Prepared by

THE COLEAMBALLY PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

THE COLEAMBALLY PROMOTION COMMITTEE

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BANK OF N.S.W.

1.

**Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.**

*See p 24  
re Clarke Gazzard*

## BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION

COLEAMBALLY is a new Irrigation area, south of the M.I.A. in New South Wales, Australia, being developed with the waters diverted west by the Snowy Mountain scheme.

When completed it will involve 600 square miles of irrigation area, in the centre of which is the first completely new rural town for over thirty years.

The story of Coleambally is a story of continuing initiative and enterprise involving farsighted and courageous action by all concerned; by Governments, Government Ministers and their Departments, by Local Government; by businesses and most of all by individuals.

As you will see, the development of Coleambally began well before the first farms were released on 19th February, 1960. We have attempted to tell, in brief outline, something of the exciting story of the early settlers and of the planning of the C.I.A., as well as telling the story of the first ten years of settlement in the Irrigation Area.

Over a hundred people involved in many ways in the development of Coleambally have collaborated to compile this book. It is our hope that you find our story interesting and enjoyable, and that you agree with us that the development of Coleambally is a project of which the whole nation can be justly proud.

"Coleambally" someone muttered  
With a dark hand pointing high,  
I looked, and there above me  
Were two swifts flying by.

"Two swifts flying, Coleambally"  
As the old folk used to say,  
The "Old Folk" were his ancestors  
Black men of yesterday.

Coleambally, now a white man's word  
Means rice farms of renown,  
Means sound progressive farmers  
And the nucleus of a town.

Means pleasant, friendly people with  
Homes dotted here and there,  
Means twinkling lights where used to be  
A skyline dark and bare.

—from a poem by Mrs Elizabeth Graham.

# SHAPE OF THE COUNTRY

## INTRODUCTION (Part)

The Coleambally Irrigation Area is situated on the riverine plain of the Murrumbidgee Valley. The Murrumbidgee River rises in the Snowy Mountains region of the South Eastern Highlands and flows in a westerly direction some 400 miles to its confluence with the Murrumbidgee River south-west of Balranald, approximately 550 miles south-west of Sydney.

The River leaves the foothills of the Great Dividing Range at Narrandera which is situated some 370 miles south-west of Sydney. West of Narrandera the land form is a broad riverine plain. This plain fans out to the north and south, and extends to Balranald, 200 miles to the west, where it merges with the Mallee sand dune formations.

The riverine plain represents the flood plain of an ancient river system where successive layers of water borne sediments have been laid down over many thousands of years. The oldest sediments were laid down in the Eocene Epoch 55 million years ago and the most recent between 10,000 and 25,000 years ago. Sandy deposits are found in all the prior stream beds and ancestral rivers while the intervening flood plains are usually covered by clay and silt.

These deposits are known to be between 700 and 1,500 feet deep in places. In many cases all evidence of the old river courses or prior streams has become lost under successive water borne and air borne deposits. These remain however, as a vast source of underground water whose potential has only recently been thoroughly investigated. There has been some private development of these underground water resources for irrigation in the Darlington Point area by pumping from deep bores. The Coleambally town water supply, which is of extremely good quality, is obtained by bores from the same source.

Much of the irrigation development in the Murrumbidgee Valley occurs between the Yanko Creek which branches from the Murrumbidgee River just west of Narrandera and Darlington Point some 35 miles further west downstream. The Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area and Benerembah and Tabbita Districts are north of the river, and the Coleambally Irrigation Area is to the South.

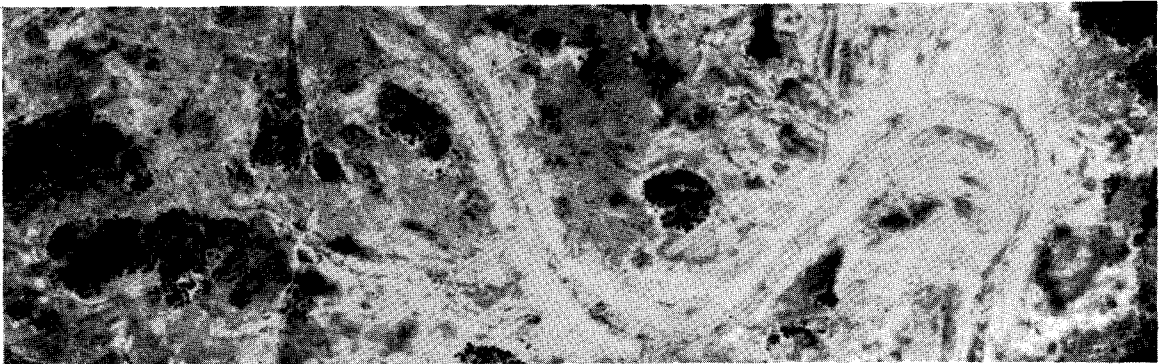
The Coleambally landscape consists mostly of a gently sloping plain. Apart from sandhill formations and other small areas of irregular land associated with present day stream courses, the topography is such that the land can be commanded by gravity and irrigated by surface flow methods. Several sand-ridge belts traverse the area. These wind borne deposits are mainly orientated in a north-east and south-west direction. They are associated with the prior streams and have been timbered with cyprus pine. The site of the new township of Coleambally is a good example. These sand ridges have been of considerable interest to anthropologists, being the sites of aboriginal burial grounds of the Baraparapa tribe.

Also associated with the prior streams there are usually found depressions heavily timbered with "Box" eucalypts. The country lying between these sandridges was originally grass plains highly regarded for fine wool production.

Irrigation development has been principally associated with the heavier soils of the plains and the Box depressions, the grey soils of the latter being regarded as the most suited for irrigated crops. The sand ridges have been used for horticultural development to a limited extent.

Coleambally is situated in the marginal areas of the winter rainfall region of New South Wales. The average annual rainfall lies between 15 and 16 inches. These is very dry land wheat grown west of Darlington Point.

David Honybun.





# THE PIONEERS

When this book was in the very early stages of its planning, at a Town Promotion Committee Meeting, the suggestion was made that it should include a section on the early history of the region — before the dramatic changes of the last ten years.

This was received with enthusiasm and as a result of the assistance of many people, the next few pages have developed. It is recognised that this is not anything approaching the complete story, but we hope it conveys something of the story and indicates the work of these pioneers.

This section is based mainly upon

1. The Darlington Point Centenary Document prepared by Mr Tom Finley.
  2. A "History of Jerilderie" written by the Rev. H.C. Lundy in 1949 and published in the Jerilderie Centenary booklet published in 1958.
  3. The Ross Family 1819-1967 — a booklet prepared by Alister Ross, and some writings of Donald Ross (Senior).
- and
4. Documents and writings of Mrs Elizabeth Graham.

Portions of this work have been checked by Mr Tom Finley, Mr Don Ross, Mr Peter Sloane and Miss Dulcie Bull. For this and for their other contributions we express our appreciation.

In addition, other material and assistance has been received from many people including:

Mr & Mrs Noel Reid  
Mr & Mrs Jack Sams  
Mr Greg Kook  
Mr Jack Egan

Mr & Mrs Harry Burge  
Mr Norm Dwyer  
Mr Sam Gaston  
Mrs Josphine Honybun

Mrs Anne McManus  
Mr A. Mills  
Mrs M. Walker.



*These sheep from "Stud Park North" are typical of those which placed the district in the forefront of the wool industry.*

*Photo: "Country Life"*

**RURAL BANK OF N.S.W.**

## EXPLORATION

The first white men to pass near the Coleambally Irrigation Area were the men of Sturt's Party, who travelled along the banks of the Murrumbidgee. On about the 17th December, 1829, he passed near Darlington Point. He put his whaleboat into the water near Maude, downstream from Hay on 6th January, 1830.

On 14th January, he reached the junction of the Murray and the Murrumbidgee. On the 23rd he reached the junction of the Murray and the Darling Rivers, and on the 9th February he reached the mouth of the Murray River.

He was forced to return the same way, not being able to pass through the river mouth because of shoals. Therefore he returned much more slowly, passing Darlington Point in early April.

## BEGINNINGS OF DEVELOPMENT

It was some years before Sturt's exploration was exploited. The Government, anxious to restrict settled areas, so as to assist administrative problems, set definite limits of location beyond which settlement was theoretically not allowed. For example, in 1835 no settlement was permitted past Mt. Bowring, near Yass. However, there was much illegal settlement and the Government in 1836 introduced the Crown Land's Occupation Act, or the Squatting Act, as it was popularly called. Temporary "Depasturing Licenses" were granted to approved applicants. There are no full records of this; most squatters were not really within the law.

According to a source quoted by the Rev. Lundy, "these pioneers came here heavily armed in readiness against dingoes, aborigines, and their fellow squatters. It was a matter of being first in, first served. There were no bounds and no regulations, and the pioneers carved up the lands by private treaty, and sometimes at the point of a gun."

By the end of 1844 all the land on river frontages in Darlington Point had been completely occupied.

On the southern side of the Murrumbidgee the main runs covered by depasturing licences before 1848 were Uroly, Banandra, Ugoble, Uratta and Singorimbah (Toganmain).

The boundaries of these are not well defined but the Banandra-Ugoble boundary was about three miles from the crossroads at Waddi.

## LEASEHOLDS – THE GROWTH OF KERABURY AND TUBBO

When the area was surveyed the occupants of these areas applied for Leaseholds. Disputes were settled by investigations of Crown Lands Commissioners and the leases for these runs were allocated.

The details of this are too complicated to come within the scope of this book, but Uratta and Ugoble were soon acquired from the original lessees and amalgamated with a large area away from the river to form Kerabury. Its northern boundary was the Murrumbidgee River. As you drive south from Waddi to Coleambally you pass through part of the "old" Kerabury: then, as you pass Eulo rice shed, into Tubbo. South of the town, the road to Jerilderie follows the border between Tubbo (on the left) and Kerabury (on the right). Kerabury extended south to the present Four Corners road. The present Kerabury, much smaller only about 18,000 acres, begins about eight miles west of Waddi.

"Kerabury" incidentally is a name derived from the aboriginal "corroboree".

"Kerabury" was controlled by Walter Clark and William Macleay, a nephew of the Colonial Secretary, Alexander Macleay, whose son, George had been on of Sturt's party in 1830. The family also controlled Toganmain.

In 1840 Alexander Macleay had sent out John Peter, the manager of another station of his at Fish River near Gunning, to take up saltbush land. He had taken up thirty miles of river frontage for the Macleays – Toganmain – and ten miles for himself – Ugoble.

John Peter later gained the lease of Ugoble – 100,000 acres in 1848 and also acquired Cuba – (Kooba) 153,000 acres.

In 1848 "Ugoble" was transferred to Clarke and Macleay. Peter secured the lease of "Banandra" (50,000 acres), "Uroly" (60,000 acres), "Ugobit" block (88,000 acres) and Block F on "Yanko" run, 30,000 acres.

From all this developed "Tubbo", at one stage believed to be the largest freehold property in the world.

The early leaseholders paid a rent to the treasury but one outspoken critic claimed that twelve million acres of the best lands in the colony were in the hands of eighteen men, (whom he named) and who did not pay more than £200 into the Treasury for the lands they controlled.

These rents were based on the number of sheep and cattle on the "run" and this doesn't appear to have been overstated. "Toganmain" trimmed after 1844 to a River frontage of only 20 miles as the crow flies, and an area of 192,000 acres claimed a carrying capacity of 1,600 cattle and 10,000 sheep.

The Four Corners — Morundah road represents a major border between the Leasehold Blocks surveyed in 1848.

To the North lay "Tubbo" (basically East of the Darlington Point/Jerilderie Road) and "Kerarbury" (basically West of this road).

From Yanco Creek to Four Corners, there were ten blocks of from 30 to 50 thousand acres.

#### **THE SELECTORS**

After the gold rush boom and the consequent social and political changes, many former miners and newly arrived migrants, needing land, found it almost unobtainable. The available land was held by the large leaseholders.

To remedy this state of affairs, the Robertson Government in 1861 introduced the "Crown Land's Alienation Act," or as it was more often called "The Free Selector's Act." This finally became law in 1864.

Under the "Crown Land's Alienation Act," the right was given to any person to select from 40 to 320 acres of Crown Lands, excepting town, suburban and reserved lands, at a fixed price of £1 per acre, of which 25% was to be paid as a deposit on application, three years being allowed in which to pay the balance without interest. Alternatively, payment could be deferred for all time by an annual interest payment of 5%. A condition of residence for three years was imposed, and improvements of £1 per acre had to be effected.

Many ingenious plots for taking advantage of this law developed. A squatter would often set up many "dummies" — for example workmen or relatives, and select land in their names. Alternatively, a selector might select his land around the only waterhole for miles, and thereby hold the squatter to ransom.

As can be seen from even the most cursory examination of the idea of expecting farmers and graziers to eke out a living from 320 acres, (later 640 acres) of dry land, the Free Selector's Act was not well conceived, and led to many grave abuses in land settlement by both squatters and selectors, and for the 23 years the Act was in existence, the Government of the day came under severe criticism.

During the 1860's the large district pastoral holdings were left largely untouched by the selectors. It was not until after 1875, when selection size was doubled to 640 acres, that large numbers of selectors began to take up land in the Darlington Point area. Between the years 1864 and 1870, only a small number of selections were taken up near the site of the township of Darlington Point.

1876 was a peak year for the selections, and the number of selectors coming in to the district. In this section we mention only selectors in the north of the C.I.A.

Among others, the Lander family selected in the Parish of Waddi, John Lander taking up a selection about 7 miles from Darlington Point. He named the property "Ringwood".

Edward and Herbert Lander selected in adjacent areas. "Ringwood" is still in possession of Mrs Jackson, of the Lander family, as also is the adjoining property "Boondilla". "Ercildoune" also belonged to the Lander family, but is now resumed.

The Kook family, Herman Kook Snr., Herman Kook Jnr., Augusta Kook and Theodore Kook, took up selections at "The Avenue" about 12 miles from Darlington Point. This remained in the possession of the Kook family until this year, Mr Bruce Kook residing on the original holding. In 1912, H. Kook and Sons acquired "Woodlands", a 3,000 acre property of the late K.A.C. Cummings and later "Kyola", 7000 acres since resumed for the C.I.A.

Just west of "The Avenue" homestead is a paddock called "The Stick-up" because the bushranger Morgan held up the Anglican Minister in it in about 1863.

The Ross Brothers also selected Coleambally, as will be described later. The most successful of the selectors seem to have been those that took up selections in family groups by pooling their resources; they were in a much better position than a single family to undertake the arduous pioneering work.

Another selection of interest to the present C.I.A. was the selection of "Eulo" by Duncan Frazer. It remained in the possession of the family until it was resumed,



*Bullock team of Mr. N. Prestage, Farm 190.*



*Brush fence, built last century on "Pine Park".  
Photo: Mrs. E. Graham*



*"Cooinbil" wool – about 1920 (above)  
1932 (below)*

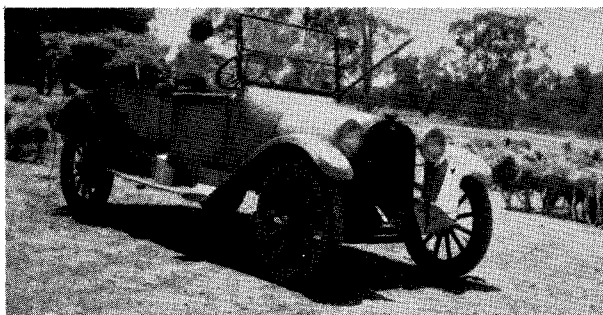
*Photos: Mr. J. Sams*



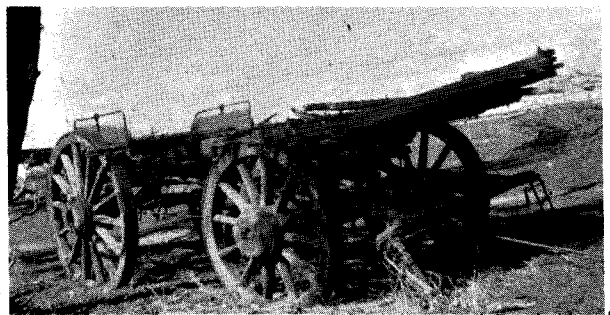
*Horse Team.  
Photo: Mrs. E. Graham*



*Stacking sheaf hay, November, 1925.  
Photo: Mrs. E. Graham*



*Drought, feeding sheep on hay from 1921 Dodge.  
Photo: Mrs. E. Graham*



*The first wagon to cart "Kulki" Stud Park North  
wool away.*

## OTHER SETTLERS IN THE NORTHERN AREA

James Egan came from Ireland to Adelaide in 1884 and travelled up the Murray to Morundah where he took up sharefarming. He was one of a group of six, including also George Morley and Edward Brett, who took up land in about 1900.

James Egan next-door-neighbour, Edward Brett, named his property "Wexford" and suggested that James Egan call his property "Waterford" so as to commemorate two neighbouring towns in Ireland. However James Egan compromised and called his farm Egansford.

This must have been enough to maintain the friendship however as the Brett household shared a common well with the Egan household for some years.

Even in those times there was a small centre near Egansford. In Warby's paddock there were tennis courts which were very popular.

The house built by Alex Morley is now lived in by Mr and Mrs Harry Burge and it is part of Farm 8.

James Cattnach's first area of land was called "Rosewood". His homestead is to the east of the Darlington Point road, just north of present C.I.A. development.

It was taken up in 1914 on a type of Closer Settlement then known as "Improvement Lease".

This property of 2500 acres was used as an example in a test case of appeal by original settlers (the Coleambally Irrigation Area Association) against resumption values. The first areas of land resumed from "Tubbo" in 1959-60 averaged £ 7.1.8 per acre, but as a result of this test case valuations were increased.

Jimmy Cull was born on "Tubbo" and lived there all his life as station hand, except during the 1914-1918 war, when he served in France. He was awarded the D.C.M. and the M.M. for acts of outstanding bravery.

"Clifford Downs", originally part of "Toganmain" has been owned by T.A. Field since 1947, and it is scheduled for resumption for the C.I.A.



*Photos from the Gala Vale Gymkhanas of forty years ago from the collection of Miss D. Bull.*

## THE ARGOON DISTRICT

"ARGOON" is said to be an aboriginal word meaning black ground. The district or area prior to 1876 was part of Tubbo Station, with sections of Kulki, Bundure, Yamma and Toganmain.

There were some early selectors in the area but none of these survived. After 1876, when the size of selection doubled, there was a new influx of settlers and a definite centre developed at Argoon.

In its heyday, about 1890 there was a Store, Blacksmith, Hotel and Post Office. The only building remaining is the Presbyterian Church, built in 1883, before both the Church at Jerilderie and at Darlington Point.

It was erected by the Ross, Beveridge, Jackson, Dalgleish, Anderson, Thompson, J. Walker, T. Keenan, Pearse, Culley and Graham families. John Graham carted the timber for the church from Corobimilla. Mr Mate of Kulki, gave the ground.

The hotel at Argoon was erected in 1879 and was owned and managed by Mr Tom Underwood. This hotel continued until it was closed in 1892. The Store was built in 1880 by the Culley family of Urana and Narrandera and Mr C. Culley managed the business, which was closed in 1889. The site of both hotel and store was over from the present church; at the east side of Kulki. A sportsground was in use from early days on this site and was the scene of cricket matches, horse and foot sports. The Argoon Picnic Race Club conducted race meetings there as late as 1913.

## DALGETY'S

The race meetings ceased in 1913 because the new manager at Kulki was not happy with the idea of retaining the old racecourse buildings as they might harbour undesirables, and had them pulled down.

The majority of the selectors moved out around 1890, and those who came later on to large areas had more success.

The 1890's exodus was caused by three main factors:-

Firstly, drought. The first serious drought for thirty years occurred in 1892-3-4.

Secondly, depression. The economic climate did not favour the small farmers.

Thirdly, rabbits. The first rabbits were seen at Argoon in 1890, and quickly developed to plague proportions.

The rural situation did not really improve markedly until the start of World War I in 1914.

The only families of the original pioneers still in the district are the Graham and Pearse families.

Mrs Elizabeth Graham of "Pine Park" has written something of the story of the Graham family on later pages.

Miss Dulcie Bull and her brother of "Gala Vale" are descendants of the Pearse family, the remainder of whom have since moved away. Their mother, Mrs C.W.L. Bull, was a Miss Pearse.

"Gala Vale" was part of "Tubbo" until purchased by C.W.L. Bull in 1898.

C.W.L. Bull sold a property near the modern Bull Road to his nephew the late Lance Bull and Lance's brother (Senator) Tom Bull. This property was called "Stanmore". Their cousins Clive and Linton Bull, also bought property from "Tubbo" and have remained in the area on Farm 82.

The Pearse family first settled on Pine Grove in 1876 and acquired a considerable area of land in the area. The family sold "Pine Grove" about 1910 to the Campbell family of "Coo nbil" who were seeking new land to compensate for their loss of "Yarrolumla" which had been resumed as the site of Canberra.

Interestingly, the wheat grown on "Pine Grove" early in its development was of prizewinning quality and yielded eight bags, (32 bushels) to the acre.

Another interesting early crop was grown on "Goolgumbra" under Sir Samuel McCaughey in the 1880's : a yield of 60 bushels per acre was achieved from an oats crop.

The Jackson family settled on "Fairlie Grange" in 1876 and they left about 1888. They were followed by a Mr Ryan, who began wheatgrowing on the property, thence by McBean, who sold out to Mr Auston, thence to the present owners the Donellan family, who commenced there in 1924 or 1926 and were displaced by the C.I.A.

Other settlers in the area were T. Beveridge (near present Coleambally) C. McLennon (Green Pine) 1898; Jas. Walker (near Kulki); C. Millthorpe (part of Gala Vale) T. Kennan (part of Yamma) and others whose names are not available.

"Neyliona" as it is now was in part selections taken up by several people — Edward Ashcroft, J. Sparks and Patrick Neylon. This last gave the property its name when he added the name of his daughter, Iona.

"Neyliona" as it is now was 100 years ago, in part selections taken up by several people — Edward Ashcroft, J. Sparkes and Patrick Neylon. The last gave the property its name when he added the name of his daughter, Iona.

"Wonga" as well as "Neyliona" was part of Sir Samuel McCaughey's Goolgumbra Station which he purchased in 1875, later acquiring the settlement blocks, probably in the nineties when drought and depression hit.

In 1912 John Culley and Cuthbert Taylor purchased "Yurooga". These men knew the district well from their days at Tubbo. In 1937 the partnership was dissolved and the property split to form Wonga and Pooginook. In 1942 Elaroo was purchased by C.R. Taylor & Sons. Quite recently Pooginook homestead area was absorbed by Wonga but the name is retained in the well known Merino Stud based now on Elaroo.

At the same time when the Stuarts, relatives of McCaughey, took over Goolgumbra, Jack & Harry Austin purchased "Neyliona". John A. Sloane and his partner acquired it in 1919 and the Stud of Corriedale sheep which was established there became famous, the sheep going to all parts of Australia as well as such countries as Japan, India, Africa, Ecuador, Colombia, China and Mexico.

## YOUNGHUSBANDS

Mr C.M. Lloyd took up Yamma Station in 1866. The area had been the eastern part of Yanko Block F. A man named Rowan, Billy Rowan, had a small holding north of Yamma.

In 1880, C.M. Lloyd sold Yamma to Andrew O'Keeffe. During O'Keeffe's occupancy several selectors moved in. Amongst them were Edwards, Keenan, Buckston, Hardtnutt and others. In about 1927, Mr. C.W.L. Bull of "Gala Vale" bought about seventeen or eighteen thousand acres of Yamma, and Mr R.G. Liddle "Pine Lodge" a lesser amount. Round about 1940 the O'Keeffe's disposed of Yamma to T.A. Field Estates Pty. Ltd.

Mr C.M. Lloyd was always a keen racing man, with his own horses. The C.M. Lloyd Stakes still run in Melbourne, was named in his honour.

A very interesting small property was "Willow Vale". Only about 1200 acres, once part of "Yamma", until selected by Mr Rust and others, about 1880, it remained viable until 1967; thanks to the skill of its owner, Mr W. Walker who purchased it from Mr Bert Mills in 1949. Mr Mills also owned "Yanco Downs" where "Rowan's Camp" is now.

The homestead was originally pisé, but the present homestead was built in 1929, using timber cut, drawn and dressed on the property. Additions were made in 1938-42.

"Rogart", owned after 1948 by the Culley family was part of the south end of "Yanko F", in turn part of "Tubbo". It was first separated from "Tubbo" in 1898.

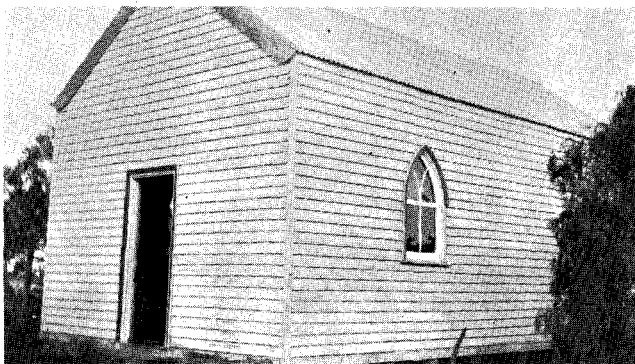
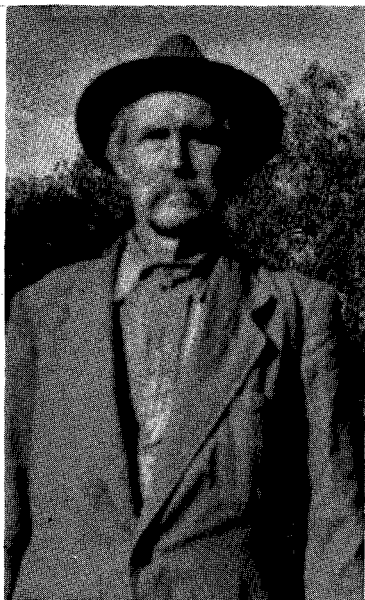


*(Above) Bullock teams.*

*(Left) C. J. Graham, the remaining pioneer of the Argoon settlement of the 1870's.*

*(Below) The Argoon Church, Photo from the 1930's.*

*(Bottom of page) "Pine Park" today.*



**S. & K. McDONALD**



# Of Old Times *Mrs. Elizabeth Graham*

Before John Graham had selected his holding, "Sunnyside" and moved on to it in 1877, he had travelled these areas far and wide following his calling as a Carrier.

He carted goods from Echuca and Deniliquin to Cully's Store at Urana, and later, on to Argoon after Cullys built the store there.

After the early settlers came, Argoon had its Store, Post Office, Blacksmith, Hotel and Church, until droughts on the too-small holdings drove the settlers away. Only the Church remains.

John's wife, Eleanor, travelled with him, driving the four to six bullocks in a dray. He had a team of several bullock drays before acquiring a waggon, with a driver for each dray.

Each dray was fitted with a hinged prop at the rear, and at the front end of the pole to support the loaded dray when the team was unyoked.

One incident which Eleanor never forgot was on an occasion when, with a boggy patch ahead, most of her team had been taken to give added power to the cart ahead, leaving only her polers. It was a windy day, and a strong, fierce gust rushed down suddenly upon them. The props had not been let down and the load had been unsettled so that now the heavier weight was behind the axle. The force of the wind heavily unbalanced the dray and causing the pole to rise and raising the bullocks off their front feet. This caused their bows to press heavily against the throats of the two bullocks, choking them. To try and save further trouble Eleanor seized the end of the pole, between the animals, and swung on it, her weight thus relieving the throat pressure. Her brother ran back to her aid.

As they prospered John disposed of the drays in favour of a waggon, and Eleanor had a van and pair of horses to drive. She used to tell of the trouble, annoyance and inconvenience of having to unpack and display her goods, cooking utensils, foods, suitcases, bedding etc., so that Inspectors along the Murray could see that she was not smuggling over the border new goods on which she should pay duty. She was John were much in favour of free trade. Federation, with its changes, came a bit late for her to benefit much.

The popular quick "pre-fab" home is not entirely modern. John and Eleanor's first kitchen, back in 1877 was a "pre-fab".

They had gone to a sawmill at Echuca to buy and collect timber for their home. The miller had several buildings erected there, mostly one-roomed, for sale and removal.

Graham's decided to buy their kitchen ready-made. It was dismantled and stacked for them. Re-assembly was easy as symbols showed where each part fitted.

No irrigation channels in those days! Wells had to be sunk for water. Eleanor did not, at first, like the well water. If John had the van away she would walk with a demijohn to her neighbour's station homestead where she was welcome to a supply of rain water, walking back the three miles with the precious fluid in her arms.

Eleanor was not alone in preferring more distant drinking. Two neighbours, bachelors, blocks adjoining, had their huts adjoining too, so saving one wall. At the week-end, having no vehicle they'd walk to the Argoon pub and when leaving would roll a barrel of beer the two miles to their home. Truly — Roll Out the Barrel!

John Graham of Sunnyside and Ryan of "Fairlie Grange" were the first settlers to farm the land. John's wheat field had been ploughed by a single-furrow plough drawn by two bullocks. When it was ready he strode over the field sowing the grain by hand from a bag apron.

When the crop was ready for cutting a reaping-hook, and scythe were used. The hay was gathered into sheaves by hand, and tied with hay stems. Later it was carried in by hand, and old Tom Woods stacked it.

There were no rabbits about at all in this area. The first ones seen were two small rabbits caught by Jack Graham when about 7 or 8 years old. He took the strange little animals home to show his mother. She knew them, having seen rabbits before. These appeared homeless, as though they'd been carted along and let go here.

Schooling was difficult in those early days. The Argoon Church, built on land given by Mr Mate, of "Kulki", was intended to be both Church and School. But by the time it was erected most of the settlers had left their over-small holdings of 640 acres. Earlier, school had been held at the home of Mr Tom Woods, with Mr Alexander Cross as teacher. When he left Mr & Mrs Archie Simpson made a room of their home (near where "Gala Vale" homestead is) available as a school room. Three Simpson children attended, three Grahams, Robinsons from "Ivyholme", Coutts, Lang and others. Archie Simpson was working as boundary rider for Tubbo Station on the area Big Argoon.

**MAX'S MENSWEAR**

Upon Mr Simpson leaving, John Graham's neat hut on a 320 acre block which he held, was used as a school until only the Grahams were left. John then moved the room closer to his house, for convenience. (Such act causing him to lose the block later. It is now part of Gala Vale).

Travelling entertainment called at times. Cricket matches were held, and race meetings were held on the various stations and holdings. Dances and parties in neighbours homes.

Later, in 1904, a Picnic Race Club was formed and a meeting held on "Kulki" where in earlier days Mr Chas Millthorpe and helpers had erected a few sheds. The remains of about only one still stands (4/7/71). A booth, serving drinks had been erected and some race patrons imbibing too freely had become a nuisance. They had become a bother to the one policeman present, but he obtained cord and tied each wrong-doer round the waist to the wire fence. As their numbers grew so did their strength and eventually, straining to get back for a thirst quencher, they pulled the fence over.

Over the Big Argoon area are several big old pine trees, used by the shepherds as "Look-outs". The shepherd would climb such a tree to scan the countryside for his sheep in those pre-fence times. Some of those trees still remain. One is, on Sunnyside. (Grahams used it as a bush-fire look-out).

On Sunnyside too, was a sheep-fold made of branches in which the shepherd would yard his sheep before returning to his hut. Other folds were about.

Of the rabbits — they soon multiplied, and in due course one settler was in trouble over rabbits. Threats of prosecution made no difference to him. "They lagged me out here for killing a rabbit", he'd say, "Now they can lag me back for not killing them!"

To obtain wheat for flour, and grain for next year's sowing, John's first crop had to be flailed. This meant cutting it by scythe, or reaping-hook, allowing it to dry out; spread a sheet on the ground, place the hay on the sheet and thrash with a flail.

The flail consisted of two round sticks joined together at one end by a leather strap. Each stick was about 1½" in diameter. One was about two feet long, the other, the handle, about three feet long. After thrashing, wind was needed. On a windy day men with shovels would toss the mixture of wheat and chaff into the air so that wind would blow the chaff away from the grain, leaving the grain fairly clean, as it dropped back on to the sheet.

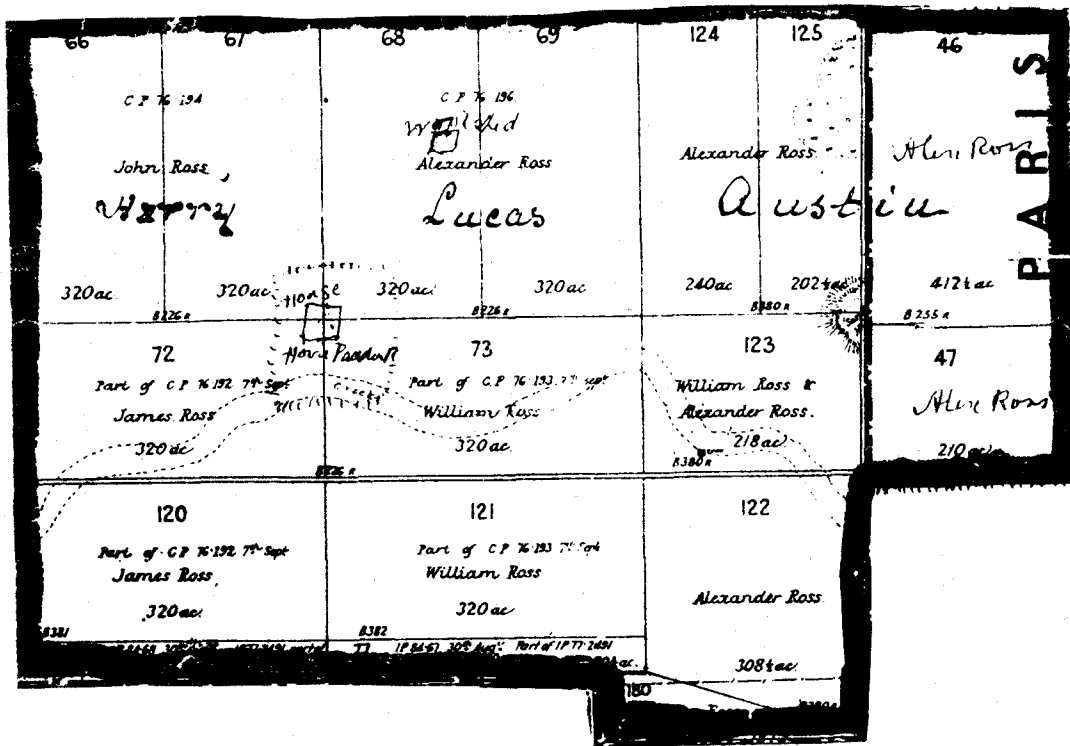
A faster method, later, was the header-wheel made by Meadowbank, Sydney, and supplied by Hudson Bros. from a foundry at Junee. This header-wheel was turned by a handle. A hay sheaf head was thrust through a mouth, up against spikes on a wheel. The spikes beat the grain from the ears of wheat and it fed away into a vessel. But this wheel method was not a complete success for some grain flew away, hitting the workmen, who stung by the flying grain declined to work further on such a machine.

John tried, too, a Hudson Bros. Stripper. This was quite successful but the grain needed to be winnowed after being stripped, so he bought a Winnower as well. Later, an improved Stripper was built by H.V. McKay, at Sunshine. This improved machine was acquired as well. Years later his sons bought a harvester.

Forty years ago Mr C.W.L. Bull and neighbours, Messrs Liddle, McLennan, Boyd, MacDonald, Miss Dymock and others began a series of gymkhanas and other sports in aid of Jerilderie Hospital. Until the war they were held annually at Gale Vale and became a happy rendezvous for many people from neighbouring districts. Miss Bull, as well as Miss Dymock, helped organize these gymkhanas.

With the passing of time the slow bullocks gave way to the faster horses for haulage, but the art of bullock-driving is not lost. Mr Norm Prestage of Farm 190 used a bullock-team on his farm at Merriwagga a few years ago. They were used for plowing, sowing, harvesting (for which two men were needed) and then, yoked to the waggon they hauled the loads of wheat to town.

# The Ross Family and Coleambally



Late in 1854, Janet and Alexander Ross landed in Adelaide, on an assisted immigration passage, with their three sons and two daughters. Their youngest son had died on the voyage out, from lack of suitable food.

They were met by Janet's brother, Alexander Forrest. Alexander Ross joined him in his blacksmithing, manufacturing and milling business; Janet Ross rented a farm at what was later called Forreston.

In 1865, as we have mentioned earlier, the Robertson Land Act made "selection" possible in New South Wales, and the oldest son, Sandy, was sent to investigate. Eventually in 1867 they moved to New South Wales and began selecting. At first they selected areas near Holbrook, where the family still has interests. Coleambally was the third property selected, and apparently appealed to the Rosses because unlike the heavily timbered country around Holbrook, not much clearing was required. The want of water was, however, the main drawback, only really overcome by the advent of the artesian bore at about the time of World War I.

Coleambally was part of Kerabury "Run"; we have already told the story of its development.

The four Ross selections at Coleambally were adjoining and a house, constructed of split slabs was built on the common corner of the four blocks, so each selector — father and three sons — could fulfil the residential conditions of his selection. The old house was still in use until the late 1930's; it has now been replaced by an iron walled building, but some of the original timber is retained in this newer house, now owned by Mr L.B. Jennings, as it is part of Farm 163, Coleambally.

The Rosses quickly became active in community affairs. Mr Tom Finley found this item on the "Town and Country Journal" July 15th, 1882, datelined Argoon, July 1st, telling of plans for a Public Hall at Argoon; "Our energetic neighbour, John Ross J.P. is moving in the matter and consequently a foregone conclusion that the undertaking will speedily be crowned with success. It may be stated that dancing and similar dissipation will not be allowed in a room which at least once a month be graced by the presence of a Presbyterian Minister.

The family holdings were quickly expanded. "Uri Park" sixteen miles away, was purchased in 1883, and many other smaller areas were also absorbed.

William married in 1883 and went to live at "Uri Park" and Robert was at "Coleambally". The shearing shed was at Coleambally, but in 1901 a shed was built at Uri Park as it was nearer to the shipping point for wool. This was first sent by steamer from Darlington Point until the railway came in 1882.

**B.P. AUSTRALIA**

The total area of Coleambally and Uri Park was 22,000 acres with a wool clip of 350 bales, at about the turn of the century.

The wool production of the sheep showed a gradual increase. There were few pests or troubles such as flies and foot-rot, largely because of the new and healthy nature of the country. However, sheep ked and tick was prevalent, and an annual dipping was necessary. A home-made dip consisting of 1lb of arsenic to 50 gallons of water was used, the arsenic being dissolved by boiling with washing soda. It was found very effective and safe to use, but any stronger solution caused scalding and even death through poisoning by absorption through the pores of the skin. Another work which was done in the 1800's was the washing of sheep prior to shearing. Every station had its "sheep wash"; the one at "Burrabogie" in 1882 could handle 6,000 sheep a day.

Disposing of surplus sheep was a big problem in the early days as there was no export of mutton, no refrigeration to hold the carcasses, and not much local demand for the meat. However Henry O'Brien of Yass, and also lessee of "Benerembah" and "Grungle" had found in 1845 that a live sheep worth 2/6 would make 7/- worth of tallow, and huge boiling down plants were built, remaining in use until the early 1900's.

In the early '90's rabbits arrived in the Coleambally area from Victoria and greatly added to the work and worry of dry seasons. Netting fences were erected to contain them in fixed areas, pit traps and yards were built along the fences, and poisoning and fumigation tried out. However, the only effective way proved to be digging out, ploughing in and later ripping of the burrows, destruction of all harbour, logs, trees and creek banks and the constant dogging of the treated areas. Fresh waves of rabbits appeared from time to time and the latest wave was in the 1950's before Myxomatosis eased the problem. Rabbits are not a great problem on the more closely settled C.I.A. farms.

Of the other pests foot-rot was the most persistent. Despite vigorous treatment of the sheep in large lots by soaking the feet in arsenic, blue stone or formalin, it would break out again as suitable weather conditions occurred, e.g. abnormally wet autumns and springs. The only sure way seemed to be to slaughter any carriers and to continue treating the remainder of the flock. Worms, were controlled by good husbandry and keeping the sheep in good condition. Blowfly strike was minimised by adopting jetting and mulesing, the last perhaps being the most effective of the three.

There were no roads in those days, simply waggon tracks and when one track got too much cut up, the teamsters would pick out another. Transport was very slow.

James Arnold once took a load of wool from Coleambally to Darlington Railway Station (now known as Wilbriggie) a distance of 32 miles, and returned with wool packs in 36 hours, not taking the yokes off the bullocks once during the journey of 64 miles — an amazingly fast trip for a bullock dray.

As the only means of personal transport was by horses, a fair number of these were bred each year, mainly by James Ross. His cross of blood horse and Welsh Pony were widely recognised as a good type of horse for both saddle and harness use. Donald Ross senior drove two ponies, tandem in a sulky, 140 miles in two days and stressed that these ponies were grass fed and straight out of the paddock.

There were not any macadamised roads in the Darlington Point area, and there was no gravel available, the nearest approach being the loamed surfaces pioneered in 1920 by the Murrumbidgee Shire Council.

Early in the century, a telephone connection was made between the homesteads of Uri Park and Coleambally, a distance of 16 miles. In this case the top wire of the fence was used, with poles and overhead connecting wires spanning the gateways. Reasonably good results were obtained unless the fence was wet.

Ross Bros. did not go into the cattle business very extensively as fencing and water supplies were not adequate for big stock in dry years, though at "Uri Park" cattle could be fattened successfully as it had a river frontage.

Share farming was another activity. Ross Bros. provided the land and seed wheat and the farmer provided the horses, plant and all labour. The crop was then shared equally. Wheat was never worth more than 3/- to 3/6 per bushel, and yields, without any super in those days, about 20 bushels to the acre (max). Needless to say, no one made their fortune out of wheat growing.

The Ross Family partnership was dissolved in 1913. John Ross acquired Coleambally and it passed to his sons Don and Alister.

Approximately half Coleambally has been resumed by W.C. and I.C. for the C.I.A. and the remainder is owned by Mr G.L. Killen and managed by Mr H. Allen.

Donald Ross senior was Murrumbidgee Shire Council President 1929-33, 1936-38, and 1940-42. Donald F. Ross, now of "Uri Park", was Murrumbidgee Shire President in 1963-64 and 1966-67.

(Other local families with outstanding records of service to the Shire Council include the Lander, Kook and Frazer families.)

**REG COWIE**



*This picture, from the collection of Mr. Tom Finley, shows the "Albury", first steamer to navigate the Murrumbidgee.*

Darlington Point's early prominence was due mainly to its position as a steamer port. The first paddle steamer to navigate the Murrumbidgee steamed up the river past Darlington Point and reached Darlington Point on 17th September, 1858 under the control of Francis Cadell, one of the two great pioneers of the river trade. The trade grew quite quickly, though Gundagi was too high up the river to be visited regularly, and Narranderra was the chief port, until the coming of the railway.

Depending on the distribution of the rainfall, the rivers were navigable on the average from about April to January. In some seasons boats were able to run most of the year. In dry years, if the boats were not held up somewhere along the rivers, they were tied up at their home ports, and the bullock and horse teams would take over the transportation of goods and station produce.

In 1864 an inn had been built at Darlington Point by an early selector, Mr George Rogers, on the north side of the river, and in 1866, at Waddi, another inn, which may have been built even before 1864, was licensed. "Darlington" was, according to Sydney Morning Herald of August 15th, 1865 "fast assuming the dimensions of a township."

The town grew slowly. In 1869 a third hotel was added, the Riverine Hotel, near where the Punt Hotel now stands. Mr S. DeMamiel of the Riverine Hotel, also acquired the lease for the punt. This was the origin of the Punt Hotel. Many of Mr DeMamiel's descendants remain in the district.

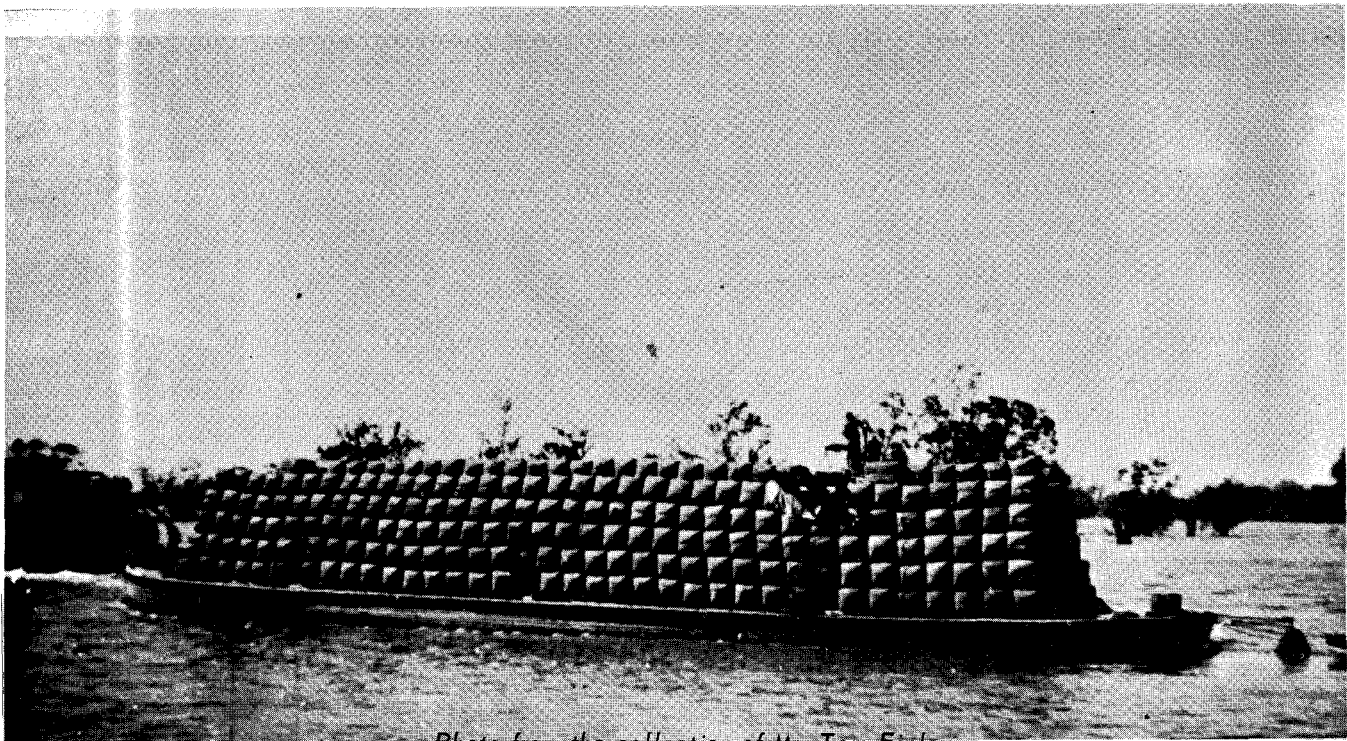
In 1875, a passenger on the "Victoria" wrote letters to a friend, describing the country, stations and towns passed on the way. Of Darlington Point he wrote: "Darlington, a wooding station, (Woodpiles for the steamers) according to J.J. Jervic, established on part of the original Cuba station. At the time of the journey, Darlington and Waddi could muster 3 hotels, a store and a blacksmith's shop. Waddi was the small town opposite Darlington. A punt, capable of carrying 1,700 sheep plied between the two. In 1876, McCulloch and Co., a Melbourne firm and proprietors of the Express line of river steamers, leased 5 acres of land in Darlington, and erected a large wool receiving and general store. J.L. Bennett, a late storekeeper at Toganmain Station was appointed McCulloch's agent and in charge of the stores. The stores were in the area bounded by Darlington, Boona and Flood Streets, on the north side of the river. McGaw and Co., of Cuba also built a wool store in the same area. J.L. Bennett had a wharf on land adjacent to the store." In March 1881 tenders were called for the building of a Public Wharf at Darlington Point. Many riverside stations preferred the convenient loading of the paddle steamers to transhipment to a railhead, and large quantities of wool continued to be sent by paddle steamer, even after the opening of the railway line to Hay. For example, in the 1930 and 1931 seasons, wool was despatched by steamer from J.F. Ryans, "The Homestead", Darlington Point. In 1932 the river was too low to allow this, and from then on The Homestead wool was despatched by other forms of transport. The last steamer to pass through the Darlington Point bridge in the 1930's was beached near the Whitton ferry. A steamer was used during the war to cart wood to the internment camp at Hay, but since 1946 there have been no steamers on the Murrumbidgee.

#### **KELLY'S FOODLAND**

The paddle steamers apparently presented a challenge to the New South Wales Government, as Riverina trade was being funnelled to Adelaide or to Melbourne. In any case a vigorous railway building programme was begun. The railway to north Wagga was opened for traffic in September, 1878 and to Wagga a year later. The Government's decision to extend the railway line to Hay so as to secure the rich Riverina trade for Sydney, started a bitter controversy as to which side of the Murrumbidgee river the line should be laid. Naturally, residents on the south of the river wanted the railway on that side, but there was much disagreement amongst the southerners as to the direction the line should take. In the Darlington Point district, 200 residents signed a petition for the railway to be on the south side of the river, drawing the Ministers attention to — (1) The large number of selections through which the line would pass, being of mutual benefit to the selectors and Railway Department. (2) The proposed line on the north side of the river would only be of benefit to a few large landholders, as there was not a selector on or near the proposed route. (3) Much of the area through which the line would pass on the south side was leasehold country, and could be resumed by the Government at little expense, whereas on the north side much of the country had been converted to freehold by the squatters, and resumption would add greatly to the cost of the line. (4) The country on the south side of the river was much better than that on the north side. A plan drawn by the Public Works Department, depicted the railway in a straight line from Wagga Wagga to Hay, the line being above flood level and not passing through any existing towns.

On July 1st, 1879, a petition was signed by many landholders for the railway to be on the south side of the river. On September 8th, 200 residents signed another petition for a south side railway. However all this was disregarded. The railway line from Junee to Hay was constructed; the railway station at Narrandera was opened in February, 1881, and the opening date at "Darlington" was 1st September, 1881. The station was renamed "Wilbriggie" on 25th August, 1909.

Interestingly, a complete scheme to link Griffith and Jerilderie, via Argoon, by rail, was also mooted by the early Argoon settlers, but failed to obtain approval of the Government. The last attempt at the scheme took place in 1923, until the idea of a Coleambally railhead was revived in 1963.



*Photo from the collection of Mr. Tom Finley.*

# THE PLANNING

The aim of this section is to give some idea of the extent and depth of planning which went into the development of the C.I.A.

Our particular thanks are due to:

The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, and especially Mr D.I. Crosby.

The C.S.I.R.O and especially Mr E. Hoare and Dr T. Talsma

The Forestry Department and Mr T.P. O'Rourke, Chief Forester of Narrandera

The Lands Department

Mr A.J. Grassby, M.L.A.

The Murrumbidgee Shire Council Staff and Draughtsman, Mr Terry Savage, who drew the maps.

The Jerilderie Shire Council.

The task of setting up the C.I.A., was, as must be obvious, an enormous one, and one of the aims of this booklet was to try to summarise the steps of planning and research which occurred.

The sheer size of this task and the complexity of the planning process has meant that pressure of time has forced us to abandon this aim in relation to "The Story of Coleambally". We have hopes of doing this in the future; there is considerable interest in the subject, and we have received many offers of assistance from the people actually involved. However we cannot let this book go to print without some mention, however incomplete and sketchy, of some of the research and investigation which took place. Unfortunately the major deficiency is in the coverage of the work of the very early planners of the 1950's and even 1940's.

Interestingly the first recorded mention of the idea of irrigating the C.I.A. goes as far back as 1894 when diversion of the Murrumbidgee was suggested as a means of alleviating the three years drought then in progress. The same drought led, incidentally, to the development of boring techniques, as is mentioned elsewhere; the first bore was sunk in 1902 at "Wood Park" near Jerilderie.

## Message from A.G. Enticknap

My greatest recollection of Coleambally was in the planning. The addition to Burrunjuck Dam was well on way to completion, as also were the power stations on Tumut River.

This meant a considerable amount of water was available for irrigation purposes, so planning had to be undertaken, so as to make the best uses of the water, and give the most diversitive form of farming activities.

The Irrigation Commission brought forward several schemes, and each had to be carefully investigated. First thought was to use Lake Mejum, as a holding storage for creation of irrigation district on the north side, toward Barellan but when a complete survey was made on south side of river, it left no doubt that land where Coleambally now stands was the most outstanding in suitability, and it was therefore decided that Coleambally as an irrigation area would commence immediately.

I was delighted with this decision, because of the wonderful soil of different standards, for varied types of farming.

When the township was being planned, the land on which it stands belonged to Forestry Commission. As this department was part of Conservation Department, there was no difficulty.

I have always felt it was a most wonderful day when the water was turned into the main canal, also when we had a conference on the site of the new township.

No doubt the scheme was well worthwhile to N.S.W. and to Australia.



RICEGROWERS CO-OP. MILLS



The Coleambally Irrigation Area is one of the largest irrigated land settlement schemes yet attempted in Australia. Located in south western New South Wales, in a fertile region of land, south of the Murrumbidgee River, the scheme, when completed, will occupy an area of 400,000 acres and will comprise approximately 570 large area mixed farms and 100 horticultural farms.

The land, formerly held as large grazing properties ranging in area from 1,000 to 100,000 acres, was resumed by the Crown, gazetted as an Irrigation Area and subdivided into farms varying in size between 500 to 800 acres for large area mixed farms and approximately 100 acres for horticultural farms.

The initial group of 26 large area farms was allocated in 1960 and the first delivery of water to farms was made in February of that year. Since that time, continued development has been carried out by stages so that ten years later, at June, 1970, 335 farms had been allocated and the total area of land acquired and included in Coleambally Irrigation Area was 230,417 acres, of which 157,159 acres are irrigable.

On each occasion that farms have been made available for application it has been necessary to conduct a ballot to determine priorities among applicants who have the required qualifications to occupy and develop a farm.

#### **WATER SUPPLY**

Water is diverted to the Coleambally Irrigation Area by means of the Gogeldrie Weir on the Murrumbidgee River approximately 16 miles upstream of the town of Darlington Point.

The weir is a concrete structure over 300 feet wide with six vertical lift, electrically operated gates, each forty feet in width and twenty feet high. Constructed in 1959 by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission, the cost of the weir was in the order of \$900,000.

The weir is operated during the irrigation season (September to April) to raise the level of the river in order that water may be diverted by gravity to the Coleambally Canal and at the same time allow sufficient water to be discharged to satisfy downstream requirements.

The Coleambally Canal takes off a short distance upstream of Gogeldrie Weir and after 4½ miles in a south westerly direction, heads almost due south. The Canal has a capacity of 2,500 cubic feet of water per second and is 29 miles in length.

Over 260 miles of supply channels convey the water from the Coleambally Canal to the farm boundaries. In addition, the drainage system operating in the Coleambally Irrigation Area involves almost 350 miles of drainage channels.

It is worthy to note that all water supplied to farms in the Coleambally Irrigation Area flows to each boundary by gravitation.

Total water delivered to the existing 335 farms during 1969/70 irrigation season was 180,611 acre feet.

#### **WATER STORAGE**

To ensure continuity of supplies, the flow of water in the Murrumbidgee River is regulated by the storing and discharging of water from the Burrinjuck and Blowering Dams.

Burrinjuck Dam is a concrete structure on the Murrumbidgee River about 37 road miles southwest of Yass. Originally completed in 1927, as the storage work for the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Areas, the dam has since been strengthened and enlarged to provide a storage capacity of 837,000 acre feet.

Situated on the Tumut River about 8 miles south of Tumut, Blowering Dam — an impervious earth core structure supported by outer zones of gravel and rock — was completed in 1968. The water stored in the dam is from the natural flow of the Tumut River as augmented by discharges through the hydro-electric generators at the Tumut Power Stations of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-electric Scheme.

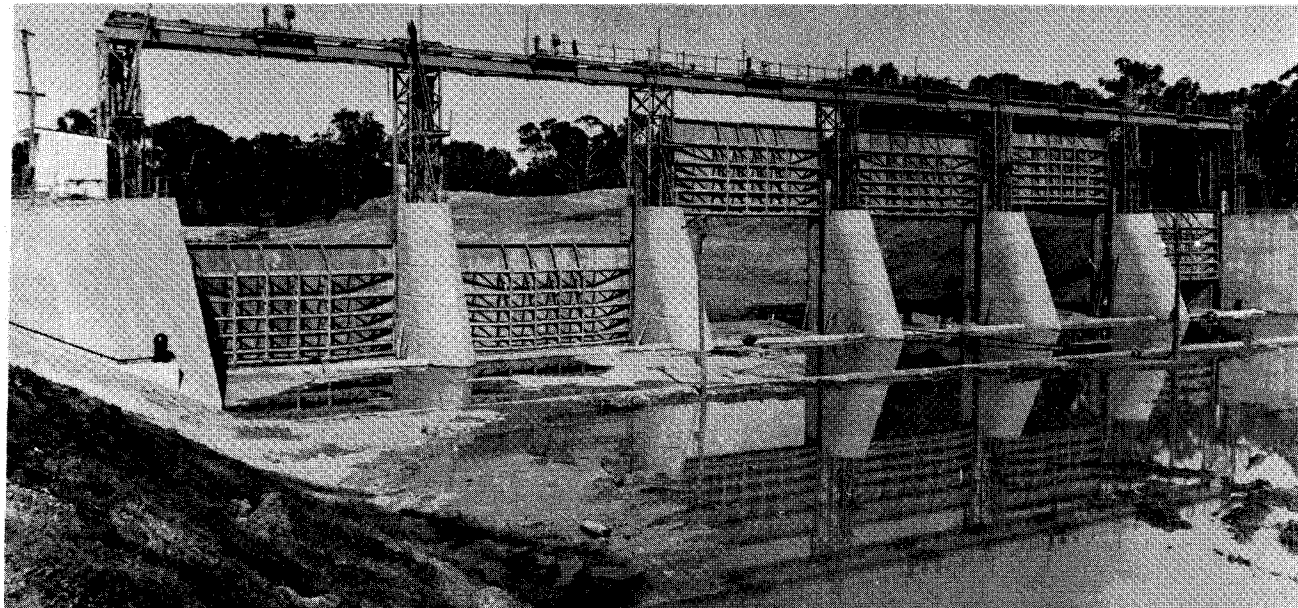
Blowering Dam, with a storage capacity of 1,322,400 acre feet, permitted a large increase in irrigation farming in the Murrumbidgee Valley and it supplies the greater part of water for the present and planned Coleambally Irrigation Area.

#### **OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE**

The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission constructed all works involved in the creation of the Coleambally Irrigation Area, the cost to date being \$17,000,000 and is responsible for the operation and maintenance of those works.

The flow of water in channels is distributed to farms by Channel Attendants, each of whom control a Division containing approximately 65 farms, 80 outlets and 50 miles of channels. Landholders order water in advance in accordance with a roster system and delivery is arranged through outlets in the quantity and at the time required. Checks and Regulators, operated by the Channel Attendant, control the flow in each channel whilst the supply to each farm is through an outlet fitted with a dethridge wheel. A meter is attached to each wheel to measure the quantity of water supplied.

**BROLGA HOTEL-MOTEL**



*Gogeldrie Weir from Right Hand Bank – Downstream. April 1959.  
Photo W.C.&I.C.*

#### **COLEAMBALLY IRRIGATION AREA – PLANNING**

In 1952 the Minister for Conservation at that time appointed two committees, referred to as Blowering Committees "A" and "B", to advise and report on a number of matters associated with the use of the additional water likely to become available within the Murrumbidgee River upon completion of Blowering Dam on the Tumut River. The two Committees were, subsequently, amalgamated.

Earlier, the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission had requested the C.S.I.R.O. to carry out broad reconnaissance soil surveys in the Murrumbidgee region to assist in planning of future irrigation development from the Murrumbidgee River. These surveys were carried out in 1949-50, with some assistance from the Commission and provided background for the Blowering Committee's investigations.

The first report of the Blowering Committee was submitted in February, 1956 and its recommendation included development of an area between the Murrumbidgee River and Spiller's Creek to be served from the proposed Gogeldrie Weir. In a supplementary statement to the First Report dated October, 1957, the Committee reported that its investigations revealed it would be feasible and more economic to develop from Gogeldrie Weir a very substantial area south of Spiller's Creek in addition to the north of that Creek. The name Coleambally Irrigation Area was chosen for the general area and commencement of development was advanced in the Committee's recommended priorities.

In the meanwhile, investigations had been in progress on lands south of the Murrumbidgee where earlier broad investigations had shown irrigation development to be feasible. Land surveys had been commenced by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission in 1952 and reconnaissance soil surveys were carried out in 1953-4 by the C.S.I.R.O., Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission and the New South Wales Department of Agriculture to define soil types and the principles of their distribution. At that time the area was referred to as the Billabidgee Area, the name connoting land between the Murrumbidgee and Billabong Creek.

The tentative boundaries of the Area were delineated and the size of the mixed farms (a minimum of 400 acres of suitable irrigable land and 100 acres of dry land) was fixed on the recommendations of a subcommittee to the Blowering Committee in 1959. Standards for horticultural farms were decided in consultation with the New South Wales Department of Agriculture.

Early planning was based on development of the central part of the Area in order that the main drainage conveyor (Coleambally Creek) could be constructed and also to permit utilisation of the main belt of sandhill country should a demand for increased horticultural production arise.

#### **STEVENSON'S READY MIX**

The passage on 28th November, 1957, of the "Gogeldrie Weir and Main Diversion Canals Act 1957" gave the "go ahead" to the Coleambally Irrigation Area. Close co-operation was immediately achieved between engineers, scientists, surveyors, draftsmen and officers on the project and with local interests. Utilising work already done on topographical and soil surveys, the most suitable area for development south of the Murrumbidgee River was selected. Engineering investigations were carried out to determine the desirable locations for canal, channels, drains, roads and farms.

Due to the magnitude of the project, construction was programmed on the basis that it would proceed for many years. The land was progressively acquired for subdivision and development. Farms became available for allotment yearly, the number varying from 20 to 50. The Commission's own work force built the necessary earthworks and structures required to serve each year's programmed development, local contractors being employed for channel construction and for supplying ready mixed concrete.

For the efficient administration of the Coleambally project, the Commission set up its construction organisation at Darlington Point which consisted of the office buildings, accommodation for single staff and workmen, cottages for married staff, stores and workshops for the servicing of plant, vehicles and other equipment. A concrete precast yard was set up for the manufacture of small concrete irrigation channel structures and bridge decking beams.

Gogeldrie Weir, a massive steel and concrete structure across the Murrumbidgee River, 16 miles upstream of Darlington Point, was built to divert water to the new area and to areas north of the river. This is achieved by blocking the river by means of the weir's six steel gates and allowing the water level in the river behind the gates to rise. At a predetermined level, the water from the river flows by gravity into the Coleambally Canal through a large concrete regulating structure.

Coleambally Canal flows unrestricted for 12 miles to reach the irrigated areas and the final major branch channel. Over this length it has a bed width of 95 feet, depth of flow of 10 feet and a capacity of 2550 cubic feet per second ("cusecs"). With corresponding reductions in size and capacity the canal flows a further 16 miles shedding water regularly through small branch channels and another major branch. Finally, 30 miles from the river, it loses its flow and identity to the last major branch channel.

Large concrete regulating structures with steel gates control the water as it flows down the canal. Offtaking structures admit this water to the major branch channels and the smaller distributing channels. These channels follow the low ridges that run east to west in this area. Small concrete checks hold the water in the channels at the level required which then enters the farms through a measuring device known as a Dethridge Wheel.

The whole system ensures that water arrives at the farm at the highest practicable point above ground level. The landholder can then irrigate his land without having a pump i.e. by gravitation. With such intensive supply, it is essential that excess water in the form of drainage and storm runoff be disposed of effectively. To permit of this, the drainage system follows the natural depressions and watercourses between the supply channels. Pipe drainage inlets permit surplus water to flow into the drains at the lowest parts of the farms.



*Completed Section of Coleambally Canal - July, 1958. Photo W.C.&I.C.*

**BARRY RUTLEDGE**

These small drains feed into large "canalized" watercourses which carry the surplus water far beyond the surplus water far beyond the boundaries of the area. One travels south emptying into Yanko Creek while another larger drain goes west 80 miles to Billabong Creek via Euroley Creek.

The number of farms allocated to date is 313 mixed farms and 22 horticultural farms. To serve these farms a total of 277 miles of supply channel and 392 miles of drainage channel have been constructed. In addition, a comprehensive network of roads with bridges and culverts have also been built to permit easy access from the farms to the centres of commerce.

In 1957, more detailed soil surveys were commenced by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission for use in subdivisional design of mixed farms. Soil surveys have proceeded ever since and have included very detailed surveys of the sandhill country which might be used for horticultural purposes. Commencing at the same time and going hand in hand with these surveys, investigations to stratigraphy and ground water hydrology underlying the Area have been carried out to determine and forecast ground water conditions and behaviour, which is an integral part of irrigation land use planning.

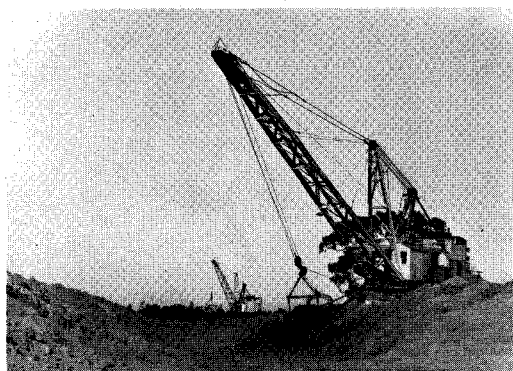
Design of the first 26 mixed farms was finalised in March, 1959, and these farms were set apart at the end of that year. Farm design had to continue well in advance of settlement schedules preceded by completion of the necessary topographic, Soil and stratigraphic surveys on which subdivisional design, supply and drainage channel location and design could be based.

In addition to the detailed investigations necessary for progressive design of the area, further reconnaissance soil and land surveys were made between 1958 and 1962 to make the best selection of land in and bordering the area which had initially been defined by the tentative boundaries. This together with engineering consideration enabled the fixing of definitive boundaries of the Area.

Early development was based on the use of unregulated flow in the Murrumbidgee from the works of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme and this permitted development of 194 mixed farms. Although there was a cessation of settlement between 1965 and 1967 pending completion of Blowering Dam, planning and design continued during this period so that, when additional water eventually became available from the storage, development could proceed.

Planning and design has always involved close liaison by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission with the various authorities responsible for roads, railways, telephone communications, electricity and education so that proper provision could be made for those essential services.

Every endeavour has been made to ensure that design of the Area provided workable farms and, to this end, no designs were finalised until preliminary designs were thoroughly inspected and checked in the field and amended when necessary by parties comprised of technical officers of the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission and the Department of Agriculture.



*Bucyrus Excavators at work on Tubbo Channel – April, 1959.*

**"TREVAIL PARK" CATTLE STUD**

# RESEARCH

A considerable amount of research was carried out, to assist in the development of the region. This is largely summarised in the W.C. and I.C. Bulletin No. 2 in the Land Use Series "Environmental Studies of the Coleambally Irrigation Area and Surrounding Districts."

A paper by Simon Pels, "Geology and Ground Water Hydrology", dealt largely with investigations of interest in dealing with problems of drainage and the effects of channels crossing sandhills and prior streams.

Many early investigations were concerned with the soils but certain geomorphological aspects of the region were also discussed. Such investigations were carried out by Butler (1950, 1956, 1958) Butler and Hutton (1956), Hawkins and Walker (1956), and Langford-Smith (1958, 1960).

Reconnaissance soil surveys of part of the Coleambally Irrigation Area were carried out by Van Dijk and Talsma (1964) and Flint (W.C. and I.C. unpublished). Further reconnaissance soil surveys are currently being made by the W.C. and I.C. Detailed soil surveys of part of the horticultural areas have been made by Mark Stannard (W.C. and I.C.), who has also had published "Morphological description of soils occurring in the Coleambally Irrigation Area".

The northern part of the area is covered by the Narrandera 4-mile geological sheet (Wynn, 1962) while the southern part is included in the Jerilderie 4-mile geological sheet and the geology of that part is discussed by Hall and Whiting (1957). The underlying sediments of the Oaklands area, further south, are discussed by Sturmfels (1950).

Towards the north, the horticultural soils of the Murrumbidgee Irrigation Area have been surveyed by Taylor and Hooper (1938) and the geology of that area is discussed by Pels (1960).

Further information on sediments underlying the Coleambally Irrigation Area was obtained from bore log records held by the W.C. and I.C. and the Department of Mines.

Investigations into salinity problems were conducted by Dr T. Talsma and these also are covered in the booklet referred to above.

The main conclusion is that salinity, as is mentioned earlier, is not a major problem throughout the C.I.A.; it is lowest near Narrandera at the beginning of the alluvial fan, and increases towards the south west.

Many other research projects have been undertaken, notably by the Department of Agriculture. These have covered not only purely agricultural topics but also have included investigations into questions of agricultural economics, e.g. J.G. Ryan's paper "Economics of the Development of Large Area Farms on the Coleambally Irrigation Area", published by the Division of Marketing and Agricultural Economics in October, 1968.

It is understood that plans are in hand for a research station to be established at Eulo by the Department of Agriculture.

## *Work of the Lands Department.*

The Closer Settlement Advisory Board has been the Section of the N.S.W. Department of Lands which has been most closely associated with the Coleambally Irrigation Area.

Since the establishment of the Coleambally Irrigation Area, the Closer Settlement Advisory Board has been the Authority charged with determining the compensation to be paid to landholders whose land has been resumed by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission for the creation of irrigation farms.

The Closer Settlement Advisory Board has made full use of the technical staffs of the Department of Lands for the following purposes:

- Provisions of topographical plans of area resumed.
- Keeping up-to-date sales information providing sales analyses of comparable land to assist the Board in determining the amount of compensation which should be recommended in individual cases.

With one exception (the exception is known as the CATTANACH case) and is mentioned in an earlier part of this book. The Board has reached agreement with those persons whose land was resumed by the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission.

In the CATTANACH case, the question of determining fair market value was referred to the Land and Valuation Court, following failure to reach agreement.

The Closer Settlement Advisory Board prepared the case for the Crown and presented expert evidence before the Court.

## **COLEAMBALLY BUS SERVICE**

# Work of the Forestry Department

The town of Coleambally stands on Compartment No. 3 of Bretts State Forest No. 585.

The 1920 Working Plan for the Boona and Bretts State Forest group records that originally the both areas were included in Boona State Forest Reserves Nos. 2238 and 2471 and Bretts State Forest Reserves Nos. 1781, 1783, 1754, 1755, 1756, 1757 and part 178. They were notified on various dates between 4th March, 1877 and 5th September, 1896, to protect pine forest country from alienation, and apportioned for Forestry as Boona and Bretts State Forest under the 1914-15 classification of lands for Forestry and settlement. Boona State Forest was proclaimed on 23rd March, 1917 and Bretts State Forest on 26th October, 1917.

The Plan indicated that Bretts State Forest was 21 miles south from Darlington Point and 29 miles of south-west from Willbriggie Railway Station on the Junee to Hay line and connected with these centres by bush roads, it states, "These were very difficult in winter months."

## **RAINFALL, CLIMATE, SOIL AND TIMBER:**

Rainfall averages about 16" annually climate ranges from mild in winter to very hot in summer, the mean temperature being about 60° and the maximum 112°.

Configuration is undulating sand hills carrying White Cypress Pine (*Callitris columellaris*) and level open spaces carrying Yellow Box (*Eucalyptus melliodora*), Grey Box (*Eucalyptus woollsiana*), Boree (*Acacia pendula*), Native Willow (*Acacia salicina*), Needlewood (*Hakea leucopetra*) and Native Western Rosewood (*Heterodendron oleifolium*). The formation is alluvial and the soils being brown and red sandy loams. The Forests are watered by either wells or bores.

The Working Plant said firebreaks should be cleared, surface clearing and burning carried out and an Overseer's Hut to cost £50 built.

The report concludes that the object of Management is for the production of Cypress Pine Poles and milling timber.

"The future development of these areas is so uncertain that no silvicultural operations are to be undertaken at present?"

## **LOGGING:**

Dixons Pty. Ltd. of Narrandera took a mobile mill to the Forest in 1920, camped on the dam and spent two years there. The sawn timber was hauled by horse teams to Narrandera.

## **SURVEY:**

In 1947 the Forestry Commission undertook a survey of all timber on this and other State Forests. Compartment 3 had an area of 1,830 acres and was classified as a medium dense Pine-Hardwood Forest. 70% of the merchantable stand was 10" plus diameter breast high, the carrying was 36,122 logs 8" diameter and the volume was 1,486,476 super feet.

During the period 1959 to 1963, the Narrandera Sawmills of Dixons Pty. Ltd. and Ganmain Sawmilling Co., cut 137,000 super feet of timber.

## **IRRIGATION:**

In 1962 the W.C. & I.C. dug irrigation channels through the forest and the Commission was advised that certain areas would be required for the future township. The first revocation was made on 29th May, 1964 when 104 acres were revoked.

The Forestry Commission kept in close contact with the Town Planners during early periods and agreed that all timber cover be retained for shade and shelter. However certain roads had to be cleared and in March, 1965 the Forester at Narrandera (Mr T.P. O'Rourke) assisted in pegging out the new roads and 500 trees of various sizes, not required for shade and shelter were removed.

The first occupation Permit on the new area was granted to the Education Department for a School Site of 5 acres on 1st January, 1965, for a "Peppercorn" rental.

## **REVOCATION:**

In the Government Gazette of 3rd May, 1968 an area of 330 acres in the Parish Argoon, County Boyd was revoked. This covered the township of Coleambally.

On 26th February, 1971, an area of 452 acres north of the town was revoked and in the Government Gazette of 6th April, 1971, the remaining part of compartment 3 of this State Forest, totalling 340 acres was also revoked

**"JOMARIN" - CATTLE STUD**

# A Town In A Forest



The site for the town was selected quite early in the development of the area, and roads constructed and planned accordingly to assist access to the site which was to be the administrative, social and service centre for the project.

In February, 1959 the Department of Local Government prepared a report on the type and size of town which would be needed. This report recommended that an ultimate population for the town of between 4,500 and 5,000 should be envisaged, and that further detailed planning was required. This was also discussed at the first of Coleambally's famous barbeques held for Mr A.G. Enticknap and other politicians in the pine forest on 13th October, 1963.

Accordingly in March 1964 the Murrumbidgee Shire Council commissioned Clark, Gazzard and Partners as Consultants to prepare a town plan. This was completed in December, 1964.

The first thing done was to gather together as much data as possible about the likely development of the Town so that the growth of population, and the needs of that population for facilities at various stages, can be estimated. Being largely an economic study, attention was given to rural production and the growth of the rural population, to the likely trends in farm production and to the likely processing industries, to the creation of employment opportunities in the town and to the relationship of the new town to existing centres.

In the words of the report: "These attempts to predict the future of the town have probably under-estimated the influence of certain social factors which should operate to accelerate development. The chief of these is the desire of the settlers in the Coleambally Irrigation Area for a centre of their own. Because they are new settlers, because the area they are settling is fairly isolated and because some of their needs differ from those of their predecessors, they need a township with which to become socially identified. They are the 'new' pioneers and they want a 'new' town . . . . a town that should reflect today's high standard of living. The extent of this factor's influence cannot be determined."

Seven years later we can go closer to evaluating the influence of these factors. The predicted maximum growth by 1971 was to a township of 44 people; the township has in fact a population of over 350.

The report indicated that a population of 350 could only be reached by 1971 if:

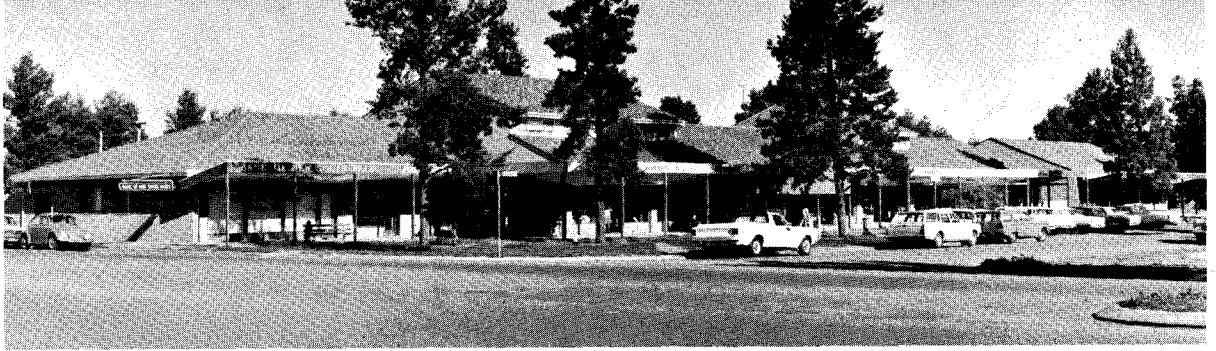
1. The Murrumbidgee Shire Council and W.C. & I.C. headquarters were moved from Darlington Point.
2. A rail link to Coleambally was provided.

So, obviously, the desire for a new town was, and is, very strong indeed.

From reading the report it becomes obvious that despite the tense technical tone, the planners were deeply interested and concerned with their task. In fact, their plan has been used as a prototype for U.N. developments overseas.

**LLOYDS BUILDING SUPPLIES**





***Shopping Centre, 1971. Photo Robert Anthony Studios.***

A major objective was to preserve as many trees as possible. The town was envisaged as "a town in a forest" and to achieve this large areas of forest reserve have been left around its edges and natural parklands provided within. Roads have been planned to disturb the least number of trees.

The main street, Brolga Place, has been located away from the highway and major roads so that long-distance through traffic will not pass through it. Parking areas have been provided at the rear of the buildings facing the street. A certain sense of movement and vitality is, however, part of the Main Street environment. The New Town is unlikely to grow to a size where sustained traffic congestion could occur from only cross-town traffic, and thus the problem will be rather one of generating some traffic movements than of preventing them. This has been achieved by making the Main street an integral part of the major street system — in this case a street through which a large percentage of all cross-town movement will be channelled. This adds to the life and vitality of the town centre. Should, however, vehicular traffic achieve such proportions that it becomes a nuisance, there are two parallel streets, east of the Main Street, which can become alternative routes.

The main street itself is not wide; it is far narrower than the four-lane, divided Kingfisher Avenue. It is not, however intended as a parking area; cars will park in areas behind the shops and hotel.

Two major intersecting paths will mark the town centre — the north-south vehicular road (Brolga Place) will be crossed by a pedestrian path, running east-west.

The Northern part of this cross, near the Community Hall is reserved for the Shire Council; this is the centre of a series of buildings which have taken shape over the past few years.

At the southern end is the present Anglican Church. The W.C. and I.C. offices are planned for the western end of the pedestrian path. The other side will be in the heart of the shopping centre.

These pedestrian areas will be set up as parks.

The residential blocks are allocated by tender, subject to a variable minimum "disturbance value". A house block is cheap by outside standards — a few hundred dollars at most — and this is encouraging residential development, for example from retired people.

The plan also sets aside areas for such purposes as light and heavy industry, railway and sporting facilities.

A final recommendation of the report was that the Murrumbidgee Shire Council should be the Development Authority, though of all the alternatives — the W.C. & I.C., the State Planning Authority, a separate and new development authority or the State Government itself — the Shire was the least able financially to perform this task.

Thanks to the continuing co-operation of all concerned, the development has proceeded with the local participation and sense of identification hoped for by the planners. This has proved to be efficient and has vindicated the idea of the selection of the Shire as developing agent.



***Bellbird Street, 1971. Photo Robert Anthony Studios.***

**PARTINGTON'S PHARMACY**

## THE KANGAROOS OF FARM 598

On our property we have 250 acres of box timber in a low depression and when we came here in May 1970, we found we had about 400 kangaroos, mainly red and blue fliers with a few grey foresters. We also had numerous emus and a pair of wedge tail eagles plus dozens of curlews. (The name of our farm is "Wee Loo" which means "Curlew").

The emus moved away as the farmers moved in and fences went up, but the kangaroos would not leave the timber. We got in touch with the National Parks and Wildlife Service and they sent a man up here in October to try and count the kangaroos, but it was so wet and the timber so thick it was very difficult. He counted ninety just in our clear paddocks. In January 1971, a team of men from the Service camped in the timber and set a trap but only six kangaroos were caught in three days and taken to Bundure Station which is a sanctuary.

All kangaroos were tranquilised when caught, and those taken to Bundure were tagged.

The number of kangaroos had dropped to about two hundred by then, some having decided it wasn't too safe here.

Farmers warned us they would trample our rice, but lucky to say, they didn't go near it. We then fenced the 250 acres in, for cattle in the future.

The Wildlife Service in March came again with a man from Young, who had a large property and wanted some kangaroos. They set up a trap with wire mesh bulk bins and built two fences tunnelling into the trap and we rostered the help of neighbours. We had a few drives with people on foot making a lot of noise, a couple of motor bikes and a horseman. It was quite fun for us, but not for the kangaroos, as we nearly frightened them to death. Anyway we caught sixteen, mainly does and young ones. One big red buck broke his neck when he hit the wire in the trap. After the first drive the majority avoided the trap.

I believe if we had had a lot more beaters and catchers we would have caught a lot more in the first and second drive, but after that they were too cunning and doubled back on us.

Once a kangaroo has made up his mind which direction he is going, nothing will stop him, and he would knock you down before he would stop or dodge around you.

Since there wasn't a hope of saving any more it was decided that if they did damage to wheat crops, we could get a permit to have them destroyed, but since the dry weather came and food is short, they have moved out onto other farms, and we only counted about twenty in August 1971.

The wildlife men said they are some of the best specimens of red kangaroo they have seen.

We hope they will keep going and find a new home on one of the stations.

Sydney University sent a couple of men out here to kill a few reds and greys for experiment purposes to find out why the reds only live on the plains.



*An alternative method of dealing with the kangaroo problem.  
A picture from the 1930's.*



*This town plan has now reached stage 1 for 300 people (September, 1971).  
Photo Robert Anthony Studio.*

**COLEAMBALLY ELECTRICAL SERVICE**

27. Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.

## A NOTE ON THE PLANNING OF C.I.A. AGRICULTURE

The views of E.R. Hoare, Chief of Division of Irrigation Research, C.S.I.R.O. Griffith.

The work on the Coleambally irrigation area proceeded ahead of the building of the Blowering Dam. Before settlement of the area the Blowering Committee had met several times to discuss farm size, types of cropping and to estimate the probable size of the Coleambally townships. Previous estimates had shown that farms devoted entirely to fat lambs and wool would not be viable and other forms of land cropping were required to make them so. It was calculated that the introduction of a rice crop of 50 to 80 acres enabled the occupier of the farm to eliminate its debt in about ten years. It was also suggested that other forms of annual crops, such as summer grains and especially cotton, could enable the Coleambally scheme to become quickly profitable. The problem at that time related to the obtaining of ready markets for the farm produce. One such crop was cotton which Australia at this time (1963), imported \$14 million worth.

At this time in a paper presented to the Institute of Engineers (Australia) at Khancoban in November 1963, Mr Hoare, Chief Scientist CSIRO of the Irrigation Laboratory, Griffith outlined the perplexing problem concerning the development of large irrigation projects. He pointed out that the engineering details of the scheme could be proceeded with incorporating a great deal of satisfactory engineering design knowledge, but the ultimate use of the farm lands would be under the control of farmers who would have to meet the economic problems of their time. This could be many years after the scheme was finished and developed. It was therefore necessary to incorporate in the design as much flexibility as possible. He suggested that as Australia already exported three quarters of its rice crop, other crops should be considered that helped to meet demands on the home market. Such a crop was cotton, which could be grown in the M.I.A. the Namoi or Macquarie developments. As it has happened the Namoi developed this crop much faster than any other area due to having slightly better climate and farm size on a scale that suited this mono-culture.

The CSIRO laboratory at Griffith, however, pursued a policy of adapting the cotton crop to the M.I.A. and also of improving it for a number of areas in Australia including the Namoi and Macquarie areas. He pointed out that Australia had a sufficiency in cereals and sugar but over the next 30 years to the year 1990, it would require an increase of horticulture by 40%, giving a 20% increase of fruit and a 100% increase of vegetables. Cattle would require a 40% increase and fat lambs, surprisingly enough, 80% increase plus whatever export was required. There was also an import of fibres (cotton), vegetable oil and these were the crops that would be available for the Coleambally development. His suggested limits were —

1. 150 vegetable farms of 200 acres each or 75 vegetable farms of 400 acres giving \$15m gross return, using 90,000 acre-feet of water.
2. 300 large area farms between 600 and 1000 acres, each planted with 200 acres of cotton giving an \$18 million gross return using 210,000 acre-feet of water.
3. A further 300 farm units with ancillary cropping on a sheep/rice/wheat/barley complex yielding \$12m gross, using 210,000 acre-feet of water.

He indicated that this was not the maximum in absolute terms and that Australia has the good fortune to have the capacity for further food production from these areas if desired. There was little doubt that the selection of good soil types for the successful application of arable farming would become of increasing importance. Whether this potential was to be achieved he indicated would depend on many social factors, of which one dominant factor would be the lead given by Government and grower organizations in planning a steady long term development.

At present not all these events have occurred. Cotton did not spread in Coleambally largely due to the high capital investment required, but arable cropping so necessary was found in oil and summer grain crops. There remains another twenty years in the period that was then discussed and no doubt cotton as well as oil and summer grains, together with vegetables, will play their part in the development of Coleambally.

M.I.D. CO-OP.

# THE FARMERS

## 1. From the W.C. & I.C.

### FARMING PURSUITS AND PRODUCTION

Farms set apart for mixed farming (non horticultural) purposes, which comprise the bulk of the Coleambally Irrigation Area, mainly operate on a "rice fat lamb" regime, supplemented by production of other grains, such as wheat, barley and oats, row crops and beef cattle. Grain sorghum, sunflower and maize and fodder crops such as sudax and lucerne are all grown successfully in varying acreages.

Rice has proved to be the major cash crop on the Coleambally Irrigation Area. In the 1968/69 season 51,080 tons were produced from the 15,724 acres harvested and with yields averaging over 3¼ tons per acre, the return to the grower from 70 acres of rice was in the vicinity of \$15,000 for that year.

Horticultural farms, located on the sandier soils of the Area, are designed for viticultural, citrus and peach production although many farmers have turned to vegetables in order to obtain early cash returns. Potatoes, onions and carrots have flourished in the sandy soils and mechanical harvesting techniques have made this pursuit a profitable enterprise.

The value of production for the year ending 30th June, 1970 was \$4,603,658 and is indicative of the potential of the Coleambally Irrigation Area.

## 2. From J. Wilkinson

(Presented to the 1971 Agricultural Bureau annual dinner and concert).

Sydney has its drugs and pollution, Coleambally has its Committees and submissions.

Two years ago I bought a Coleambally farm because I had been advised by several experts that irrigation farms were the best investment this side of the Black Stump.

Having bought this farm and shown such confidence in the area and having heard that the Hon Jack G. had rarely even seen a rice farm, I thought I should prepare a submission. After all, there were plenty of submissions dealing with rather stuffy figures of exports, areas, yields and God-knows-what but few dealing with the more human side.

Well, I was very disappointed that no one asked me to present my submission, so when Harry asked me to do the right thing at this dinner, I jumped at the chance to get the wretched thing off my chest.

Here it is!

A Coleambally farm is a 500 acre stretch of mud with water flowing in one end and profits out the other.

The rules were laid down by the W.C. & I.C. and amended by the Co-ordination Committee, the Rice Marketing Board, the Co-op Mills, the Ricegrowers Assoc, and the Departments of Agriculture, Industry, Trade, Customs and Health and finally refereed by OUR AL!

Others who have joined in the festival are the Shires of Urana, Jerilderie and Murrumbidgee, followed closely by the M.C.C., P.M.G., D.M.R., G.E.B., I.R.E.C., A.F.L., B.N.A., C.W.A. and the A.B.C.

The year starts in July when meetings are called in the various districts to bring about reductions of rice acreage in all the other districts and to elect the best talkers to try and convince the great panjandrum that industry knows best. The various leaders of the industry, having completed their world tours and compiled their conflicting reports, are duly re-elected and can safely resume the planning of their next world tours.

The farmers then leap aboard their tractors and commence scarifying, pulverising, levelling and seeding the biggest possible piece of dirt allowed under Rule 1, plus 5%.

At this stage big business moves in. All the companies handling that precious commodity Sulphate of Ammonia reduce their profit margins from 33% to 25%. However, they do better at the next stage when they retrieve the lost discounts during the Barnyard Grass scare.

The tempo gradually quickens to the harvest. This exciting period in April/May is a time of hot winds, rain, lines of trucks, elevator breakdowns, a scramble of trucks from Emery to Walsh to the Mill and back, elevator breakdowns, long yarns in the truck lines, fierce competition in tons per day, elevator breakdowns, until finally the sheds fill and the mechanics emerge from their cosy cubby-holes under the elevators and go about their business.

The next period is really difficult. The farmers sit around chewing their pencils and fingernails while gazing at sheets of computerised and incomprehensible figures which are finally sorted out by their accountants and scoffed at by their bank-managers.

From J. Wilkinson

AREA BRICKWORKS



# *Rice in the C.I.A.*

*by John McInnes*

Rice is planted in September-October and harvested in late March and early April. It is inundated with water during December, January and February.

Though the land requires considerable preparation, fertilisation and constant attention, rice has been a very remunerative crop.

When the first Coleambally farms were released in 1960 a well tried and proven routine had been established on the M.I.A. for growing rice. As many of the settlers on Coleambally were share farmers and sons of farmers from the M.I.A., and with the extension work of the Department of Agriculture particularly Agronomist Don Wallin, this knowledge was quickly introduced to the C.I.A. Coleambally leads the world in broadacre rice production.

It was two years before Coleambally had direct representation at an Industry level. This was through the formation of the Coleambally Branch of the Ricegrowers' Association, which meant the appointment of two delegates to the Central Executive.

Because of the transient nature of rice on the C.I.A. (rice could only be grown for the first six years after occupation) the Industry had decided that no permanent facilities or structures should be built in the area. The first bag storage was planned for Darlington Point. Local pressure successfully had this changed to the present Eulo site – but a cartage charge of 10/- per ton was added to cover the extra cartage involved. This charge remained until 1966.

The next bulk storage of 10,000 tons was built at Griffith (adjacent to milling facilities), the rice being received at Eulo into Transit Bins.

Gala Vale was chosen for the site of the next bulk storage shed despite some local pressure to locate it on the Mill site in the town.

On the 18th May, 1964 at a meeting of Coleambally Progress Association, a Committee was set up to investigate all aspects of a Mill. Those on the Committee were J. McInnes, F. Whelan, N. Dwyer, B. Cobden and F. Shaw. Ray Vicary, Robin Williamson and Ian Crump were co-opted to Committee.

On the 7th August, 1964 this Committee presented a documented case to the Ricegrowers Co-op Mill Directors. The deputation was told that the transient nature of rice on Coleambally was the main obstacle to constructing a Mill.

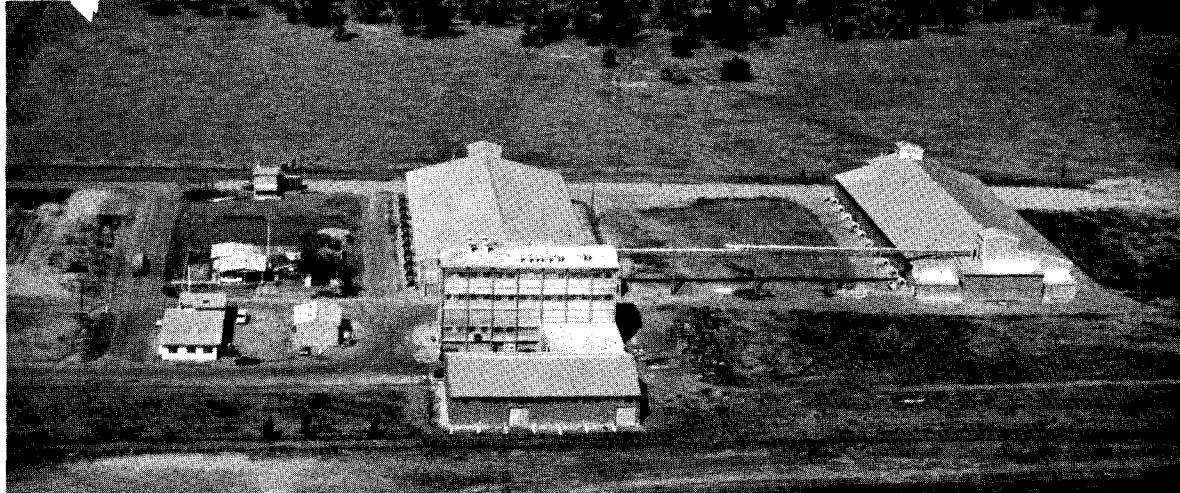
## **PERMANENT RICE**

From its earliest days in the Industry, Coleambally had been working for a more permanent rice situation. At the Annual Conference of the Ricegrowers' Association Leeton in August 1963 it was resolved that those farms which grew rice commencing 1960-61 season be extended by two years to the seasons 1966/67 and 1967/68 and those which commenced in the season 1961/62 be extended by one year to 1967/68. The resolution was carried by 36 votes to 28. Subsequently this proposal was put to the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission by the Ricegrowers Co-ordination Committee and agreed to on the grounds of maintaining production during the Blowering Dam construction period. The landholders were advised of the Commission's agreement in April 1964.

At the Annual Conference of 1964 a resolution was carried that there would be no decrease in acreage while rice was economic to the grower.

*On the 16th November, 1967*, the Central Executive carried a resolution supporting permanent rice on the 193 pre Blowering farms. This was subsequently adopted by Co-ordination Committee who carried it forward to the W.C. & I.C. These moves culminated in the announcement by the then Minister, Mr J.G. Beale that permanent rice had been granted to the existing 193 farms.

Almost immediately the Chairman of Ricegrowers Co-op Mills, Mr J. Woodside announced that a Mill would be built at Coleambally.



***Part of the Multi Million Dollar Investment of the Rice Industry in Coleambally.  
Photo: Robert Anthony Studios***

The next step was to obtain permanent rice for all Coleambally farms. This was put to the Central Executive and *passed*, to the Co-ordination Committee and thence to the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission on 7th May, 1969.

This decision was implemented by the removal of the six year clause from the gazettal notice for Coleambally farms and the insertion in future gazettal notices of the following:

"as from the 1970-71 season the Commission will consider application by holders for a supply of water under special conditions for the growing of a maximum of 60 acres of rice per season on each holding. The granting of any such application will be at the discretion of the Commission".

The years of uncertainty were now gone. The farmers of Coleambally are no longer to be considered "Itinerant Ricegrowers" but rather fully fledged members and equal partners in this great and very important industry of the Irrigation Areas and districts of South Western New South Wales.

#### **IMPORTANT DATES IN RICE HISTORY**

17th December, 1962	—	Coleambally Branch of the Ricegrowers' Association was formed
19th August, 1963	—	Resolution at Annual Conference to extend ricegrowing of 1st and 2nd allocation of farms
18th May, 1964	—	Progress elects Committee to investigate Rice Mill.
7th August, 1964	—	Committee presented case to Directors of Ricegrowers Co-op Mills
7th October, 1964	—	Representatives of Australian Rice Pty. Ltd., unsuccessfully made overtures to Coleambally Rice Growers.
26th November, 1964	—	Directors of Co-op Mills held public meeting at Coleambally to urge support of growers for Mill.
27th May, 1965	—	Co-ordination Committee waived 10/- per ton cartage levy and approved 10,000 ton storage at Gala Vale
16th November, 1967	—	Central Executive supported permanent rice for Pre-Blowering farms.
14th September, 1966	—	Minister announces permanent rice.
22nd September, 1966	—	Chairman announces decision to build a Mill.
23rd May, 1969	—	Hon. G.R. Crawford D.C.M., M.L.A., opens Coleambally Rice Mill.
7th May, 1969	—	Co-ordination Committee informed W.C. & I.C. that Industry favours post-Blowering farms being on some rice growing basis as pre-Blowering.
3rd December, 1969	—	W.C. & I.C. agreed.

**"ENGELMARK" STUD**



## THE RICE MARKETING BOARD FOR THE STATE OF N.S.W.

The Rice Marketing Board has played an important part in the development of the Coleambally Irrigation Area. Amongst other functions, it is responsible for the receipt of rice paddy from growers during the rice harvest each year and provides storage facilities for the crop.

The Coleambally rice farmers are entitled to representation in the Rice Marketing Board and in this capacity N. Dwyer served from 1964 to 1970. The present member Bob Blake was elected in 1970 and serving the Coleambally Irrigation Area on the Board at the present time.

The first rice storage shed on Coleambally was constructed at Eulo in 1963 where bagging out facilities were provided together with large overhead hoppers where bulk rice could be transhipped to the M.I.A. This receipt point was named the Walsh complex after Frank Walsh, a past chairman of the R.M.B. He is an original soldier settler at Stanbridge and has played a prominent part in the history of the rice industry.

Further storage complexes were built at the Coleambally Mill site and at Gala Vale which was named the Emery complex in honour of Menzies Emery who served on the R.M.B. for 21 years. The Emery complex is one of the largest in the rice growing areas storing over 27,800 tons of Coleambally rice grown each year.

The Rice Marketing Board has built its storage sheds with capital contributed by growers. Under the Equity Redemption Fund Equity certificates are issued and individual growers are able to cash these certificates when they leave the industry. The amount of Equity certificates issued to 1971 was \$5,779,325.

Another important function of the R.M.B. is the arranging of finance and the distribution of progress payments to growers. In addition, it regulates the required production of varieties by providing premiums for certain varieties and the issuing of rice seed.

The Board works hand in hand with the Department of Agriculture and operates a pure seed scheme for the benefit of rice growers. Stud seed is selected and grown each year and helps to maintain a high quality of seed. A constant search is carried out for improved new varieties which are tried under field conditions and appraised in the R.M.B. Appraisal Laboratory.

The Appraisal Laboratory is used for the quality appraisal of samples from every grower's crop and farmers are helped and encouraged to deliver the highest quantity paddy.

The Rice Marketing Board is also responsible for rice promotion. It actively encourages people to eat more rice by means of cooking demonstrations, advertisements in women's magazines, chef's Publications etc and finances each years promotion campaign based on 3% of the value of home market sales.

### COLEAMBALLY RICE INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION

#### CENTRAL EXECUTIVE

Robin Williamson	1962-1971
N.T. Dwyer	1962-1964
J. McInnes	1964-1966
F. Whelan	1965-1971
B. McDougall	1966-1971
H. Burge	1970-1971

*Growers delivering rice to a bulk receipt point at the Walsh Complex on the Coleambally Irrigation Area.*

#### RICE MARKETING BOARD

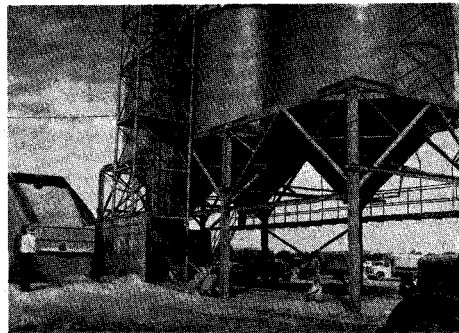
N.T. Dwyer	1965-1970
R. Blake	1970-1971

#### RICE GROWERS CO-OP MILL

Robin Williamson

#### RICE GROWERS CO-ORDINATION COMMITTEE

In addition to the Board and Mill Representatives, J. McInnes 1964-1966 and F. Whelan 1966-1971 were elected from Central Executive to Ricegrowers Co-ordination Committee.



## **RICEGROWERS' CO-OPERATIVE MILLS LTD.**

Ricegrowers' Co-operative Mills Limited are proud of the fact that all eligible Ricegrowers in Coleambally have become shareholders of the Co-operative, and that the Coleambally Shareholders and in turn the Coleambally Rice Mill play an important and intricate part in the overall operation of the Co-operative.

Ricegrowers' Co-operative Mills Ltd., is the organisation that mills and markets the entire New South Wales Rice production plus a portion of the Queensland Rice production.

At the present time the Ricegrowers' Co-op Mill Ltd., owns and operates seven Rice Mills in three states of Australia, that is Leeton, Griffith, Yenda, Coleambally and Deniliquin in New South Wales, Echuca in Victoria and Brandon in Queensland.

The Coleambally Rice Mill is not only in the centre of the Coleambally Irrigation Area, but as reference to the map shows, it is also virtually the central point in the area of economic activity covered by the Co-operative in southwestern New South Wales.

When Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Ltd., was formed in 1950 its first mill was established at Leeton where the headquarters of the organisation is still located.

Over the years, the original Leeton mill has been substantially increased in capacity and updated in the techniques employed. All mills owned by the Co-operative now have a standard of technical excellence which was unthought of in the earlier proprietary mills in the days before they were taken over by the Co-operative.

Construction of Coleambally Mill was commenced in February 1968, and was officially opened by Mr. G.R. Crawford, New South Wales Minister for Agriculture on 23rd May, 1969. It was, at the time, the fifth mill of Ricegrowers' Co-operative Mills Limited and was the first completely new mill which the Co-operative had constructed since the initial Leeton mill was built in 1950/51.

During the early years of Coleambally, that is 1960-1966, the original W.C. & I.C. policy of six years of rice only per farm plus the uncompleted design of the C.I.A., posed many difficult problems for both the Rice Marketing Board and the Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Ltd.

Whilst this six year rolling policy was in operation neither the Rice Marketing Board or the Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills were able to determine suitable sites or a central site where a Rice Mill could be installed.

However the then Chairman of the Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Limited, Mr John Woodside, gave Coleambally Ricegrowers a firm undertaking that if and when Coleambally got permanent Rice Rights the Co-operative would take immediate action to establish a mill in Coleambally.

In a momentous change in water policy on 14th September, 1966 the Minister for Conservation wrote to the Rice Industry Co-ordination Committee advising that the restriction limiting Coleambally farms to six years of rice growing would be removed and permanent rice rights would be granted.

The directors of Ricegrowers' Co-operative Mills Limited met on Thursday, 22nd September, 1966 to consider the Minister's changed water policy.

The Chairman of Directors made a press statement immediately after the Director's Meeting stating that the co-operative was taking immediate steps to acquire a site and establish a mill in Coleambally commencing with the construction of a 10,000 ton Aeration Storage shed for the 1967 harvest.

The present Coleambally Rice Mill is stage 1 of a large Rice Milling complex planned for the Coleambally site by Ricegrowers' Co-op Mill Limited.

Had Coleambally settlement continued at the planned rate of fifty farms per year, Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills had proposed to increase the size of the Coleambally Mill to thirty-two tons per hour in 1971/72, which is equivalent to the present total capacity of the three M.I.A. mills, that is Leeton, Griffith and Yenda.

A further increase to forty tons per hour had been planned for 1975. This together with increased storage capacity of a further 30,000 tons of aerated storage to make a total of 50,000 tons of aerated storage at the Coleambally Mill site, would have brought the total capital investment at this site to approximately \$3½ million.

Unfortunately deferment of Coleambally has also meant the deferment of this building programme.

The absence of Rail Facilities at Coleambally is another matter that has hampered planned development of additional facilities at the Coleambally Mill.

Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills has become well-known throughout Australia by the packing and marketing of the famous 'Sunwhite' packet rice.

During the short twenty years since Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Limited was founded, staff have increased from one part time employee in 1950 to approximately five hundred employees in 1971 and annual turnover during the same period has increased from Nil in 1950 to approximately \$30 million during 1970/71.

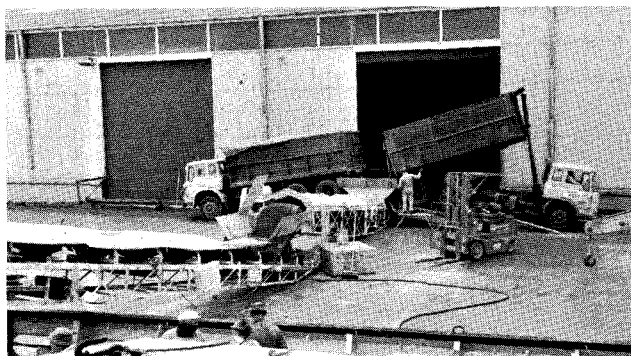
**LEIFTING BROS. BRICKWORKS**

Robyn Williamson

For those unfamiliar with the areas of responsibility of the various rice organisation in New South Wales Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Ltd., buy the Paddy Rice from the Rice Marketing Board for the State of New South Wales ex Board Weighbridge, this means that Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Ltd., assume control of the Paddy Rice as soon as the grower's truck has been weighed and tested by the Rice Marketing Board. From this point on, that is storage, milling, packing, shipping and actual sale of the milled rice and rice by-products becomes the responsibility of Ricegrowers' Co-op Mills Ltd.

**BELOW: Loading Course Grains, Geelong, 1971**  
Photo: P. Smith

**RIGHT: Farm Development**  
Photos: F. Shaw



## WHEAT

The C.I.A. produces over half a million bushels of wheat a year. Planted in Autumn and harvested in December, it makes a good complimentary crop to rice.

The early settlers on Coleambally recognised wheat's value as a developmental crop, enabling the farm to be contoured and graded and soil settlement to occur. The economics of the crop allowed this to be done.

This role was not fully appreciated until quotas were introduced three years ago when new farms were not allocated quotas, or at best only very small ones. Considerable agitation took place until this position was improved by the allocation of "developmental quotas" to the last farm released.

After the wheat explosion of 64/65, which produced three quarters of a million bushels, more than treble the previous years' production, the need for local storage was obvious. Like the ancient caravans of old, cavalcades of farmers' trucks set out in all directions from Coleambally, seeing any available storage space. Tocumwal, Berigan, Jerilderie in the South, Morundah and Narrandera in the East and Murrumbidgee, Whitton, Wilbriggie and Yanco in the North, became in many instances second homes for Coleambally farmers during the 64-65 harvest.

Coleambally wheat growers were tired of their wheat going to an orphanage — they wanted their own home for it, their own storage within Coleambally.

It was not surprising that the Coleambally Branch of U.F.W.A. in February 65 unanimously decided to form a committee to prepare argument to support the claim for a 450,000 bushel storage for Coleambally. The Committee of Messrs. Burge, Dwyer, Leach, Smith, McInnes, Whelan and Vicary presented their documented case to the next meeting of U.F.W.A. which was the Annual held in "Hell's kitchen" Argoon under alladin lamp.

Looking back the problems do not appear to have been large, but at that time in '65 the problems appeared to be larger than giant size. Some said, we were reaching for the moon, (Since then incidentally man has reached the moon and we have our storage).

Grain Elevators Board's policy of storage on rail-head only had never been breached; and the flood of conflicting requests for storage all over New South Wales presented the authorities with a dilemma. About this time, April '65, Mr. Stan Hodgson, Chairman of the G.E.B. visited the southern part of the State and was heard to say, "When Coleambally really decided what they want we will look at it". The Silo Committees

**L. S. HARDIE**

operating at surrounding Receival Centres such as Morundah, Wilbriggie, Yanco, were pressing for additional storage to serve both Coleambally and themselves. No wonder the authorities were, or chose to be, confused.

Another harvest of approximately three-quarters-of-a-million bushels passed.

By July '66 Coleambally had really consolidated its thinking on storage. The town doubters had been routed by the visible presence of the School, and the general activity of the Shire.

Tipped off by Noel Hogan, that Mr Hodgson was more than sympathetic and ready to receive a deputation, U.F.W.A., the Progress Association and Coleambally Branch of the Rice Growers Association, dispatched a delegation forthwith. Consequently on 6th July, 1966 at 4.00 a.m. Messrs Williamson, Vicary and Whelan set off. First, our driver, who had better remain anonymous had the unhappy knack of driving at 30 m.p.h. all the way yet arriving at each corner at 60 m.p.h. Secondly Mr Hodgson seemed very impressed with the arguments advanced and indicated he would put the matter before the full board for decision provided the Coleambally people agreed to accept the fact that the cost of road haulage back to rail would be a transport deduction in the same way as railway freight itself is a deduction from the payment to growers. Thirdly, Al Grassby, who introduced the deputation successfully advanced the argument the storage built on a proposed railway site did not impair the G.E.B. time honoured policy of storage at rail-head only.

About this time the State Government had announced that it was passing amending legislation to reconstruct the G.E.B. to give a grower majority on the Board. Because of this the G.E.B. refused to take such a major decision on the eve of the changeover.

So yet another Coleambally harvest of six hundred thousand bushels passed.

The storage situation throughout the State was acute. To assess the position in February '67 U.F.W.A. conducted seven regional meetings one for each G.E.B. Inspectorate district. These meetings revealed an overall State deficiency of 96,89 million bushels. To confound the problem the wheat Sub-Committee of U.F.W.A. had met and reaffirmed the rail head only policy — by this time the number of requests for off rail had increased to four, Melrose, Bulgumia, Walbundrie and of course Coleambally.

At the Narrandera regional meeting, Messrs Robinson, Vicary and Whelan put a strong case for five hundred thousand bushel off rail storage. They were successful principally because neighbouring site committees were now sick and tired of the plethora of Coleambally wheat descending upon their receival centre upsetting the smooth running thereof — the most common sentiment expressed being "We are alright for storage if you would fix up Coleambally". This meeting elected Ron Carlon and John Kelly to present the results of the meeting to the U.F.W.A. wheat committee. Because Coleambally missed out on a draw from the hat, Ron Carlon insisted that we send a man to state our own case. The Executives of Rice Growers, U.F.W.A. and Progress agreed for two reasons. First it was calculated that the new G.E.B. grower members would be in fact in the room, although nomination had not yet been open. Therefore it was a good opportunity to canvass our case. (This assumption later proved to be spot on) Secondly, the situation was becoming critical. If buildings were erected to house Coleambally wheat elsewhere; this would have pre-empted our ability to have storage erected in the town later and so jeopardise the chances of the proposed railway.

Some members of the U.F.W.A. wheat committee were unhappy about an unauthorised delegate speaking; one from Moree, Cliff Rees, claiming it was a political stunt and taking up too much valuable time. However the delegate was allowed to proceed and was strongly supported by Ron Carlon who was unsuccessfully subjected to heavy pressure to declare an alternative site to Coleambally town site. After the meeting it became obvious that attitudes were softening and that a good deal of support existed on an individual basis.

It was now only a matter of time.

Amid the swamp box trees on 21st June 1967, Tom A'Beckett, (retiring G.E.B. member) and the G.E.B. Engineer met with the two shire representatives, Messrs McInnes and Davidson and others to inspect and choose a site.

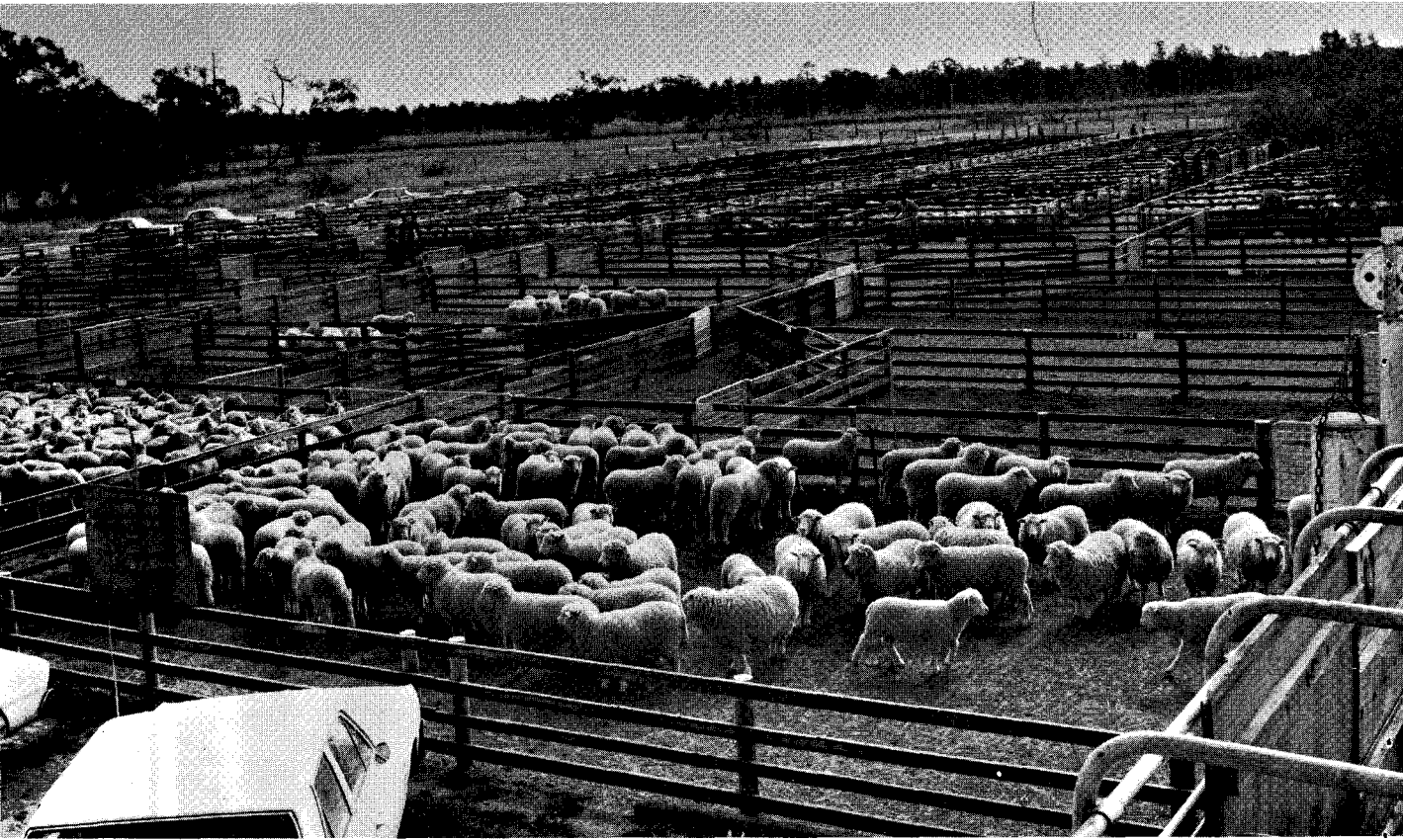
Later the G.E.B. announced the allocation to Coleambally of a Temporary Type Storage — we had a foot in the door.

There was quite an air of satisfaction in Coleambally when the G.E.B. informed the Shire Council that a "Semi-Permanent" storage fully equipped with receival facilities would be constructed. Was it worth it all? Would storage have come to Coleambally in due course anyway without all this activity by farmer organisations the Shire Council and others? What do you think?

Frank Whelan

**G. P. McGOWN & ASSOCIATES**

## THE SALEYARDS



### THE SALEYARDS

*Photo: Robert Anthony Studios*

The need for saleyards at Coleambally was early recognised as the town developed as a centre. A report and site plan was presented to the Murrumbidgee Shire Council on 11th July, 1969 and construction began shortly thereafter.

The first over-the-scales pig sale was held at the new saleyards on June 10, 1970, and was conducted by Dalgety and New Zealand Loan Ltd.

The Sheep selling yards were opened on September 21, 1970 "with a yarding of 8,300 sheep and a continuous downpour of rain", as the "Riverina Daily News" aptly expressed it.

On behalf of the Murrumbidgee Shire, the Health and Building Inspector, then Mr. Geoff Starkey, conveyed to buyers, sellers and agents the Shire Council's best wishes for the opening and all future sales at Coleambally.

Mr. Frank Mellington, secretary of the Coleambally Local Agents Association, replied. He expressed confidence in the future of the Coleambally Stock yards and thanked those present for their attendance. Australian Estates Co. Ltd., drew first call.

Mr. Gene Barker on behalf of owners of sheep in the first selling pen, offered the traditional stetson hat to the first buyer. This was won by a buyer representing A.J. Bush & Co.

The first pen went for \$7.05 and the sale was completed in ninety minutes with a total clearance.

The Saleyards have now been in operation for almost twelve months and prices have been at least equal and on occasions ahead of surrounding areas. Sales have been held on the same day as Finley, which has helped to ensure a good attendance of buyers.

A major swing to cattle in Coleambally has resulted in the Saleyards Committee commencing a study of the economics of cattle Saleyards for the area.

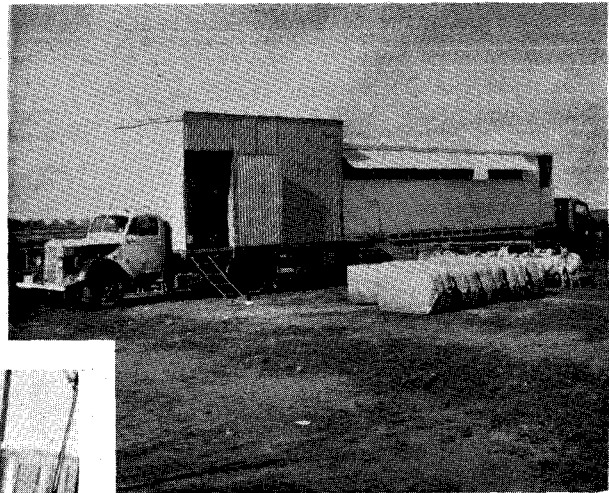
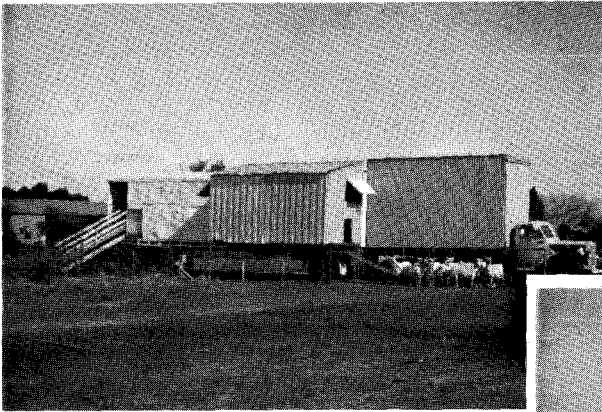
**B. G. & J. M. O'MAHONEY**

### THE MOBILE SHEARING PLANT

The Mobile Shearing Plant was constructed by Mr H.R.W. McClure at Narrandera in 1965 and has since operated solely in the C.I.A. The first farmer to use this Plant was Mr Elliott Shaw of farm 168 Coleambally. It is now owned and operated by Mr Brian O'Mahoney of Narrandera. It consists of three trucks — shearing shed woll room — holding — cover room shed and when placed together provided a complete 3 stand shearing shed, with five men employed. This unit is easily movable from one farm to another taking approximately ten to fifteen minutes to assemble and pack up. Normal working day would be 350 sheep shorn of 1200 crutched.

Mr O'Mahoney has always been associated with the shearing industry and at Mr D.F. Ross's property "Uri Park" at Darlington Point in July 1965 set a new Australian Shearing Record, shearing 329 merino lambs in 7 hours 48 minutes. This record was later broken by Mr Kevin Sarre.

*Brian O'Mahony's Shed at Work.*



### FERTILIZER SERVICES



### THE RIVERINA COARSE GRAINGROWERS ASSOCIATION

The Story of the R.C.G.A. and the Coleambally people involved in it is a short but active one. Formed just under two years ago on the 19th February, 1970 — Its functions have been to:

- (1) Help the coarsegrain and oilseed growers improve their agronomic husbandry of the crops by means of Field Days and Seminars.
- (2) Through I.R.E.C. Grain Crop Committee to help guide research into the best varieties, agronomic practices and other associated problems, such as grain drying and handling.
- (3) Liaise with Government Departments and Ministers on the particular problems of the industry.
- (4) Probably the most important of all — to flow back to growers accurate market information, gained through the R.C.G.A.'s association with the A.C.G.A.L.

The need for such an Organisation as the R.C.G.A. became apparent in 1968 — 69 with the event of wheat quotas. Up until this time the coarse grain industry in the area had passed through two phases:— Firstly, in the early days of Coleambally, Sorghum had not been widely grown and those growers who did produce this grain made their own marketing arrangements through grain Merchants in the Area. As the feed grain market at this time was fairly stable, satisfactory prices generally were obtained. Problems of obtaining sufficient advice on the growing of the crop as well as the problems of grain drying deterred many growers from persevering with the crop. Maize was virtually unknown in the district, though two growers who did grow this crop come to mind — Jim Wilson and Alan Gorey.

In 1967-68 season the interest in Sorghum growing increased with the event of the formation of the A.F.L. Mitsui Co., which contracted with growers to produce Sorghum for the Export Market. Two Coleambally farmers who were early starters with these contracts were Doug Sutherland and Frank Whelan. When harvest time came, however, much of this grain was sold on the domestic market. This was done with the agreement of the contracting company and led next year to the signing of a much larger tonnage on domestic contracts to supply the Melbourne market, which returned \$40 per ton to growers.

With the event of this large tonnage came the need for a drying installation. For the harvest of 68/69 a more or less experimental installation, providing drying and storage, was established by A.F.L. Mitsui in the industrial section of the Coleambally town. Similar installations were erected in Leeton Griffith and Jerilderie. However, many problems and delays occurred and some growers persevered with on farm dryers of varying designs. These also had their problems. One operated by Frank Whelan and Paul Smith dried about 450 tons of grain — even though there was an odd midnight fire or two.

Sowings of Sorghum increased in the next season (69/70) and the installation in the Coleambally town was considerably enlarged and a continuous type grain dryer was installed. Preparation for a big harvest were under way when two "disasters" struck — wheat quotas and the mouse plague.

With the event of wheat quotas many growers had large tonnages of wheat which was in excess of their quotas and much of this was trucked across the border to Melbourne at low prices. This completely ruined the Melbourne Sorghum market. Whereas growers had planted Sorghum hoping for close to the \$40 per ton, they had received the year before, they found themselves being offered prices ranging from \$18 — \$24 per ton. Maize growers were faring no better — receiving offers of 70c-80c per bushel.

This problem was raised by Doug Sutherland at the Ricegrowers Association's Annual Conference, held at Coleambally in 1969. Bruce Gowrie Smith, who was growing maize close to Coleambally at Darlington Point explained how growers at Quirindi had formed a co-operative and were marketing their grain at prices considerably above those being received by Riverina Growers.

The Directors of the Quirindi Co-op were invited to address grower meetings in the Riverina and on the 10th September 1969, a meeting at Coleambally was followed by one at Griffith, and another at Finley about two weeks later.

Further meetings were then held all over the State of N.S.W. In the Riverina an investigation committee was burning the midnight oil often and late, seeking the best solution to a mass of problems. Coleambally personnel attending were : Frank Whelan, Ian Pike, Doug Sutherland, Cec Polkinghorne, and Paul Smith. These meetings were held in Darlington Point with the helpful assistance of the Murrumbidgee Shire Council, who made a meeting place available. It soon became clear that there was no hope of satisfactory prices being obtained on the home market, and so the Export Market was the only hope. To undertake this was a big task and the co-operation of the other regions throughout the state would be essential.

To this end a meeting of all the regions was held at Gunnedah on the 12th February, 1970. Three small planes were chartered by Riverina growers who flew to attend. Among those who went were Coleambally farmers : Doug Sutherland, Ian Pike, Bill Hamilton, Frank Whelan and Paul Smith.

**S. & K. McDONALD**



The Riverina delegation returned home and called two formation meetings in the Riverina to form the R.C.G.A. These were held at Darlington Point on the 19th February, 1970 — for the Murrumbidgee Valley and at Jerilderie for the Murray Valley about one week later. Three Coleambally people were elected to the executive of the Murrumbidgee Branch : Frank Whelan — Vice President; Paul Smith — Secretary; and Doug Sutherland — Treasurer. Soon after, the two branches met at the Central School in Coleambally to form a central executive of the Association. The three Coleambally personnel on the executive of the Murrumbidgee Branch were elected to the same positions on the Central Executive.

On the 25th February, the Riverina delegation returned to the formation meeting of the A.C.G.A.L. in Canberra. Here the decision to conduct voluntary pools for Sorghum and Maize were taken. This grain was to be exported through Newcastle using the G.E.B. system, whose chairman addressed the meeting. Mr Doug Anthony, then Minister for Primary Industries, attended briefly and offered his support for the undertaking. A Board of Directors, consisting of three from each of the six regions of N.S.W. was elected to conduct the affairs of the Association. Riverina Directors elected were Bruce Gowrie Smith, (Griffith), Paul Smith (Coleambally) and Murray Creed (Jerilderie).

The meeting elected AFL-Mitsui as managing agents and the first Board Meeting was set down to be held at Goldfield House Sydney, on the 17th March 1970. It is now history that the A.C.G.A.L. in its first year proceeded to export \$2,000,000 worth of Sorghum and Maize for growers and raise the price to approximately \$30 per ton for Sorghum and 95 cents per bushel for Maize. In the second year the throughput of A.C.G.A.L. was to rise to over \$15,000,000 worth of grain.

The prices received for the grain varied with the Rail freight from the various regions. While growers close to Newcastle received about \$31 for Sorghum and over \$1 a bushel for Maize, Riverina growers, having the highest rail freight, received \$29.20 for Sorghum and 95c per bushel for Maize.

The R.C.G.A. had grown in 12 months to over 400 members with another branch being formed at Wagga, where increasing tonnages of legumes were being grown. An assistant part time Secretary had been employed to cope with the work involved. After the retirement of the original assistant, Mrs Eykamp of Leeton, Mrs Paul Smith was employed. Farm 185, Coleambally became the office of the R.C.G.A. having a typewriter, duplicator, filing cabinet and a well used telephone.

The Central Executive met in Finley late in 1970 and examined the rail freight problem. It was clear that the only real hope was to export through a southern port such as Melbourne, Western Port Bay, Portland or Geelong. A port Investigation Committee was set up and later spent three days seeking out every possible outlet in these ports. Coleambally personnel involved were Jim Wilson, Ian Pike, Frank Whelan, Doug Sutherland and Paul Smith.

As the 1970-71 harvest approached another trip to Melbourne and Geelong was undertaken and at the eleventh hour a site was found at the ex-Cresco Super Works at Geelong. Storage space was available and a good receival system was ready for work. To outload the grain it would be necessary to load tip trucks by front end loader and transport it half a mile to wharf where it would be loaded onto ship by portable conveyor belt. Costings were carried out and with A.C.G.A.L. approval, the movement of approximately 16,000 tons of Riverina grain to Geelong by Road Transport was commenced.

The first shipment of 2,800 tons of sunflower seed and 4,600 tons of sorghum was loaded in July and the second shipment of 1300 tons of sorghum and 6,500 tons of Maize is due to sail in early October. Though there were problems at times the proof of success is in the price to be paid to Riverina growers — sorghum approximately \$32 per ton and Maize \$1.10 per bushel.

Now at the time of writing we are in the 1971-72 sowing season. With the prices received for grain exporting through Geelong there has been an increased interest in oilseeds and coarse grains from indication of seed orders it appears possible that next season's harvest could yield a greatly increased tonnage with the total possibly exceeding 50,000 tons, all going well. On the local scene the likelihood of a major grasshopper plague clouds the horizon a little and the dollar crisis and its possible effect on the Japanese economy does not help on the international scene. However, many difficulties have been overcome in the past eighteen months and with hope of dealing with those in the future, plans are proceeding for future years. Work towards a miscellaneous Grains Terminal situated at Geelong to serve Victoria and the Riverina is proceeding. An improved transport system is also needed and the ultimate hope is for standard gauge rail line from the Riverina to Geelong. Improvements such as these will be necessary to cope with the vast tonnage the Riverina is likely to produce in future years.

Those Coleambally personnel involved in the affairs of the R.C.G.A., the membership of which now approaches 700, agree that it has been a time consuming effort but one well worth while.

**"ARGOON" CATTLE STUD**

## THE HORTICULTURAL FARMS OF COLEAMBALLY

In 1963, as part of the overall planning for the C.I.A., 14 small farms, varying in size from 64 to about 100 acres, were pegged out in sandhill country in the far N.E. corner of the area. In general, the farms were simply timbered sand dunes of up to 35' in height, with sandy flats interspersed. It appears that the aim of the surveyors was to allow each farmer about 40 acres of first-class horticultural land, i.e., land that could be spray irrigated and farmed indefinitely without the need for tile drainage. The planners visualised these small farms as orchards of citrus, and/or as vineyards. Stone fruits, in particular peaches, were also recommended.

Several small, isolated, timbered blocks failed for at least three years to catch the public eye; but in the meantime a few adventurous men took up their farms. These early battlers seem to have been of two broad types: the orchardists such as Tom King and Parry Bocking, with David Welch and Vogel, who planted trees and vines; and the vegetable growers, of whom Andrew Bellato, Tony Broso, and the Andreatta/Mian partnership come readily to mind. Both groups had their early setbacks and disappointments: this was a new kind of farming, on soils and subsoils with rather remarkable and even mysterious characteristics, in an area where cultivation was immediately subject to a fierce wind scour, and where retention of moisture in the topsoil was difficult and costly. On the credit side, water was reliably available, and the farms were of low rental; on the debit, only spray irrigation could be used and the costs of fixed equipment were difficult to meet on farms giving as yet no returns.

The first to make the breakthrough were the vegetable growers, and the potatoes grown and washed in Coleambally and road freighted to capital cities became favourably known on all the East coast of the continent. Great credit must be given here to the Broso, Bellato, Andreatta and Main families for their perseverance and inventiveness. Techniques of bulk handling in sand farming had to be worked out; machines made for heavier soils needed extensive modifications; and the leading pest of the region, skeleton weed, had to be overcome by deep ploughing and persistent cultivation.

Most of us are familiar enough with the everyday problems of taking up farm blocks . . . but these farms had some extra ones thrown in free to keep the sandgropers interested: the stubborn resistance of green pine and box stumps; the cheerful aggressiveness of the bulldog ants, of which a nest was found under every tree; the fierce heat of the sands in the summer; provision of power for pumping; blind stumps (plough-smashers.); and over all, the wind, the scorching, snad-pelting wind.

Of the early settlers, three decided not to stay, and their three blocks passed into the hands of fresh owners, in each case energetic young vegetable growers: Tony Galuzzo of farm 1016, Bill Cadorin of Farm 1013, and Bob Kennedy of 1004. Of these three farms, only 1016 had been developed to any extent, and nothing at all had been done on 1004, so all these three men faced the same complexity and width of problems as if they had been the first holders.

The early unattractiveness of the blocks persisted, although by 1966 the success of such inventive men as Tony Broso was established. By mid-1966, Mr P. Naismith was living on his block and the fence line between him and his neighbour Mr Jack Thompson was complete, but close at hand were two more farms without tenants (1005 and 1006). These were soon occupied by Ivan and Fay Holingworth on 1005 and John and Joan Crawford on 1066.

From 1965 onwards, a wider range of activities showed the initiative of the fourteen enthusiastic tenants. Calf rearing, hybrid maize growing, sorghum growing for certified seed, pig raising, carrot and onion production all flourished for a short time. In this "mixed" type of farming, Parry and Barbara Bocking, and Tom and Gai King, were the leaders, and it is a pity that such vital approaches to farming should gradually fail. For this is what has been happening in the last three years here (until Sept 1971). Excepting potato growing, the farming ventures here have been disappointing, and the eagerness of the settlers has to a great degree faded. This may well be, of course, temporary. But some of its apparent causes are clearly permanent. Among these are deep-seated and at present incurable drainage problems, coupled with an unexplained reluctance of trees, both citrus and peaches, to grow and yield. General financial distress has caused an investigation by a State Governmental Committee, and its findings are soon to be made public. Meanwhile, of 14 farms, 4 tenants are earning their livings in permanent jobs off the farm.

What of our later fellow-sandgropers to the south-west? These men, moving onto their farms in 1969, appear to have had two advantages: they were able to confer with the earlier birds about sand-farming ideas, and they needed to have more finance, to qualify. The result is that they have made noticeable more progress in their first three years than we did. An encouraging feature of the S.W. area, near the town, is the strong movement towards the building of a winery; this could well mean permanent prosperity, which at the moment in the sandhills of the N.E. is as close and as substantial as a midsummer mirage over Tubbo.

**COLEAMBALLY SERVICES PTY. LTD.**

## **BEEF CATTLE IN THE C.I.A. - Statement from Stud Owners**

It is our belief that the beef and veal industry has a real and justified place in the C.I.A. we are also sure of the fact that the beef industry can play a very important part in the development of future C.I.A. farms, as it has in the past.

It will be noticed that during the drought affected years 1965-66-67, beef production dropped markedly, thus losing valuable export income. Water and the ability to diversify will always make irrigation areas safe areas as against dry land farming.

Droughts will always be with us from time to time, but Coleambally being an irrigation area, will have a decided advantage over dry land farming. By being in this position Coleambally can and will produce beef of high quality to meet expanding world markets.

It is also important to note that the beef industry is the only meat industry over the last ten years that can claim increased prices and a handsome profit for the capital invested.

Our export markets can only be described as being very sound. Export market opportunities will continue and good prospects for increased demand for beef at very favourable prices on the United States market looks encouraging.

Canada and Japan are importing substantially large consignments of beef, thus putting the Australian beef industry on a very sound basis. Just recently the U.S.S.R. has emerged as a future market for Australian export beef.

Of all farm investments, the beef industry appears to be one of those with the greatest potential and future.

### **TREVAIL PARK POLL HEREFORD**

Because cattle numbers and beef production is increasing, and this enterprise is contributing more and more to total farm profits, we should take this opportunity to up-grade our herds.

This is where, I believe, Poll Herefords can play their part in the up-grading of our beef, for home consumption and our very valuable export markets.

They will cross with any breed to produce top vealers, to meet an increasing demand for top quality beef.

The Tevail Park Poll Hereford Stud was established in 1961 with the purchase of four females from the "Allambie" Stud. In the same year Qantabadgery Haggis 2nd, a bull of tremendous size and scale, was purchased.

In 1964 I began activities on Farm 202 "Trevail Park" and moved part of the stud to Coleambally.

When the Dunoon Stud was dispersed in 1966, I acquired four top females as well as Lenehan's Adonis, a bull of great breeding quality, size and colour.

In 1968 I purchased Springfield Ven Cactus, a very type bull by the very famous Springfield Hy Venture.

During 1969 a one-third share of Springfield Hy Venture was sold for \$10,000 to a New Zealand breeder. This year Springfield Omaha 2nd was added as a junior sire, to mate with my heffers.

Over the last couple of years we have seen the implementation of quotas on wheat, dairy products, rice to a degree, and I beleive many other farm commodities will in the not too distant future, have quotas placed upon them.

Quotas mean that there is over production in that particular product and when that critical position has been reached type and quality comes to the fore.

J.R. Allen, a leading Hereford breeder, makes the point that "at the main markets throughout the U.S.A. you will find that 95% of the beef cattle will be Britain breeds or their crosses".

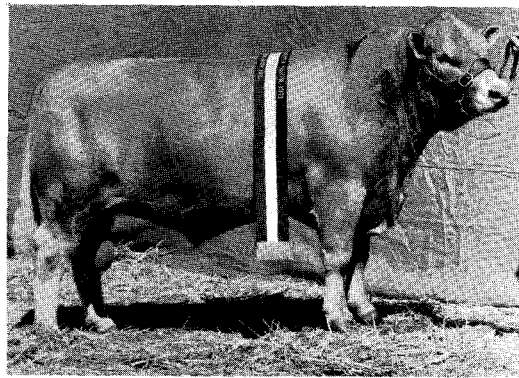
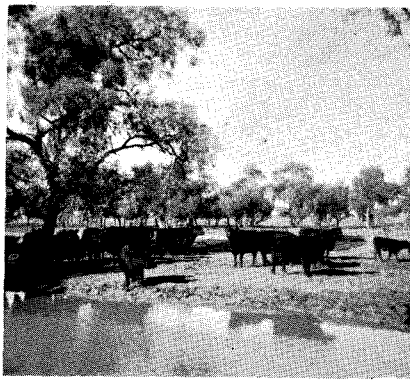
He goes on to stress the importance of quality "Surely the soundest foundations on which to build an industry which is determined to become Australia's most important new industry would be to produce a regular supply of consistently high grade beef"

At the moment Australia is not in a position to produce a choice grade of beef to meet a competitive market when that day arrives.

It is in my opinion that the production of good quality beef such as the British breeds will play an increasingly important part in the Australian beef market and the development of the C.I.A.

**MURRUMBIDGEE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Terry Hogan**



#### **JOMARIN MURRAY GREY STUD**

The Murray Grey breed traces its beginning to 1905. On "Thologolong" via Wodonga, Victoria an extremely light roan (almost white) shorthorn cow was mated with an Aberdeen Angus bull, the resultant calf being of grey colour. During her lifetime this Shorthorn cow had approximately twelve calves which were all dun grey, and as far as is known, she did not have a calf or any other colour.

For the next 40 years, the Sutherland family used only Aberdeen Angus bulls on the grey cattle but the predominance of the grey colour persisted.

Because of this, two grey bulls were retained for the purpose of establishing a new breed but, due to difficulties which the plan involved, the idea was abandoned and in 1938 one bull was sold to three brothers — W.R. and M. Gadd of Mt. Alfred, Victoria.

It had also been noticed by the Gadd Bros. that an occasional grey steer or bullock was among the black cattle on "Thologolong" and it always appeared to be the best beast in the mob for both condition and size. Not long after, about 1940 the brothers dissolved partnership and the ownership of the grey bull passed to Mervyn, the youngest of them and he obtained fifteen Aberdeen Angus females from "Thologolong" and another fifteen from "Alberfeldy" the property of Mr D. Ross of Holbrook, New South Wales, (incidentally a relative of the Ross family of Coleambally) with the view to establishing a herd of greys. From this point, by continued use of "grey" bulls, the cattle were developed as a breed on a commercial basis and became well known.

It was during the period of building up the herd that the first pens of commercial cattle were produced. These were very successful and this led to the formation of the Murray Grey Beef Cattle Society.

A leading meat company made it known that the Greys handled by them had yielded the highest proportion of top grade beef to fat and bone of any cattle that they had ever killed. Their quality as beef stock became known and they have achieved outstanding success in beef carcass competitions.

The "Greys" were introduced into the Coleambally Irrigation Area with the formation of the "Jomarin" Murray Grey Stud. A Silver "A" grade Murray Grey bull Bimbadeen Neptune was purchased from Mr Herb Barlee of Bimbadeen Murray Grey Stud, Khancoban, a pioneer breeder of Murray Greys on Thologolong blood lines. This bull was joined to a number of "C" grade cows.

Meanwhile a small grading-up program through high quality stud and commercial Angus cows is at present in its second stage with the purchase of an additional Silver bull Bimbadeen Vesuvius.

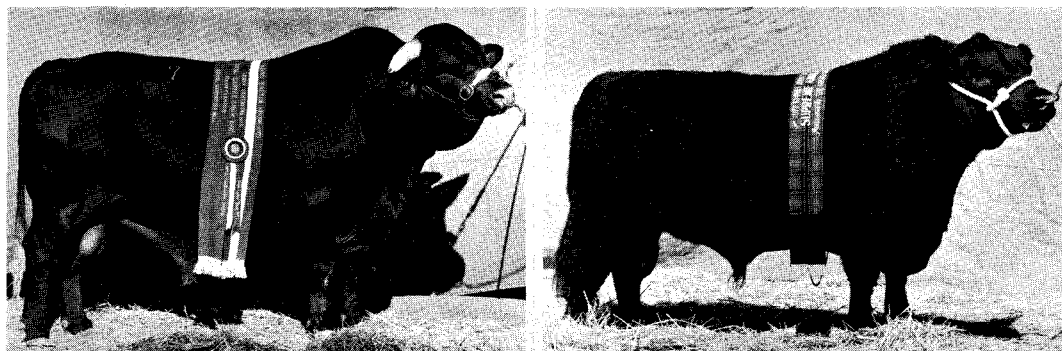
Only bulls capable of siring grey calves from Angus cows are used and together with the stringent inspection system of the Murray Grey Breed Society, the outstanding characteristics of the Murray Grey cattle are maintained in the stud.

#### **"ARGOON" SANTA GERTRUDIS STUD No. 706**

The programme of grading up to a Santa Gertrudis Stud has been adopted by us to produce and provide the Irrigation Areas with a most desirable dual purpose sire suitable as a good vealer producer, and also capable of producing cattle for lot feeding.

Our decision to adopt a Grading-up Programme of Santa Gertrudis was influenced by performances. From the progeny from a third cross Santa Bull which we were using as a vealer sire; the heifer portion of the drop had weight gains of up to 3¼ lbs per day. We decided to use these heifers as the foundation herd. We then purchased the classified pure bred Santa Gertrudis Bull "Big Sur Boneparte" by the top King Ranch Sire "Krar

#### **MURRUMBIDGEE COUNTY COUNCIL**



***These photographs of breeds represented in C.I.A. Cattle Studs  
are by courtesy of "Land Newspapers".***

Emperor" for mating with these heifers, and the resulting progeny will be classified as first cross. This procedure is repeated with the first, second and third cross heifers with the use of a classified pure bred bull for each cross, until the fourth cross, which can then be classified as pure bred.

There are many other points in favour of the Santa Gertrudis as a vealer sire. For example calves when dropped have small head and shoulders and are long bodied, with the ability for rapid weight gains. Santa Gertrudis run very little risk of suffering bloat, due to their distinctive eating habits and also because of the bulls very strong characteristics and regardless of the breed of the mother, the calves are of a colour and conformation which suit the buyers.

In addition Pink Eye is very seldom found in Santa Gertrudis stock.

In the event of vealers not being sold, they can be successfully carried over and lot fed, without fear of them running to gross fat, as they continue growing until the end of their fifth year.

**L.J. and E.I.L. Geyer**

#### **ENGLMARK ANGUS STUD. COLEAMBALLY N.S.W.**

Coleambally is an irrigation area with great potential for top quality stock and it was with this in mind that Angus cattle were selected because of their adaptability and their ability to cross breed with most other breeds of cattle. Angus bulls are particularly well suited with all classes of young heifers and their early maturing progeny with perfect marbling quality of fat through the meat is world famed.

Englmark Angus Stud was registered with the Angus Society of Australia in late 1968 after the purchase of three registered stud Angus cows from Ulaka Angus Stud, Wagga. Further purchases were made from the top families of the leading Angus Studs of Kilmarnock Young, Tulagi Deniliquin, Bulgary Wagga, and Forest Hill Wagga.

The foundation Sire was Cooinbil Hercules, purchased from the Angus Stud conducted by Cooinbil Station at Carrathool Hercules is a particularly well bred bull of outstanding length and temperament. He goes back directly through his father to the imported bull Elect of Westdrums, a son of the famous Sire Ballot of Belladrum who was considered by many breeders to have been one of the most outstanding Angus bulls ever to be exported out of Scotland to America where he bred exceptionally well. Hercules mother was a Bald Blair cow by the imported bull Earl Jago of Brackenfield.

As a foundation Shire he has proven himself and has produced some good length young bulls which show great promise. Hercules only daughter so far was shown last year and gained a Reserve Champion Beef Cow all breeds award, two firsts and two thirds from three country shows.

The stud is preparing a show team of six for the 1971 show season.

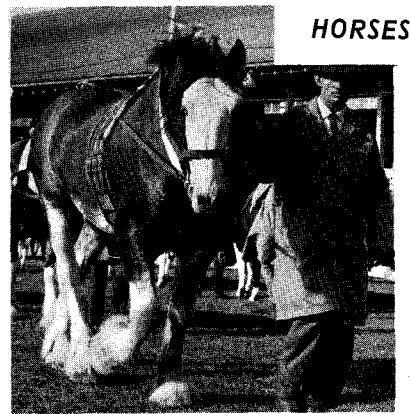
#### **SOMERSET DEVON STUD**

The Somerset herd of Registered North Devons owned by H.E. & P.M. Burge, of Farm 8 Coleambally is founded on "Havilah" and "Tondara" females. In the near future imported South Devon semen will be used on selected females.

Devons are one of the oldest breeds in England and in recent years its popularity has increased due to results of weight for age trials.

At the Royal Melbourne Show in 1962 Lot Feeding Trials: of first nine places, six were occupied by Devons, known as the economical producers of "The Best Beef".

#### **SUPERSPREAD AVIATION**



**Photo "Country Life" Above – "BIARRITZ", Left – "VALMONT SCOTTISH SOLDIER"**

**Photo Land:-**

This Clydesdale stallion "Valmont Scottish Soldier" is shown being led by his owner, Tom Forge of Farm 16. This magnificent animal had success at the Royal Easter Sydney Show 1971; he won his Class and the Male Championship.

He was chosen twice to lead the Grand Parade and also led the Parade of Champions.

At the Griffith Show 1970, he won first prize for Clydesdale Stallion Champion Stallion and Grand Champion Clydesdale.

Horses were used until six years ago on Forge's farm. A team of six horses were used to pull a header when stripping wheat, rice, oats, etc; only three horses were needed if the ground was dry.

The Forge's farm, being one of the first allocation, has a very interesting story of its own. Tom Forge and his son Ron, now on Farm 37, camped on their farm from 1st March 1960. The farm was cleared using a steam traction engine and bulldozers.

Mrs Forge and the other three children moved in on 10th April, 1961 when sheep, pigs cattle and horses were brought out to the farm.

Mrs Forge and her son Fred began a registered dairy, selling milk and cream. The piggery proved a very successful venture. In addition they have a Dorset (Poll and Horn) Stud, and Aberdeen Angus Bull and cows.

Rice grown on Farm 16 has been accepted as seed rice for the ten years of rice growing.

There are also trotting mares, foals and stallion ("Border Express"). The Trotting and Clydesdale Studs, and the farm itself is named "Leetondale".

**Below – "NOBLE WELCOME" WINS AT TEMORA – 6th February, 1971**





Coleambally is also home for some of the Riverina's most prominent Pacers.

Mr & Mrs B.J. Kelly are among those who actively participate in the breeding and racing of trotting horses in this district. Over one hundred races have been won during the past few years by horses bred on their farm, nearly all these being trained and driven by Riverina Reinsman Alan Harpley.

A record that will surely stand for sometime is that Mr Kelly has won four of the last five Riverina Derby's with Bernie's Elect, Bernie's Sister, Dictator and Noble Welcome.

He has also been successful in the M.I.A. Breeder's Plate with Bernie's Elect and the New South Wales Country Championships with Noble Welcome.

Much of Mr Kelly's success can be attributed to the wonderful Broodmare "Illinois" who is the dam of "Chief Reveler", "Bernie's Pick", "Bernie's Sister", "Bernie's Elect" and "Bernie Hanover". Three of the above are now racing in America.

Asked what he thought the best pacers he had raced were, Mr Kelly replied Noble Welcome, Bernie Hanover and Bernie's Elect in that order.

Mr Kelly states that he feels the C.I.A. is ideal for the breeding of horses, with its all round green pastures and plenty of water and sunlight. There is a very good Australian market and also a good overseas market for Australian Pacers.

Stables and a trotting track have now been erected on Mr & Mrs Kelly's property and a number of young horses are being educated there.

Perhaps the most fascinating animal in the world is the thoroughbred horse, for everyone has heard of a Melbourne Cup, a Kentucky Derby or The Grand National, and few there are who have not tried their hand at a small wager once every year, and it is social status to say I backed the Cup Winner.

A new breeding ground has been found in the challenge to breed even better thoroughbreds, for now at "Plymouth" Coleambally are the brood mares of the "Strathmore" Stud. This present home of the highly successful Imported sire "Biarritz" who is putting the winning numbers in the frame. In a short stud career "Biarritz" has sired winners approaching the \$150,000 mark. He has now been mated to a world famous breed "The Gems". His matrons were sired by "Crown Gem" brother to Royal Gem. It was Royal Gem, bred in Australia and exported to U.S.A. who sired "Dark Star" winner of the Kentucky Derby. Despite a bid of \$63,000 dollars by U.S.A. interests "Crown Gem" remained in Australia to sire numerous winners, Progeny of "Crown Gem" have won three Wagga Cups, and have been placed second on two occasions. It was "Crown Gem's" Son "Dark Purple" who won the Victorian Classic mile The Caulfield Guineas.

When asked why he was breeding thoroughbreds out at Coleambally the Stud Master replied "Plymouth" is endowed with the soils that go for building bone and body, and the land is free from parasites which stunt the growth of the foals. Also lush green pastures can be provided throughout the years — what more could a thoroughbred ask for?



**TOM FORGE HARVESTING RICE WITH HORSE TEAM 1961.**

## COTTON

Cotton is normally sown in October on raised beds 40 inches apart. Weeds are controlled by chemicals and interrow cultivations. The leaves, flowers and young bolls are attractive to many insects. Spraying by boomspray and, as the crop grows, by air, up to ten times is essential if damage is to be prevented. Water from the head-ditch is directed into the rows by using aluminium or plastic syphons. When the crop is nearing maturity and the majority of bolls are open a chemical is sprayed on to drop the leaves and allow an earlier, cleaner harvest.

The crop is harvested in April-May by a tractor mounted one row or self-propelled two row mechanical picker which uses rotating barbed metal spindles to pluck the seed cotton from the plant. The picker tips the cotton into trailers or baskets for transport to a ginnery where the lint is separated from the seed. The lint is pressed into 500lb bales and stored, usually in the open, until sold to spinning mills. The seed is crushed to produce cotton seed oil and high protein stockfeed.

Coleambally's first cotton crop was planted in 1963, which was also the year Ricegrowers Co-op Mills backed cotton growers in building the Darlington Point Cotton Gin.

Costs of growing the crop were high and techniques of row crop production were strange to most large area irrigation farmers. A Commonwealth Bounty Scheme together with the need to find a high return crop to replace the then temporary rice income encouraged several farmers to plant in the following years. Crops on fertile well drained soil, given good management, yielded up to two bales per acre. A district average yield of three quarters of a bale gave little if any profit to the grower so that, although yields were rising a fall in the Commonwealth Bounty caused the acreage to decline.

*J. Wilson*



**NORMAL ROW CROP COTTON – Photo C.S.I.R.O.**



**Laurie Jennings of Coleambally harvesting narrow row of cotton.**

**Photo: C.S.I.R.O.**

*Alastair Low, of the C.S.I.R.O., Griffith, is among those who remain convinced of the future of cotton in Coleambally. He points out that the world consumption of fibres cotton has 56% of the market, whereas wool has only 8%. Each year more cotton is required, — this increase is equal to about one third of the whole Australian wool clip.*

*Much effort is being devoted to producing new early — maturing cotton varieties, e.g. “Riverina Poplar”, and new growing methods which suit Coleambally’s particular conditions.*

*The more usual method of harvesting — by spindle pickers — may be supported by stripper harvesters. For this cotton is grown in narrower rows than the traditional ridged rows 40 inches apart, and stripper harvesters are cheaper than spindle pickers and will harvest three times as fast.*

*It is not impossible, then, that Coleambally will become the centre of a cotton growing, and even weaving and spinning industry.*



**Photo: J. WILSON**

## A TRIBUTE

### DON WALLIN

"George Entiknap was the father of Coleambally, and Don Wallin its patron saint."

The name WALLIN Road, means far more to the people of Coleambally than just the name of a Road.

This name is very dear to the hearts of the early settlers in Coleambally and refers to that genial, returned ex-army tank corps man, and Department of Agriculture Agronomist, Don Wallin.

The praises of Don Wallin have long been sung by the early settlers in Coleambally, where his advice and guidance on irrigation layout, irrigation crop management and overall irrigation farm programming have put many Coleambally farmers on their feet.

This energetic officer, who defied the conventional image of a Public Servant, worked all hours and all days and it was not unusual to see Don Wallin driving his car, like a tank, through a six foot wall of Black Oats, around dead timber and gil-gai holes over puff banks and across freshly cultivated land, at all hours of the day and night and even at weekends to visit settlers and inspect their crops and sort out irrigation problems.

Whilst the early settlers of Coleambally were very fortunate to have the personal guidance of Don Wallin, all settlers in Coleambally, even those recent ones to whom his name means nothing, have reason to be grateful to the person.

Don Wallin's experience with people and agriculture commenced during the Second World War, when he left Hawkesbury Agricultural College in mid course to join the Army. After Active Service in the Tank Corps in the Pacific, Don returned to Hawkesbury College to complete his agricultural diploma course in 1946.

After a brief period of private employment, Don joined the New South Wales Department of Agriculture, as an agronomist and was ultimately stationed at Griffith as District Agronomist in 1951.

It was in this capacity that Don Wallin first became involved in the many and varied problems of Coleambally; for he was appointed one of the Department of Agriculture's representatives on the many committees that were formed during the planning of Coleambally.

In fact it can be stated that Don Wallin has been involved in all stages of Coleambally development from the pre-planning committees, the Farm Design Committees, the Advisory Committees and finally as straight out Agricultural Advisor to the first two hundred or so Coleambally settlers.

It was during this period that Don Wallin became recognised as one of Australia's leading authorities on Flood Irrigation, and thus it was no surprise to Coleambally when he was promoted to a senior position in the Department of Agriculture in Sydney.

### TREE PLANTING:

Coleambally farmers have won the reputation of the most tree conscious farmers in N.S.W. In 1970 they planted 13,420 trees and since the area was established some eight years ago, over 64,000 trees have gone in. The settlers on this new irrigation area are highly skilled, capable and conservation conscious farmers and Forestry Extension Officers find it a pleasure to work with them.

Trees are appearing in ever increasing numbers along roadways, down drives, around sheds and behind houses.

The ten most popular species being planted are: Dwarf Sugar Gums, Aleppo Pines, Brown Mallet, River Oaks, Mugga Ironbark, Cootamundra Wattle, Coral Gum, Stricklands Gum, Pink Flower Gum and Green Mallees.

The Forestry Commission manages other State Forest in close proximity to Coleambally and numerous poles, posts, strainers and other round timber are being obtained to improve the properties.

**T.P. O'Rourke,**  
Forester,  
Forestry Commission of N.S.W.,  
Narrandera

## FARM MANAGEMENT CONSULTING IN THE COLEAMBALLY IRRIGATION AREA

The Narrandera Rural Advisory Group was formed in 1964. It was composed of over 30 district farmers and graziers of whom at least 4 were drawn from the newly settled Coleambally Irrigation Area. They were unsuccessful in obtaining a suitable Rural Adviser, and Mr. Paul McGown who had been conducting a consulting group at Corowa and Albury, offered to supply a consulting service. This was accepted and in January, 1965 Mr. Robert Kerrigan commenced work with his office at Narrandera.

This was the early period in Coleambally settlement and Robert Kerrigan's work with his Coleambally clients included sorting out the most suitable enterprises and assisting with management decisions for a developing farm. This often meant budgeting and drawing up applications for development loans from Banks.

In May, 1966 Robert Kerrigan's practice had grown sufficiently for him to employ an assistant, Mr. Peter Crossing. There were some 13 to 15 Coleambally clients included in the practice by this time.

In 1967 Peter Crossing took over the practice from Robert Kerrigan and engaged Craig Kinniburgh as his assistant. In 1970 David Honybun was successful in a Coleambally ballot and has since combined his farming activities with farm management consulting in the area. Craig Kinniburgh left Narrandera in 1970 and was replaced by Greg. Hayes.

Peter Crossing has also been engaged in regional studies for the State Government and private Groups, including preparation of a submission for the Yamma Settlers Association to the Water Conservation & Irrigation Commission for lower rentals. Peter Crossing is at present working on a six month assignment with a study group of G.P. McGown & Associates Pty. Ltd. in Iran.

### FARM SIZES

#### *A note of interest to the outside reader.*

In the early stages of planning there was considerable controversy over farm sizes. At one stage a total size per farm of 420 acres was envisaged, and farms of this size were actually marked out along Prickley Road. However, after considerable discussion the size was increased. The large-area farms are now slightly in excess of 500 acres irrigable, and as far as possible, contain a mixture of soil types.

The small area horticultural blocks are of about 70 acres and are situated on sand hill country. They are not irrigable by gravity and accordingly spray irrigation is installed.

The present target, subject to review, is for the development of 570 large area and 100 horticultural farms. The number and size of farms may be altered, if necessary because of changed farming and economic conditions, but the full area as originally planned will be developed.

Farms are allocated by a ballot system. Ballot applicants have to satisfy the Commission that they have minimum capital assets and do not possess more than 80 per cent of a home maintenance area. In the initial settlements the minimum capital requirement was \$17,000, in 1968 and 1969 the minimum capital requirement was \$19,000 and in 1970 \$23,500.

Each farm is allocated a fixed water right of 200 acre feet per annum at a charge of \$2.50 per acre foot. The present charge for additional water is \$1.90 having been recently increased from \$1.70 per acre foot.

194 farms were settled between 1959 and 1967, and a further 120 since 1968. Originally the scheme envisaged rice growing at 60 acres per year for the first six years of development to enable the farms to become viable. The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission later extended permission for a limited area of rice to be grown in all years when water is available and soil condition permits. In 1966-67 all farms were allocated 70 acres of rice, due primarily to favourable market conditions. With a decline in this situation over the past 2 years, the area permitted for rice growing was reduced to 65 acres for the 1970-71 crop and to 60 acres for 1971-72.

*(The last twenty or so pages have been concerned with the story of farming in Coleambally. Having read them you may know something of the mechanics of the farming industry in Coleambally but nothing at all about what the development of a Coleambally farm really means.*

*Shirley Muntz kept a diary, day by day, in a battered exercise book. Based on the types of things she recorded here is part of her story of how the family achieved the aim for which they came to Coleambally — the ownership of "A little bit of dirt").*

## **A LITTLE BIT OF DIRT**



*Story and Pictures by Shirley Muntz.*

Prologue: The Ballot.

The W.C. and I.C. building in Leeton on the 16th July, 1962.

The afternoon is very cold and approximately 600 people are standing about waiting for their number on a marble to be dropped into the barrel. Each number represents a person or persons who has been accepted into the ballot in the third allocation of Coleambally farms. Ken's number is 37, Joe's 36.

The barrel is rolling and the only sound to be heard are the marbles rattling. The barrel stops; you can hear matches being struck and then smoke starts to find its way to the ceiling. There is a nervous cough to be heard here and there throughout the crowd, the barrel door is opened, and the first marble drops from the barrel.

A dozen or more farms have already gone. The cigarettes are out and more are lit. Ken and Joe each in their own thoughts are wondering what chance they have, as there are two hundred marbles in the barrel and only forty farms.

Ken thinks its like a bloody lottery, and he has never won a prize in his life.

Thirtyfarms have now gone, only ten left. But like a miracle Ken hears 37 called out, he has a farm on Coleambally.

Beside him Joe is watching his face — tense — the next number called out is 36, Joe has a farm also.

It seems incredible that 36 and 37 could go into the barrel and come out 37 and 36.

\*\*\*\*\*



There was not a lot of visible excitement as both men knew nothing of what was in store for them in the coming years. Ken rang to tell me. I think I was the only one excited over our first "bit of dirt".

We celebrated by eating fish and chips and drinking a bottle of beer in front of the fire. We couldn't go anywhere as our nine year old son had the mumps. A fortnight later Ken got word of what number farm he had drawn. It was 85 (525 acres).

As Ken's brother Neil was in partnership with him it was his car that we came out to Coleambally to see the farm for the first time. I shall never forget the day, it was frosty and foggy. I had packed a bit of lunch in case we got lost or the boys got hungry. When we went over the Coleambally Canal, Neil did take the wrong turn. Realising this, we stopped and after a lot of map reading we found our way onto the right road. We travelled west over bumpy dirt roads, for miles it seemed. All I could see in this country were some emus, a water wheel here and there and a few trees, which looked a hundred miles away.

In one place I even saw some kangaroos. I would not have been surprised at all if I had seen a horde of aborigines on walkabout.

The more we went west the more I hated the look of it. I was sure it was "black-fella" country; no white man could live out here. The two men were "as keen as mustard" so I kept my mouth shut.

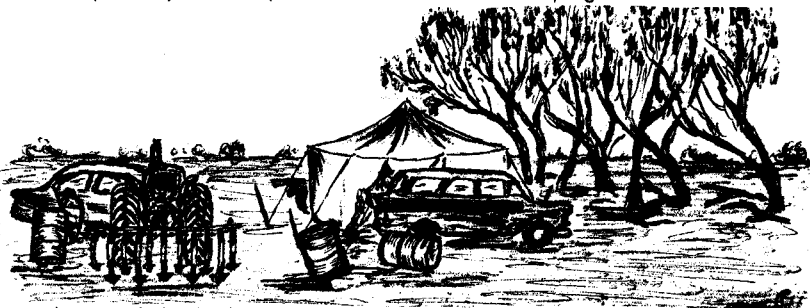
At long last we came to a water wheel and on it was the number of our farm. Finding a block of wood, indicating one of the boundaries, we commenced to drive across. It looked as flat as a board, but was as rough as guts. We came upon a fence where we stopped. Getting out of the car I looked across our "bit of dirt". On the south side there was a line of evil looking water-starved box trees — these trees I have grown to love since. After going through gillies and over puff-banks, we came to a gate and went through.

Further on we came across another fence that had done its job years ago, but was still standing in places. Still driving south, we came at last to the pipe that would carry the waste water from the farm into the drainage canal.

The men were very happy with the farm; they gave me the honour of turning the first bit of soil on the farm (with a screwdriver).

Everything was hurried along on Ken's father's property, such as the shearing and all the odd jobs, so they could get to Coleambally and start work on their first rice paddock.

But fate took a stand, Ken, our baby son and I, all caught the mumps, so it was Neil's with two men that came out with a 745D tractor and Ken's Fordson Major, a 17 tyne scarifier and a three-point linkage scarifier, also bringing with them a 12 x 12 tent, bedding and other household utensils. It was a fortnight later that Ken, myself, our baby son and Ken's sister Joan, came out to see how they were getting along. Ken and Joan still had their faces wrapped up in scarves, as the swelling had not quite gone from their faces. You should have seen the way the men kept away from us, we felt as if we had the "plague".



On going into the tent it looked like a store-room, so full of beds, eats, bags and so on. Water was carried in buckets from a bore from a nearby farm and put into a drum with a tap on the bottom. Come to think of it, I don't know how the men stood the weather conditions in the tent, the wind was so bitterly cold. They even had wool packs for extra warmth on top of their beds. Tom said he froze every night, even leaving all his dirty clothes on, plus blankets and wool pack and whatever else he could find to put on his bed.

Ken was soon over the mumps and out here with them, so that left me a grass widow through the week.

There was a fair bit of whisky, rum, beer and plonk consumed in those days; the men said it was to keep out the cold. The men worked in shifts day and night. A man called Dinky also worked for the men, his job was to pick up sticks and so on. By the time the weekend came they all needed a bath. I told Ken, on one occasion, he stunk like an old ram; he was not amused.

When it rained they spent their time building a shed, and when it was near completion Neil's wife and I drove ourselves out to see them for the first time. As it was wet we decided to shift their camping gear into the newly built shed.

Setting up house for them was great fun; they had a gas stove, light and little gas heater, an old table, four old chairs and kerosene refrigerator and small cupboard. All this was one end and the beds were placed at the other end of the shed. The men remarked that the shed was like living in heaven after the tent.

The ground was ready now to be levelled. Ken and Neil bought a delver and a grader. The grader was dragged over the ground, I don't know how many times. Declaring it level they hired a surveyor to come and peg out the paddock, then the ditches and the contour banks. They got Joe's little genius to plough the banks; the delver was then used to form the banks.

About this time Neil's wife and family, myself and boys came to pay them another visit. The men must have been living high out here as there were T bone steak bones by the dozens lying around the shed, as well as dozens of empty bottles and cans.

We cooked tea for the men which left us too late to go home, so we decided to stay the night. Two children slept on a piece of iron covered with bags and old mattress on a few blankets, two other children slept in the car. We made a hammock out of the tent between two beds, that was where the baby slept. Neil and his wife slept in one single bed, Ken and I in the next and Tom in the next bed to us — I don't think we got any sleep at all that night as Ken and Neil were about 17 stone.

Next day we went home, never to do it again.

Joe, our neighbour was the untidiest man and the most hopeless tent keeper I have ever met. He lived in a tiny tent near a canal (so he could get water easily); he kept all his eats and cooking utensils, the lot in fact, in his kerosene refrigerator. He said it was because the ants and flies could not get at them there.

Joe's rubbish tip was outside his tent as well as being inside; in fact, you couldn't put your foot down inside without treading on a can, bottle, paper, or something.

A pair of swallows built their nest on the centrepole of his tent — they kept him amused for hours. The swallows didn't mind him moving about the tent, but when anyone else went there, they did kick up a racket. Joe had to tie the rest up after a windstorm saying that his bloody tent wouldn't blow down while they were in it. I think the only reason they built there was because there were no trees. The birds brought out their young and flew away.

About this time we had a storm-and-a-half. Joe's tent went with mostly everything in it. Anything that was any good he brought down to our shed, his double-decker bed, pots and pans and so on. He burnt the blankets and mattresses that got wet.

He set himself up under the lean-to of our shed; this meant there were up to five or six men at a time eating, drinking and sleeping in the shed after a day's work was done.

When the rice was just coming up, the two men were worried sick as a lot of it was leafing underground and their tempers had worn thin. They rang the Agronomist, Don . He told them to keep the ground wet.

I was amazed to see rice coming up. It looked like a little sick thin white grub with its head just out of the ground. I was still more amazed when it turned out to be a thin weal green leaf and not long after that it became a plant.

When the permanent water went on the paddock of rice it was a beautiful sight.

Joe looked after the water while the wheat was being taken off at Ken's father's property. It was early December. Joe was having his problems with flies, mosquitoes and snakes. Joe was taking a nap late one afternoon, waking to find a big brown snake as his bed mate. His legs went before his body and in one bound was out in orbit landing at least four yards from the bed and in another bound his hands were on the gun. Without thinking he lifted the gun to his shoulder blasting both the snake and the wall of the shed at the same time.

With the harvest finished and Christmas over Ken and Neil were out here again clearing the ground. They had plans to sow the whole block leaving only next years rice paddock. They bought a Chamberlain plough between them and also a new Chamberlain tractor each. The tractors they had were not powerful enough.

I did mention it being cold here at Coleambally, but now it was as hot as hell and after a day's work Ken would refresh his tired, dusty, sweaty body with a wash under the overflow near the water wheel.

The mosquitoes were unbearable, the flies combining with them made it pure hell for the men. At night they would burn cow dung and those wirly things to try and get some peace from the mosquitoes. Joe had a brain wave — if one kept on the move the mosquitoes would not worry him. Putting his bed on the back of the old ute and tying the steering wheel down, he set the ute going in low gear, then climbing into his bed slept like a baby.

He found this far too expensive. The men bought mosquito nets, but found little relief even with them. One man said on leaving the place, that you needed a blood transfusion after living out here a week; another

chap had trouble getting his off saying "The bloody B . . . 's are so big, they put their stings through my hat and hang onto my head". It was impossible for the men to wear shorts, even with long pants on, with a quarter of an inch of dust covering them they would still sting through.

The flies through the day were so bad, that everything had to be covered. As for going to the toilet, or I should say behind a tree; night time was the best time with aeroguard to fight off the mosquitoes.

Ken and I decided to put our eldest son into boarding school, leaving me free to be able to come to Coleambally to help with the odd jobs as well as cooking. The dust gets so bad out here at times that it blots out the sun. Now that all the workable ground on the farm was all ploughed and levelled the different colours in the soil looked rather pretty — when the wind was not blowing.

The ground had been watered for sowing the wheat. The watering was fun at first but the language I learnt from the men as the banks began to wash away was not funny. As money was short they used bags filled with dirt as ditch stops. Still the water seemed to eat away the banks under your very eyes. I pictured the men with webbed feet and thought it funny — as usual they were not amused and told me so in not so many words. With sowing wheat and stripping rice it made this a trying time.

A contractor was brought in to strip the rice and Neil's wife and I decided to give them a party to celebrate their first rice crop. We cooked chickens, hams, cake and made fruit salad. I went to Narrandera to buy the bread, butter, lettuce, tomatoes, as well as everything else needed and four dozen cans of beer. As Neil's wife had told me her father was buying two dozen cans of beer, not to be outdone I had to get my father to do the same; boy, it took some coaxing to get him to buy it.

As I was coming out with my uncles I stacked everything that I had bought in the boot of their car. They had to meet the plane from Sydney; a chap they knew well was coming up to do business in Leeton and they decided to take him to the party as well. When he stepped from the plane, I was worried sick he would never fit in with the other men — he was a real toff. I was surprised with him however: unbeknown to me he had taken off his coat and tie, and pulled out his shirt tail, ruffled his hair up and I found that he could slurp beer from a can as well as the next one.

The party was a great success. The eight dozen cans were gone before tea started, leaving only plonk to drink. One of the men was away with a load of rice, arriving at the party about 10 o'clock, he was very disappointed. Only a bit of wine was left to drink. He picked up a paper cup and filled it to the brim with the remaining wine. I don't think he had quite one mouthful when the bottom fell out of the cup all over him and the nice clean dirt floor of the shed quickly turned to mud.

The chap from Sydney as well as a few of the others including myself were half plastered. This gentleman was going to drive one of the cars home and near our neighbour's place he nearly ran into Joe's old ute. Narrowly missing it, the car spun and he became bogged in the bloody bulldust, (as the men called it when they were being polite). He wasn't satisfied with that, he went into a broadside on the bridge at Morundah and his passengers after this became quite sober.

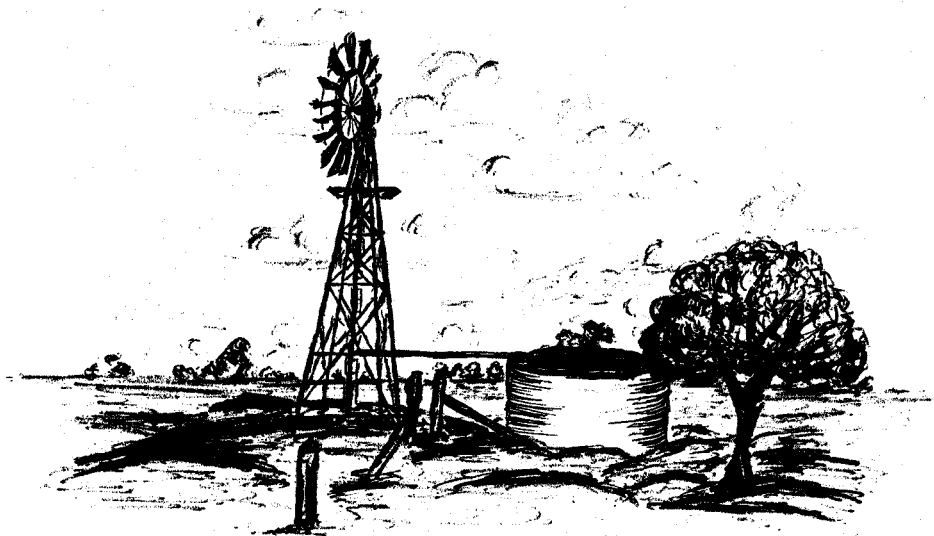
Another chap and his wife got lost and after driving around Coleambally all night, they found their way out in the morning. The only ones who had an uneventful trip home were the teetotalers.

They stripped 204 tons of rice that year off 60 acres. For the coming wheat harvest Ken and Neil bought a header costing \$4,000. That year they stripped 15,000 bags of wheat, oats and barley with it. Here at Coleambally in a big mesh bin they had 2,000 bags of wheat. This they carted to the Morundah silo.

Getting the ground ready for the second rice crop was murder. Being a good year for the dry area fellows, it was hell for the irrigation farmers. As there were no fences the grass grew and grew, they had to slash the grass with a slasher, using the plough. Two tractors were needed at times to turn the soil to let the air in.

With a lot of patience and hard work the rice was sown. This rice harvest I was out here cooking. At times I was cooking for twelve or more men. It was through this busy time that I ran out of gas. As we had no gas for three days, Ken pulled a tree outside the shed and lit the end. On this I cooked dinner and tea for the men, moving a piece of iron up the tree as it burnt.

One of the workmen was called The Hound. He was an awful chap, usually stunk to high heaven. His bed, when I made it was so smelly I had to wrap my face in a towel before going near it. One day I decided to teach him a lesson, and with my face wrapped up made his bed with the stinking part turned next to his face. I was hoping he would get the message and take his sheets home to his family to be washed — I had no such luck, he went to bed that night with dirt and dust covering his face, the dirt on his face was so thick that you could not see his eyebrows and his eyelashes looked false. He slept like a bloody log. I gave up after that and insisted he pull up his own bed each morning.



At breakfast I had nothing to do as the men got their own. For dinner there was always a roast of lamb or beef with vegetables, followed by a steam pudding and custard. For tea it was always a stew. I made all types. I am sure I could make them with my eyes closed. I had visitors at the end of a week once, eight in all. Not hardly ever seeing another woman I invited them to stay for tea. I had run out of meat, so I served omelettes and pancakes with golden syrup. Thirty seven eggs later and I don't know how much flour, everybody had their fill. I had heard over the grape vine that one of the kids had said "it was a flipping tea Mum".

Ken had got a special loan of \$3,000 for fencing. With myself driving the tractor, the baby tied to my waist, Ken rode on the carryall dropping off the iron and cement posts when they were needed. The wild oats were so high, at times they reached well over the level of the bonnet of the tractor, making it impossible to see where I was driving.

It must have been the third rice crop that we had to get rid of the old fence. It was cold again. Our son was dressed like a cuddley little bear. I was dressed in Ken's pants, my shirt and jumper and over this, his old coat. I was on the tractor as usual, with the baby by my side. I had to back up to a post and let down the linkage. While doing this I put my foot on the clutch and brake. Ken would wrap the chain around the bottom of the post. I would then lift the linkage and drag the post away.

When our son tired of the tractor we put him in one of the post holes where he was safe and couldn't wander off. There he would play happily for hours in the dirt. I was getting very tired backing up to a post, so



I put my foot on the brake instead of the clutch. Realising this, I took my foot off the brake and the tractor jumped backwards, knocking Ken to the ground. Stopping the tractor, I looked to find Ken jammed under the big wheel. Ken had to do a lot of talking to get me to drive again.

In the same fence there was a big old strainer post that we could not move. Ken said, "Pull the bloody thing as you lift the linkage". The tractor acted like a bucking horse. Stopping and getting off I told Ken to pull the bloody thing out himself.

The one and only time Ken and I left our son at the shed with four men to look after him, we were shocked to come back and find him drunk as an owl. The men did not realise that the little devil was going round the four of them for sips. After this the poor little pet had a hangover and a half.

The third rice crop was hit by hail — the hail stones were as big as golf balls. The storm passed over the corner of the paddock, wiping out two bays of rice. Although it was insured, the men were disappointed as it could have turned out to be one of their best rice harvests. They stripped 133 tons of rice with 62 tons of hail damage.

One of my experiences out here — one I shall never forget — is to do with toilets. I had taken lunch up to Ken. After he had left I told my son to watch the road for anybody coming and crouching down behind the car — also watching for anybody coming — I sat myself down on an ants nest. Within seconds the ants were in my hair as well as all over my body. Ken, seeing the predicament I was in, came back to help pull the big red ants off my body. At that moment I couldn't have given a damn who came along and caught me with only my birthday suit on.

Another thing that amazed me was the insects. Of a night they sounded like rain hitting the tin shed and next morning the insects would be at least six inches deep under the gas light on the floor of the shed.

Through the years a lot has happened; sad as well as happy times, with a lot of worry mixed in. Nine years have gone by. We have made our home at Coleambally. I have now become Ken's partner.

Ken built a house and I have a garden of trees, mostly. Our eldest son works for his father while our other son, now ten years old, goes to St Peter's School in the township of Coleambally.

Ken and I invested two years back in a dry area farm of 1000 acres, but this "little bit of dirt" comprising 525 acres has become our home.



I have learnt to love this land, the beautiful rice and wheat crops, the sheep and fat lambs, the lovely lush pastures you see around Coleambally. My admiration and thanks go to the men and women who have made Coleambally.



*Opening of Gogeldrie Weir (Photo W.C. & I.C.)*



*Opening of Shopping Centre (Photo M.S.C.)*



*Opening of Presbyterian Methodist Church (Photo M.S.C.)*





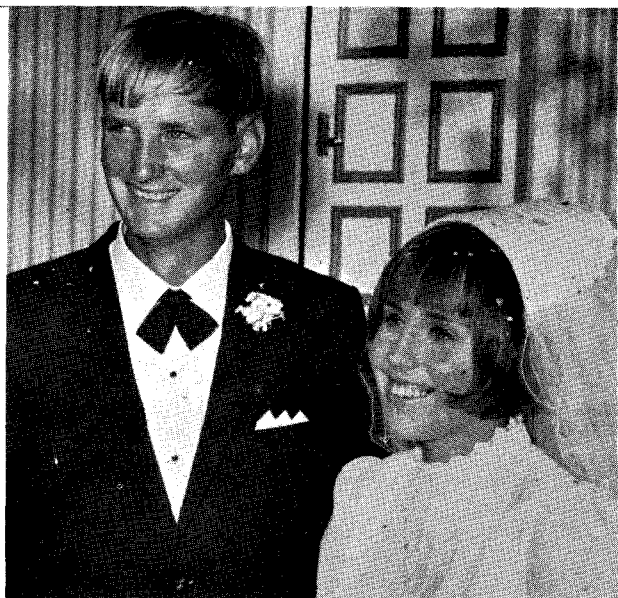
## THE COMMUNITY

**LEFT:** Three generations of "Burgess" at the wheel of farm 1, 1961.

**LEFT CENTRE:** The McGown-Clayton wedding 1967. The first "Coleambally" wedding.

**RIGHT CENTRE:** Brownies, 1971

**BELOW:** Junior Rugby, 1971



## THE CHURCH



### METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH COLEAMBALLY

With the implementation of the Coleambally Irrigation Scheme, a number of devout and warmhearted Methodist and Presbyterian families came to the area.

As time progressed, a strong spirit of unity was evident between these people and the desire and the efficacy of worshipping together, led to positive steps of joint action.

The first Methodist service was held at the home of Mr and Mrs F. Shaw on the 1st September, conducted by Rev. D. Bliss of Leeton Methodist Church. Mr Bliss continued monthly services, and the Presbyterians joined in attending these services.

A combined Sunday School was commenced on the 8th September, 1963 and held in the shed of Mr and Mrs J. Lovell.

Permission was obtained to use the old Argoon buildings for Church purposes and on 16th August, 1964, The Sunday school began meeting there.

On 18th October, 1964 the first Presbyterian conducted joint service was held and conducted by Rev. N. Monsen, Superintendent of Presbyterian Home Mission Department and on the 1st November, 1964, the first Methodist conducted joint service was held and conducted by Rev. D. Bliss of Leeton Methodist Church. From then on, joint services of worship were held on the first and third Sundays at the Argoon buildings.

During 1965 dialogue continued with reference to ways of co-ordinating the work.

A Ladies' Fellowship group was formed on 2nd August, 1965.

On 27 November, 1965 the first meeting of Methodist Riverina Synod representatives and Murrumbidgee Presbytery representatives took place at Narrandera. Rev. E. Roberts and Rev. P. Boase were the respective leaders present. The principle of joint action for Coleambally was re-affirmed and the matter of possible church sites referred to a special congregational meeting.

The first joint Methodist/Presbyterian congregational meeting was held at Coleambally North School grounds, when Rev. W. Whitbread, Supt. of Methodist Home Mission Department and Rev. N. Monsen, Supt of the Presbyterian Home Mission Department, were present. As joint ownership of property was not then possible, it was agreed that the Home Mission Departments be asked to confer regarding one Church developing the property for joint activity at Coleambally. It was recommended that Lot 24 be sought for the church property. Later advice was that the Methodist Church be responsible for leasing and developing the site.

Riverina Synod and Murrumbidgee Presbytery representatives met again on 4th May 1966 at Narrandera and agreed on the formation of a joint Spiritual Oversight Committee and a Trust Committee with provision for joint annual meeting and service.

Murrumbidgee Shire Council called a meeting on 13th May 1966, for all churches concerning sites at Coleambally and advice was later received that Lot 24 had been allocated for the site.

The first Trust Committee meeting was held at the home of Mr and Mrs T.E. Sheppard on 19th May, 1966 chaired by Rev. G. Bickford. At this meeting it was agreed to move and place on the site a building previously purchased by Mr John Lovell and Mr Les Morton (purchased 5th March 1964). It was originally the Coleambally Station shearers quarters on farm 163.

This building was moved and re-sited on Lot 24 on 14 October 1966, at a cost of \$680, thanks to an enormous amount of voluntary labour.

On 12th February 1967, the Trust Committee approved renovations to the building as outlined by the architect, Mr G. Walker. On 27 June 1967 the Trust Committee met and agreed that tenders for the renovations be called. Difficultly was experienced in obtaining tenders for the work planned on the building, within the financial limits, thus some time elapsed before further progress was made.

During November and December 1967 negotiations were concluded with the builder, Mr S. McDonald, who had been the only tenderer, to proceed to a certain stage of the plan, making the building usable for immediate needs.

January and February 1968 saw the work under way and in early March the building was renovated to the stage as it now stands.

The first Methodist conducted service of worship in the new Church Hall was held on Sunday 3rd March, 1968 conducted by Rev. G. Bickford and the first Presbyterian conducted service on 17th March, 1968, when members of the Masonic Lodge Coleambally (1967) were present. The service was conducted by Mr A. Flottmann.

The first baptism in the new hall was Robert Keith Rose on 7th April, 1968 at the service conducted by Rev. G. Bickford.

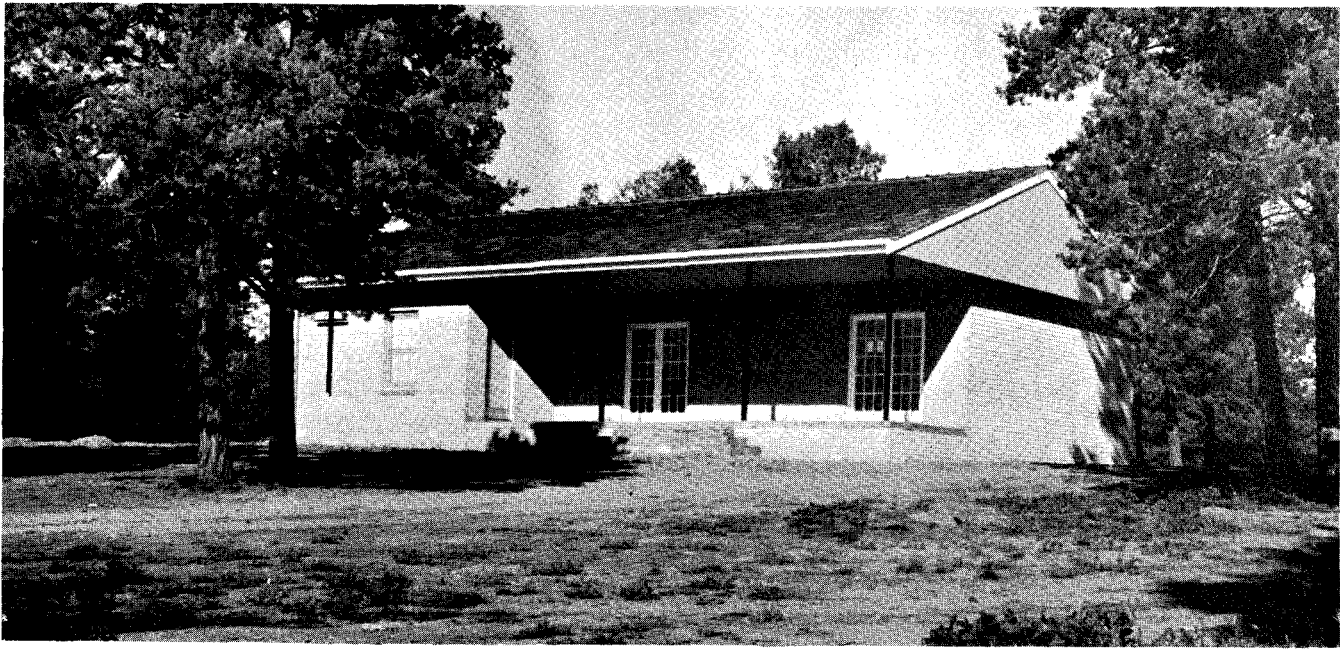
The first celebration of the sacrament of Holy Communion in the new hall took place on Sunday 5th May, 1968, also conducted by Rev. G. Bickford.

The opening and dedication of the church hall on Lot 24, Kingfisher Ave, Coleambally took place Wednesday 12th June, 1968 at 2.00 p.m. — to the glory of God and to the continuance of Methodist Presbyterian co-operation at Coleambally.

On 1st March, 1969, Rev. H. Collett Smith conducted the wedding of Mr Jeffrey McGowan and Miss Desney Clayton. This was the first wedding held in the church and also the first wedding in Coleambally.

Services of worship are now held each Sunday. First, third and fifth Sunday mornings at 10.00 a.m. and Second and Fourth Sunday evenings at 7.30 p.m.

We give thanks to God for His many blessings and look forward in quiet faith and confident trust.



**THE CHURCH of St. MARK, COLEAMBALLY, shortly after its opening, April 1969.** Photograph: M.S.C. Collection.

In 1895, the Diocese of Riverina formed the Parish of Whitton, Darlington Point, and Argoon. The Rector, or Priest-in-charge, of the Parish of Whitton regularly travelled to Argoon to conduct services. These services were held in the small church building about 10 miles south of the present town of Coleambally. The old Parish Register records the experiences and frustrations of the journeys of the earlier clergy. The Reverend H.R. Hawkins has several things to say in 1919. On the 20th April, he has this comment noted in the Register, "Owing to the number of deaths at Jerilderie from influenza many feared to come." And Later, on the 15th June 1919, he makes the following comment in bold handwriting, "Argoon was the object of this trip; after travelling exactly 100 miles I arrived on time at the church during a heavy fall of rain to find that no-one turned up". When you realised that he travelled by sulky on a cold June Sunday, one can understand how he felt.

In the early 1963s a number of settlers from the Coleambally Irrigation Area, attended St Paul's, Darlington Point, to worship. In the same year I visited a number of the earlier settlers and quickly realised that I knew a number of them before, because I had worked so long in the irrigation areas and knew the background of so many of them and their families. I found it inspiring to see how they were toiling together to establish them in the new task.

On the 11th March, 1964, a meeting of Anglican women, which met at the Home of Mr and Mrs Harry Burge moved the following motion "that the Church of England Women's Guild be formed at Coleambally". Mrs Harold Heffer was the first President; Mrs Norma Boag was the Secretary; and Mrs Joan Woodman was the Treasurer. They arranged to meet on the first Tuesday in each month at 2 p.m. at Mrs Burge's home. It was agreed to hold a trading table at each meeting and to hold a fete on Saturday, 24th October.

It is recorded that 21 women attended the second meeting and the Archdeacon was welcomed. A bank account was to be opened with the Bank of New South Wales. I note that at the 4th meeting, the Archdeacon was thanked for material used to make clothes, aprons, etc. for the fete. It is worth recording those who held the stalls at the first fete on the 24th October, 1964. Cake Stall, Mesdames Kerslake and Boag; Produce, Avon Harland and Gwen Smith; Fancy Stall, May Heffer and Karen Holloway; Drink and Sweet Stall, Lorraine Mosely and Norma Shaw; Mystery Parcels, Shirley Manning and Mrs Vicary; Pony Rides, Messrs Burge and Woodman.

The Guild decided to meet at the various homes of members and worked hard for their annual fete and engaged in catering activities. When the Church Committee was formed in 1968, the Guild was proudly able to hand over \$2,250 towards the building fund and followed up with substantial contributions to help reduce the debt when St Mark's Memorial Centre was built. The guild were also responsible for the costs of furnishing.

The first Anglican service was held in Coleambally on Sunday, 30th August 1964, at 10.30 a.m. The first two services were held outside the old kitchen, where the temporary building was being held as the Argoon School. At the first service, Martin Bell was baptised and about 50 people signed their names in the register. Later services were held inside the old kitchen, which had to be cleaned before each service. On Sunday, 14th April 1968, Easter Day, service was held in the Community Hall, in the new Township, and it was the first time that the Hall had been used for any purpose.

A general meeting of Anglicans in April 1968, held in the home of Mr and Mrs Barry Mills, formed the Church Committee with Barry Mills as the Secretary and Ken Woodman as Treasurer and plans were adopted to begin building St Mark's Anglican Memorial Centre. The Parish of Griffith had served Coleambally without any charge and had banked all church collections and handed them over to the new Committee. Plans were drawn up according to my sketches. Work commenced on the site in December 1968 and the builder was Mr Stuart McDonald. The building was completed in April 1969 and was dedicated on St Mark's Day (Anzac Day) by the Right Rev. J.R.B. Grindrod, Bishop of Riverina. The Anglicans were justly proud of their own spiritual home and the beginning of St. Mark's Centre, which one day will have a Church and a Rectory behind the centre.

The present building has a useful hall, with a sanctuary which is closed off, a well equipped kitchen, a vestry, and a flat for the clergy to use when needed.

Above the Altar in the sanctuary, hangs a cypress cross made out of the branch of one of the trees removed for the building. Covered with bark and lichen, it belongs to the place and speaks of the victory of Christ over death and evil. It symbolises the new life of the new community and Hope in the future.

**ARCHDEACON VICTOR E. TWIGG**



*Photograph: Robert Anthony Studios*



## THE GROWTH OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH OF COLEAMBALLY

by

Margaret Devereay



**A GROUP AT "AILSA CRAG"**

"I suppose I'm one of the reasons why you are here, Father". This was the remark of one Coleambally man when Father Peter O'Leary met his parishioners for the first time in 1964 at Darlington Point Church. Until this time the Griffith priests had journeyed to Darlington Point to celebrate Mass.

With the increased growth of Coleambally the need for a separate parish was seen and the parish of Darlington Point was established in December 1963, with Father O'Leary as its first parish priest. Father was to have taken up duties on 1st February 1964 but Father Jescoe of Finley had been involved in a car accident so Father O'Leary was sent to Finley and did not arrive in Darlington Point until 4th September, 1964.

At this time, as there were no town buildings or suitable halls in which to celebrate Sunday Mass, Mr & Mrs Len Arnold, in true Christian community spirit offered their home "Ailsa Craig". Father said the first Mass here on 4th October, 1964 with about a dozen parishioners and the Arnold family present. And so "Mass at Arnolds" became a household phrase amongst Coleambally Roman Catholics.

For four-and-a-half years the Arnold family prepared their home for the influx of people every Sunday and on Holy Days — preparing the altar, setting out chairs which had been purchased by the parish, and in the winter time those ever welcome fires would be glowing in the fireplaces. After Mass, Len and Ailsa and Bruce would be there in the sun room with a cup of tea for all and bread and butter for the children. A wonderful atmosphere evolved and visitors would remark how envious they were of this friendly gathering.

It is interesting to note that the Arnold's home, formerly known as "Fairlie Grange" had been used for Mass by Father Bongiorno during the 1930's.

During our time together at "Arnolds", Ailsa gradually welded us into a singing community, she being the painiste and later organiste.

Many baptisms were performed, the first being Michael Devery and many children received their first Holy Communion, the first being Suzanne Siviour.

As the congregation swelled in numbers it was suggested that the Community Hall in the town be used for Mass. It was with some reluctance that the move was decided upon and Father said the last Mass at "Ailsa Craig" on 26th April, 1969. In a glowing tribute to the Arnold family, Father said "Whenever the community of Coleambally is spoken of the name of Arnold should always be included". And they will always be remembered with love by the early parishioners for their generosity and open heartedness.

Father O'Connell had the privilege of saying the first Mass in the town on 3rd May, 1969 and the Community Hall became the regular place for Mass while the Church School was under construction over the road.

St. Peter's School was officially opened and blessed by His Lordship Bishop Carroll on 26th January, 1970. Father O'Leary said the first Mass in the new building, the upstairs section of which will be used for the celebration of Mass until a permanent Church is built.

The first baby to be baptised at St. Peter's was John Patrick Hogan and the first wedding was Helen Arnold to Dennis Power.

With the coming of 1971, Father O'Leary was to leave and take up duties as parish priest of Ganmain. During his six years he had spared no effort to serve his parishioners and put the new parish of Blessed Oliver Plunkett, Darlington Point on a solid footing. Father O'Leary is held in high esteem by his fellow priests and the community was indeed privileged to have such a brilliant man in its midst during the formative years. Father said his last Mass at Coleambally on 6th January, 1971.

Father W.E. Plunkett came from Corowa to be the second parish priest on 10th January, 1971. Father has the privilege of being a direct descendant of Blessed Oliver Plunkett, the patron of the parish.

Father wasted no time in visiting his parishioners and it wasn't long before he had "dropped in" on all and he has become a familiar figure at most community functions.

Since his arrival Father has established a Parish Council with the first meeting being held at the School on 18th August, 1971.

Members of the Council are:

Father Plunkett,  
Messrs.

Ivan George  
John Devery  
John Doherty  
Ken Carroll  
John McInnes  
Vic Rossatto  
John Graham  
Noel Carroll  
Bill Rourke  
Brian Mannes  
Jack Briggs  
Paul Smith  
Frank Whelan  
Adrian Fletcher  
Dr. Byrne  
Mrs Ailsa Arnold



## EARLY EDUCATION IN THE C.I.A.

When the first settlers began to arrive on the twenty-six farms which formed the first allocation, the education of their children soon became a matter of urgent concern. These settlers began to arrive about March 1960, and later that year four families took their children into the school at Darlington Point. This involved a twice daily journey of at least twenty-five miles. Two families used the correspondence school to assist with the education of their children.

However in January 1961, a one-teacher school (Class 1V) began in a house on Farm 8, a house which had been the home of Mrs Morley and Her son Mr Alec Morley – a family well-known in the Darlington Point District. The teacher was Mr J.R. Ceely and the first name on the admission register was Robert Adams of Farm 22. Andrew Graham of Farm 23 was the first pupil to commence his education at the school. This school was known as the Coleambally Public School.

By the end of 1961 twenty-four pupils had enrolled. A meeting of parents was held at Farm 8 with Mr Don Graham in the chair and a deputation went to Area Office in Wagga. A school site had been planned in Canal Road where the Boona Channel leaves the main canal but this was deemed unsuitable because of its position. Inspector H.M. Morgan and some of the parents sought a more convenient spot and decided on a portion of Farm 23 adjacent to Supply Channel No 5.

A two room portable was moved to the chosen site and school began there on January 1962, the school having been officially opened on 10th February 1962, by Inspector H.M. Morgan.

Later that year Miss T. Curtis was appointed assistant.

Mr Ceely left at the end of 1962 and his place was taken by Mr J. Swan. In May 1963 Miss Curtis left and Mrs J.O. Sheppard of Farm 59 began duties.

At the end of 1963 the school was raised a grade to Class III, and Mr Swan was transferred.

## EGANSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL

On 28th January, 1964 Mr P.F. Naismith commenced duty as Principal of the Coleambally Public School as it was then known. Mrs Sheppard continued as assistant.

As the school at the Coleambally township came nearer to reality it became obvious that the name of the first school, then called Coleambally Public School, would have to be changed. The name "Egansford" was submitted to the Education Department and this was approved.



**FIRST PUPILS at COLEAMBALLY – FARM 8, EGANSFORD**  
**Photo: Mrs. P. Burge.**

Attendance continued to increase, reaching a peak of 76 during term 3, 1968. Mrs Sheppard left in June, 1969 and her place was taken by Mrs J. Chauncy of Farm 29.

The school has had an outstanding record in the sporting sphere. In 1967 Egansford won the Combined Schools' Aggregate in the Class III Schools' Sports, Narelle Naseby being senior champion of that year. The following year the Junior Girl's Relay Team — M. Graham, E. Wallace, P. King and M. Rourke — were the Riverina champions and represented the Riverina at the State Championships in Sydney. In 1969 the feat was repeated by the Senior Girls' Relay Team — M. Graham, P. King, M. Rourke and D. Scifleet. In addition E. Wallace, M. Graham, D. Scifleet. In addition E. Wallace, M. Graham, D. Scifleet and P. King represented Riverina in the State Championships in individual events, the last named having the very rare distinction of representing the Riverina Area at the State Championships for five consecutive years. For two years the Egansford girls won the Primary Girls' Trophy at the Narrandera Festival of Youth.

Early in 1966 at a P & C Meeting it was decided, subject to Departmental approval, to construct a learners' pool in the north-east corner of the school grounds. The first sod was effectively turned by Mr K. Burke's bulldozer and in a matter of hours the hole was sunk. Then followed a series of Saturday working-bees and the completion of the pool by the summer of 1966-67 was a manifestation of what can be achieved when residents in an area co-operate and work towards a common goal.

The opening carnival took place on 25th February, 1967 and the pool was officially declared open by Mr C.H. Lander, a descendant of one of the district's pioneering families. At that Carnival G. Stewart set an open freestyle five lap record of 1 min. 18 secs. This has since been broken, first by B. Carroll 1 min 9.7 secs. and then by P. Carroll 1 min 8.6 secs. Miss J. Bailey holds the five lap ladies' record 1 min 25 secs.

Four learn-to-swim campaigns have been conducted during Christmas holidays. The first by some members of Leeton A.S.C. and the other three under the guidance of Mr P. Crittenden of the N.S.W. A.S.A. One hundred and forty children enrolled for one of these courses and this stresses the need for swimming facilities in the area.

The scholastic side also progressed well. The pupils who went on to secondary education brought much credit upon the school. Chris King won a state bursary and is at present attending Yanco Agricultural High School.

To date 179 names have been entered on the Admission Register, but the school numbers are gradually declining. The glory is fading, but the deeds of the scholars will live on to remind us of the early days of C.I.A. education.

### **GIDGELL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Gidgell Public School is situated in what was once rather isolated area of the Coleambally Irrigation Area, approximately 16 miles east of the Coleambally township.

The inaugural meeting of the Gidgell Public School Parent's and Citizen's Association was held on the 19th September, 1963. The school itself opened on 28th January 1964, and even though the initial enrolment was a mere 10 pupils, the new school was off to a good start. Parents and friends appreciated the service provided and were keen to assist the teacher, Mr D. Moran.

Midway through 1965, the enrolment had doubled and considerable ground improvements had been undertaken in spite of the lack of water. A basketball court had been constructed while garden beds and experimental plots had been established.

With the new year came Mr R.A. Clarke to replace Mr Moran, as Teacher-in-Charge of Gidgell Public School. The Parent's and Citizen's Association continued its good work in supplying all materials required, and the school was progressing well when Mr D. O'Brien took over as Teacher-in-Charge in January 1967.

During Mr O'Brien's term at this school, considerable advances were made benefiting the school and its pupils. With the installation of a pressure pump, ground improvements continued with the laying of more lawns, and a scheme of tree-planting and landscaping was introduced.

After Mr O'Brien's stay of 3 years, Mr J. Duncan took over as Teacher-in-Charge in February 1970, and with continued support from the Parents and Citizens' Association, the educational opportunities available at this school have continued to expand.

Despite the rather low present enrolment of 14 pupils, Gidgell Public School should continue to progress, for it serves an area of Coleambally which holds great promise of future growth and expansion.

On the 18th April, 1963 a School opened in an old building, known as Argoon Cottage, which is 2½ miles from the present school site.

It was named Argoon Public School and Mr B. Lovegrove was the first teacher-in-charge. The first child enrolled was Rosalyn Oliver, who began school on that day. There was a total of eleven pupils enrolled. This building, then owned by the W.C. & I.C. was the only one available in this area, and conditions and amenities were extremely primitive. To make sufficient room for a classroom, walls were removed by a parents working-bee using chainsaws. However the number of pupils grew steadily and from the commencement of 1964, the kitchen building there was also used as a classroom. Mrs Rhone Morton, from Wagga Demonstration School, took the lower division. Then in April 1965 an additional two temporary portable classrooms were moved onto the present school site. They were intended to be removed after six months, but are still in use. By this time there were 88 pupils. The name of the School was changed to Coleambally North Public School in July, 1965 and on 1st February 1966 the Secondary Division was established with eighteen enrolments. The first child to gain the School Certificate from Coleambally School was Beverley Burrows now at Wagga Teachers' College, having been successful at the Higher School Certificate.

The annex at Argoon was used as well as the portable classrooms. This split school caused severe administrative problems. Four new Brick Veneer Classrooms were occupied on 31st January, 1967. In April of that year the first Principal, Mr E.F. Cameron, was able to move into the newly completed residence. This was the first house completed in the new township. Coleambally North Public School was officially opened by The Hon. W.C. Fife, M.L.A. on 2nd June, 1967. The School Motto is "Diligenter Ad Lucem" meaning by Effort Towards Knowledge, and the badge depicts two swifts in flight. One source states that the word "Coleambally" derives from an aboriginal word meaning 'two swifts in flight'.

Mr J. Foley commenced duties as Principal in 1968, and during his stay of three years worked ceaselessly for the improvement and expansion of the school. It was re-classified as a Central School in August, 1969.

However the rapid expansion of the school caused severe problems of accommodation. The Methodist/Presbyterian Church was in use as a classroom in 1969 and in 1970 the situation in first term was that there were seven primary and three secondary classes to be fitted into six classrooms. The Staffroom, the Principal's Office, and nearby hallway were used as classrooms, as well as the Church and the tiny Church kitchen.



**COLEAMBALLY, 1967. Photo: Mrs. J. Lovell**



**ARGOON, 1963. Photo: Mrs. J. Oliver**

Fourth class of thirty children, who worked enthusiastically — cheerfully with their teacher, Mrs S. Hays for six months in the staffroom — 8ft x 14ft — were typical of the children who accepted these conditions without complaint.

A demountable classroom was moved in and in second term the arrival of two small schools formerly from Tootal and Ryan meant that each class had some kind of classroom.

In Third Term 1970 a new block of four classrooms was occupied; this meant that a room could be made available as a library.

When Mr F. Cook became Principal in January, 1971 there were 320 pupils and 16 on the teaching staff.

For the first time Secondary classes could be established on a regular basis, as staff shortages had previously meant that all secondary teachers including the Principal had taught for each period of every day. The high standard of many passes gained at the School Certificate is a tribute to the efforts of both teachers and pupils under those difficult conditions.

In mid 1971 four more classrooms were completed, and for the first time since a brief period during 1967-8 there is adequate space for all classes. Work is currently under way to provide specialist classrooms — science, home science, woodwork and metalwork rooms and a library of suitable size.

Plans are in hand for the construction of a High School on a site near the Anglican Church.

Throughout its brief but dynamic history the School has been particularly fortunate in receiving the benefits conferred upon it from an energetic, enthusiastic and resourceful Parents & Citizens Association. The P & C has raised thousands of dollars to supply the needs of the School and the efforts of all concerned are deeply appreciated by staff and pupils.

### COLEAMBALLY CENTRAL SCHOOL

STAFF, SEPTEMBER 1971

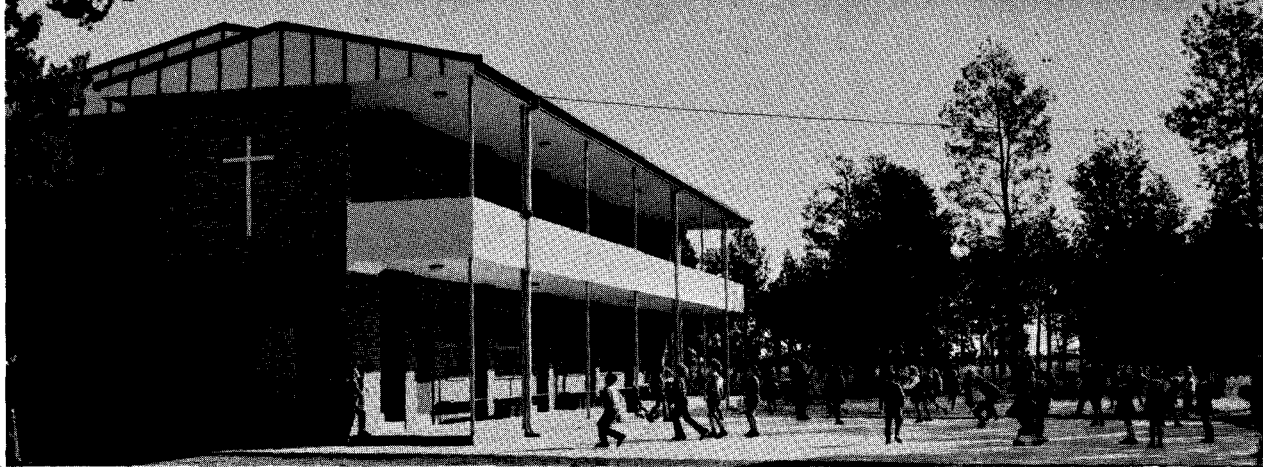
PRINCIPAL

F.W. COOK, B.A.

<b>Infants/Primary</b>	Mrs S. Perkins	Kindergarten	<b>Other Non-Teaching Staff</b>
	Mrs L. Blake	First Class	
	Mrs J. Briggs	Second Class	
	Miss V. Brain	Third Class	
	R.J. Sidlow	Fourth Class	
	A.J. Schirmer	Fifth Class — Deputy Master	
<b>Secondary</b>	T.H. Lockley B.A.	Sixth Class — Deputy Principal	
	Mrs S. Allen B.A., Dip Ed	Commerce, Geography	Mrs R. Aylett Miss D. Rawlings Mrs R. Shields Mr P. Cost
	Mrs B. Bradney, B.A.	History, English	
	J.A. Crawford, B.A., Litt B.	English, History, French	
	F.A. Jordan	Mathematics, Science	
	Mrs S. McCleary	Music, Art	
<b>Part Time</b>	Mrs B. Rose	Domestic Science, Needlework	
	N.J. McDonough	Manual Arts	
<b>Librarian</b>	Mrs S. McCleary		
<b>Clerical Assistant</b>	Mrs J. Lovell		



September, 1971. Photo: Robert Anthony Studios



### ST. PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL

On the 26th January 1970 the Bishop of Wagga, Dr. F.P. Carroll, D.D., D.C.L., officially blessed and opened St. Peter's School. Present at the function were the Federal Member for Riverina, Mr. A. Grassby, Shire President Mr. J. McInnes, Fr. A. P. Loth Director of Catholic Education in the Wagga Diocese, Fr. B.C. McEwen Inspector of Catholic Schools, Fr. P. O'Leary P.P. and a large gathering of local and visiting people.

The opening was the culmination of years of endeavour by Father Peter O'Leary to establish a school that would service the needs of the Catholic community in his parish of Darlington Point/Coleambally. When he first took up duties in the parish in September 1964 Father O'Leary began negotiations with Religious Orders to obtain the services of Brothers or Nuns to staff a Catholic school. He continued these efforts for a few years but without success. The main reason being that Religious Orders were faced with difficulties staffing their existing schools.

In 1966 Father O'Leary asked his parishioners whether they would be prepared to accept the situation of a Catholic school staffed completely by lay teachers. By this time lay teachers already constituted a large proportion of the teaching force in the Wagga Diocese. The majority of people however were not prepared to accept the offer and Father O'Leary continued to make approaches to Religious Orders in an effort to gain Nuns or Brothers for his proposed school.

Three years later, 1969, Bishop Carroll made an unexpected visit to a Catholic men's meeting held at the home of Mr. & Mrs. J McInnes at Coleambally and during the meeting the Bishop spoke of the possibility of a Catholic school staffed by lay teachers. He assured those present that teachers could be found who possessed both the qualifications and ideals required to give a full Christian Education to their children. It was pointed out by the Bishop that many fully qualified teachers were already working in Catholic schools throughout the Diocese. The people were told that if the proposed new school was built it would be staffed by such teachers and would operate under normal Diocesan supervision. Following further discussion the majority of men present supported the Bishop's proposition but asked that negotiations for Nuns or Brothers continue.

Tenders were duly called by Father O'Leary and P. Salvestrin & Co. of Griffith were contracted to erect a two storey building on the parish block in Coleambally. An area of 6.5 acres of land had been previously obtained for the establishment of a Church and school.

Meanwhile Diocesan education authorities endeavoured to secure suitable staff. The position of Headmaster was widely advertised and later Mr. M. Fanning of Sydney was appointed to the position. Two assistant teachers, Mrs B. Green and Mrs B. Arnold were also appointed to the school.

When the building was completed Father O'Leary asked his parishioners for a name for the school and the people unanimously supported the suggestion that it be known as St. Peter's School to honour their parish priest who worked tirelessly for years to establish it.

The building housed space for three classrooms on the ground floor and three upstairs. A principal's office and staffroom were also provided on the first floor. It was intended that until such time as a Church was built the rooms upstairs would be used as a Sunday Mass Centre.

Prominent amongst those present at the Blessing and Opening were all the candidates for the pending bi-election for the seat of Murrumbidgee and during his speech Father O'Leary spoke forcefully of the burden Catholic parents bear to provide a Christian Education for their children. He also mentioned the fruitless promises by politicians in the past to relieve this burden. Many present expressed their delight with the forthright manner in which the Parish Priest spoke.

The first months of school were difficult ones. Although the numbers enrolling were to almost double in twelve months the first day enrolments were below the number anticipated and this caused some concern for the success of the venture. A setback occurred in April when Mr. M. Fanning was unable to continue and had to return to Sydney. A temporary headmaster was appointed in the person of Mr. J. O'Dwyer of Wagga. Mr. O'Dwyer held this position until the beginning of the Second Term when Mr. J. Doherty of Narrandera and formerly of Wagga was permanently appointed as Headmaster. During the First Term a residence had been placed on the property for the Principal and until this time was unoccupied. Parishioners breathed a sigh of relief to see it occupied by the headmaster and his family.

At a meeting held at the school in March 1970 a Parents & Friends Association was formed. Mr. B. Mannes was elected as president, Mrs. B. Briggs secretary and Mrs. K. Leonard treasurer. Through this Association the parents and staff worked together to achieve an extraordinary amount for the school. A concrete assembly area was laid, gymnastic equipment installed, a school library established, a playing oval and basketball court started. Radios, a record player and duplicating equipment were also provided for the school by this Association. Almost all of the work was done by voluntary labour.

The first year's activities ended with a Break-Up function in December at which all pupils were presented with a certificate to commemorate the inaugural year of St. Peter's. This function was attended by all parents.

During 1970 numbers had steadily improved. Forty six children enrolled on the first day of school and the final enrolment for the year was sixty eight. Father O'Leary had transported seven Darlington Point children to and from the school each day in his car for the entire year.

1971 brought a change of Parish Priest. Father O'Leary was transferred to Ganmain and in his place came Fr. W. Plunkett of Corowa. The new parish priest immediately became interested in St. Peter's and his first concern was for the establishment of a school bus between Darlington Point and Coleambally. After much negotiation this was finally arranged and there was an immediate increase in enrolments from that area. The enrolment for 1971 stands at eight six. The P. & F. Association, Parish Priest and staff continued the hard work during the second year. The new executive in the Association are, president Mr. B. Hogan, secretary Mrs. N. Carroll and treasurer Mrs. F. Whelan. During this year a School Board has been elected, a Tuck Shop arranged and in use on a weekly basis, more gymnastic equipment installed and numerous necessary class items provided. Almost all again achieved by voluntary help and cooperation of parents, pastor and staff.

The present staff comprises Mr. J. Doherty principal and Mrs. J. Devery and Mr. P. Quin. Members of the first School Board of St. Peter's are Mrs. B. Briggs, Mr. W. Rourke, Mr. J. McInnes, Mr. B. Mannes, Mr. D. Coughlan, Mr. N. Carroll, Mr. J.B. Hogan, Principal: J. Doherty, Parish Priest: Fr. W. Plunkett

The story of St. Peter's is one of faith, enthusiastic cooperation and great achievement.

#### **TECHNICAL EDUCATION AT COLEAMBALLY**

Following requests for Technical Education from residents in the Coleambally Area, classes commenced in a portable school building on the North Coleambally School site during 1967.

The school building was divided into two classrooms. In one room a course in Sheep and Wool was conducted by teacher Peter Supple; in the other room a course in Dressmaking was conducted by teacher Diane Miles. These two teachers travelled from Griffith Technical College and conducted the classes from 7 p.m. to 11 p.m. each Thursday evening, arriving back at Griffith about midnight.

Following the completion of the Community Hall in 1968 Sheep and Wool classes were transferred from the school classroom to the Hall.

Being aware of the anticipated development at Coleambally, the Principal of Griffith Technical College, Mr R.G. Young in 1967, submitted a report to Head Office, Department of Technical Education recommending a site be reserved for Technical Education purposes at Coleambally. As a result of this action, arrangements have been made by the Murrumbidgee Shire to make a site for Technical Education purposes available when required.

By 1971, Technical Education at Coleambally had developed to such an extent that classes in Floral Art, Sheep and Wool, Fashion, Children's Art and Sheep Husbandry and Wool Science for school students were being conducted at Coleambally.

Apprentices in various trades and other people interested in vocational training, living in the Coleambally area, were also travelling to Griffith Technical College for instruction.

## SPORT & THE OVAL

Early in the development of the 27 acres set aside for sporting facilities the Murrumbidgee Shire recognised the need for local participation and advice.

The first \$10,000 had been allocated for dressing sheds and toilets and an oval. This money was made up of \$5000 from a government grant and matched by \$5000 from Murrumbidgee Shire Council.

The Committee was made up of the three local Councillors (John McInnes, Chairman; Ernie Geyer and Leo Davidson), and two representatives from each of the existing sporting bodies.

This body advised on the expenditure of the \$5000 given to the Shire by the New South Wales Government and a further \$3000 dollar for dollar grant from the same source.

It was envisaged that the committee would eliminate the duplication of facilities and encourage local contributions both in the way of finance and voluntary labour.

This was in fact the case. In a series of working-bees the oval itself was largely constructed by voluntary labour.

At the first working-bee about eight men with chain saws cut down the trees which were then dragged to the side with tractors.

Keith Burke with his bulldozer removed the stumps and several more working-bees were held dealing with the monotonous task of picking up sticks, a task at which everyone who takes up a Coleambally farm quickly becomes an expert.

More working-bees were held to plough and level the oval. It was graded several times and surveyed by the Murrumbidgee Shire Council after each grading to ensure adequate water run-off. The grading was done by farmers using tractors and landplanes.

A spray irrigation system using permanent underground mains was installed, and the system used has adequate capacity for the development of a second oval.

The ground was then sown with couch seed for the summer growing season of 1966-67. There was no electric power for the spray irrigation system and a roster of farmers was drawn up. Each farmer would bring his tractor to the oval for a day, attaching the P.T.O. to the pump and moving the sprays regularly.

This was so effective that football was played the following winter.

A mowing roster was also in use until 1969, when the Murrumbidgee Shire Council appointed a resident town caretaker, Mr Harry McCaul, who now controls the town community centre and oval.

The dressing pavillion and catering facilities were constructed in 1969 by the Murrumbidgee Shire Council. Lights were installed in 1969 also and these have done much to improve the football standard by enabling the teams to train at night. Developing a Coleambally farm isn't a job which leaves much time for leisure during the daylight hours.

The development of the area has also been enhanced by the building nearby of the Apex Childrens' Playground and the Tennis Court, and this year sees the construction of basketball courts. Plans are also in hand for the development of a second and third oval. Oval No 3 was cleared and used for some time by the Pony Club.



LAYING PIPES ON THE OVAL



## CRICKET

Cricket was begun early in Coleambally. The Coleambally Cricket Club formed a team in the 1961-62 cricket season to play in the Leeton District Cricket Association competition. The first President was Doug Tooth and the first secretary was John Stuckings.

At this stage there were only fifty C.I.A. farms, so the difficulties involved in fielding a team can readily be appreciated. Nearly all players came from retirement.

Until the construction of the oval the team had to travel forty or fifty miles to play each match.

Nevertheless teams have been fielded for every season except one, and Coleambally has played in several finals.

For the 1969-70 season a pitch was constructed on the oval by the Cricket Club.

In 1970-71 the Club fielded a second-grade "B" Division team. This was made up largely of secondary school boys and several good games were played.

The present leaders of the Cricket Club are Bill Reeves (President), Ray Reeves (Treasurer) and Phil Quinn (Secretary).

## AUSTRALIAN RULES

The first game of Australian Rules took place at Eulo on 18th August, 1964.

It was very much a "scratch" game, but aroused so much enthusiasm that a club was formed, with Leo Davidson as President, John Stuckings as Secretary and Ray Reeves as coach.

In Autumn of 1965, a team was first entered in the Barellan League. A ground was prepared at Eulo and a tin shed erected as a changing room. The team was largely made up of players who came out of retirement. In their first season, Coleambally won one game.

Despite this, and despite the long distances that often have to be travelled — Hay, for example, is over 90 miles away, — Coleambally has fielded a team each season. The team has also enjoyed increasing success.

The various social functions held in the Club and the after-game barbeques are an important feature of community life.

The present leaders of the club are Ray Geddes (President) Peter Mellington, who succeeded Ray Reeves as coach (Secretary) and Bill Reeves (Treasurer).

## RUGBY LEAGUE

The story of Rugby League in Coleambally is similar to that in many small communities — BATTLE, BOOM AND BUST.

Formed in 1965, the Club battled through the first season playing its games at Darlington Point (that being the closest suitable ground) and receiving some monumental thrashings 49-2 being but one example.

The following year the team played itself into the four but was eliminated in the first semi.

From there the boom conditions started. The team playing in the Grand Final in '67 and '69 lost both times by small margins to Hay and Deniliquin respectively.

The team then commenced its downhill slide until, through lack of players in 1971, the team was forced to withdraw from competition.

Some notable achievements have been performed by the club and its members.

On one occasion a huge brawl involving an estimated forty people erupted after the game. This was so newsworthy it made city newspapers and T.V.

On another occasion, after a game at Coleambally two men poured fifty-six gallons of beer into 7 oz galses in three hours to refresh the players and spectators after a particularly hard game.

What of the future then? Well with the hard core of enthusiastic Rugby men in the district, and as they could gain from players leaving the schoolboy football ranks, it seems inconceivable that the "greatest game of all" will remain in that "busted" condition for very long.

Ian Bowditch

## **JUNIOR SPORT**

### **COLEAMBALLY PONY CLUB**

The Inaugural Meeting of the Coleambally Pony Club was held on the 23rd October, 1967. The Club was formed and duly affiliated with Zone 21 of New South Wales.

For some months rallies were held at Farm 103 (the property of H. Heffer). Permission was later given by the Shire Council to use No. 3 sports oval. Pony club rallies and barbeques were regularly held and membership grew to seventeen active riders. Support was very good for some two years, and children took part in two annual pony club camps.

Unfortunately members became more scattered and transport for horses was not easily available. The club was not able to keep functioning at the same level so went into recess with the hope of becoming an active club again in the future.

However, a lot has been gained by some of the original members, as they have gone on to become proficient riders and have met with much success at local agricultural shows.

### **COLEAMBALLY JUNIOR TENNIS**

**Mrs M. Heffer**

Junior Tennis commenced at Coleambally in May, 1970 with a Coaching School of forty children between the ages of eight and sixteen years. The follow-up after the coaching was Saturday morning tennis from 9.30 a.m. to 12.30. This proved very popular with more children getting interested and the numbers growing each week. This tennis is supervised by adult members.

This May 1971 holidays we conducted another coaching school with a paid coach coming from Sydney. It was conducted from Monday to Friday from 9.00 a.m. till 5.00 p.m. with an attendance of sixty one children.

Some children travelled as far as twenty miles to attend.

Also this year the children are playing in a competition called the Dale Cup with teams taking part from Narrandera, Leeton, Parkview, Yanco and Whitton. Some very good tennis is played and gives the children the incentive to win, and competition is always good.

The matches are played each first and third Sunday every month with home and away matches.

Our teams have visited Griffith and Narrandera for tournaments and have always acquitted themselves well, and managed to bring home a few prizes.

A number of Juniors play in the Senior High Competition.

If present indications continue, junior tennis at Coleambally will go from strength to strength.

### **JUNIOR CRICKET**

Junior cricket started in 1970 through the help of Jock Foley, knowing the need for controlled activities of the children.

Support grew through the Coleambally Central School

The willing players were coached by Keith Buchanan and Ivan George who soon had the interest and support for a 2nd Grade Team, headed by Bill Reeves.

The Senior Grade provided equipment making possible the immediate formation of a 2nd Grade Team in the Leeton Competition.

Saturday morning coaching was inevitable and further help by John Doherty, Phil Quin, Laurie Jennings, Barry Champion, Brian Mannes, Kevin Hogan, pressed this ahead so that full Saturday play was carried enthusiastically through the season with increasing parent support.

The first game was played on 17th October, 1970. The team was faced with a heavy burden as most of the boys had no previous coaching. This brought out many lively characters and some interesting action with much humour. One of the coaches almost hit a six, causing great excitement with boys and joy to the parents.

Other parents found themselves "conned" into buying cricket gear unheard of in their household before.

One ever keen lad wore his father out, but came to the fore by chasing his own balls on a bike while his father stayed glued to the bowling crease. Other parents found their advice at home on cricket, was outdated.

A car lift by Mrs John Oliver and John Chauncy enabled twenty boys to go to Yanco for a coaching lesson by Barry Richards.

## COLEAMBALLY JUNIOR RUGBY LEAGUE

At the Inaugural Meeting held on the 28th May, 1970 at St Peter's School eleven people attended and four apologies were received. The meeting was chaired by Mr John McInnes.

Elected Officers:	President	—	Laurie Pettit
	Secretary	—	John Doherty
	Treasurer	—	Barry Briggs

We commenced playing on Saturday 6th June, 1970 with an attendance of eighty boys.

A lamb drive was held to raise finance — \$400 was raised. Three sets of jumpers and sox, one green and two red, two footballs and a first aid kit were purchased.

Three teams played in the Leeton and Junee Knockout Competitions.

Former Australian Captain, Mr Ian Walsh gave the players advice and training.

At the end of the season trophies were presented by Mr Lloyd Edwards, from Country League Football.

Trophies: *Pettit Cup* donated by Laurie Pettit for 4 stone 7 competition on Saturday mornings.

*Ian Walsh* trophy donated by Ian Walsh for the best and fairest player in the 5 stone 7 division.

Winner — Michael Fraser.

*Sid Jones, Younghusband* trophy for the best and fairest player in the 6 stone 7 division.

Winner — Trevor Jones.

*Referee's Award* donated by Barry Briggs.

Winner — Jack Chauncy.

Four trophies for the best and fairest in the four 4 stone 7 teams donated by Tunney Grace, Ken Muntz, John McInnes and Bob Fraser.

Winners — Daryl Briggs, David Jones, Craig Irvine and Phillip Oliver.

## COLEAMBALLY LITTLE ATHLETICS CLUB

Little athletics is designed for the recreation of boys and girls who are up to 15 years of age.

On 11th November, 1970, Mr Jock Foley, then Principal of Coleambally Central School, Messrs K. Buchanan, R. Meyer and D. Sutherland attended a formation meeting at Leeton of the Murrumbidgee Little Athletics Centre at which the ideals of little athletics, as applied to children, parents and community were outlined. This meeting considered the desirability of establishing a number of "Little Athletics Clubs" based on primary and secondary schools and controlled by parents and also a "Little Athletics Centre" to organise and administer athletic activity for these clubs.

Following this meeting, a meeting was called of parents at Coleambally on 18th November, 1970 at which the Coleambally Little Athletics Club was formed with Mr K. Buchanan elected President.

On 25th November, 1970 the Murrumbidgee Little Athletics Centre was established at Leeton with six clubs.

The first carnival was held at Yanco Sports Ground on 13th December, 1970 with 17 Coleambally children attending. Coleambally membership increased gradually until the Carnival held at Coleambally on 21st March, 1971 when we had 126 children competing, including eight from Hay and Darlington Point. This carnival was an outstanding success with 500 competitors. During the season, Coleambally travelled to Narrandera, Leeton and again to Yanco. Coleambally children had very good performances resulting in their gaining many points for the Coleambally Club and winning the combined Inter-Club Competition Shield donated by S. Richards and Co. Pty. Ltd. of Narrandera and Leeton.

During the winter, limited coaching was conducted by Mr Buchanan assisted by Mesdames Cowie and Middleton.

We look forward to another good year this coming season with the children's enthusiasm gaining strength as the athletic season commences with school athletics.

Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.

## **EULO TENNIS CLUB**

At Egansford School on the 21st March, 1962 a meeting was called for all those interested in helping to form sporting clubs and in the setting up of a recreation ground.

Those present at this meeting were settlers from the first and second lot of farms to be settled at Coleambally: Bob and Denise Robertson, Don & Dot Dwyer, Norm Dwyer, Laurie Pettit, Frank Mellington, Geoff Edmanson, George Pack, Pat Burge, Jack Leach, Miss Kay Briggs, Dennis Guildford and Jim Ceely (the Egansford school teacher).

It was at this meeting that the Eulo Tennis Club was formed. The club's first President was Don Dwyer, and the Secretary was Kay Briggs.

To start funds rolling, a day of social tennis and a barbeque was held at the home court of Mr H.J. Briggs on the 31st March, 1962.

To raise money the club held a number of functions during the next three years. The main event of the year was the annual "Tennis Club Picnic Day" which was held at the home of Mr Joe Briggs. The events of the day included a Yankee Tennis Tournament, adults' and childrens' races and novelty events of all kinds, finishing with a barbeque and dance — they were a great success.

At the second annual meeting held on the 22nd June, 1964 it was learnt that 12½ acres had been granted for the "Eulo Recreation Ground". A committee was formed consisting of R. Robertson, L. Pettit, D. Dwyer and P. Dunham to pick out a suitable site for the tennis courts, and working bees to erect four courts started on the 4th July, 1964.

It was not until 12 months later at the 3rd annual meeting that a date was set for the club's opening day. The date decided on was the 17th July, 1965 commencing at 10 o'clock with an American mixed tournament, but due to wet weather, it wasn't held until a fortnight later, on the 24th.

During the next 2½ years the courts were in full use with the club being host to many visiting clubs and with their own activities. But when town courts were erected the club's membership dropped. At a special meeting called at the Egansford school on September 17th, 1969 it was decided to close the courts due to lack of members and interest. Tenders were called for all equipment belonging to the Eulo Tennis Club.

## **COLEAMBALLY TENNIS CLUB**

The Coleambally Tennis Club's inaugural meeting was held on 2th January 1967. On 6th February at Coleambally School a public meeting was attended by twenty people and the club was officially started following the election of officers. President Barry Briggs, Vice Presidents Barry Hogan and Bevan Connellan, Secretary Bob Blake, Treasurer Rosalind Carroll. These executives held office until June 1968. During this period there was much foundation work accomplished for the club such as negotiations with the Murrumbidgee Shire re-allocation of land and surveying etc. There was much assistance given by Geoff Boland Shire Engineer in this regard.

Clearing of the site was carried out voluntarily by members. Dozing of trees was done by Keith Burke. Loam for surfacing was carted by members. There were six working bees during this period. Plans and specifications for three courts were prepared and passed by the Shire. Tenders were called for the supply of fencing materials. These were supplied at near cost price by Jack Boyle.

Membership fee was set at \$5 and members were active in fund raising. \$100 was contributed towards the erection of a community kiosk. A shire grant of \$540 was received towards fencing costs.

The first Annual meeting was held in June 1968. The new executive elected were President George Grady, Vice President Cubby Frankel, Secretary Bob Blake and Treasurer Terry Hogan. These members held office until September 1969 and during this period the preparation of the surface was completed, fencing of three courts was erected and water connected to four points. Installing of lights was completed to all three courts at a cost of \$2,800. The area for a fourth court was cleared voluntarily by Ken Cobden. The money for the lighting of the courts came as a windfall as when the Coleambally town was officially opened on June 27th 1968 by the Minister for local Government Mr. Morton, he presented the shire with a cheque for \$5,000 for future development of the recreation area.

With much preparation, plans and estimates were submitted for the lighting project. The club was successful in obtaining \$2,300 of this money and the balance was paid by club funds. The courts were officially opened on 20th October 1968 and was celebrated with a most enjoyable tournament with all members taking part. Much credit is due to our court captain Tom Carroll for management of play on that day.

Lights were connected to the courts in August 1969.

The courts were made possible not only by financial assistance through government grants but by the co-operation generosity and enthusiasm of members who attended 24 working-bees during these fifteen months.

Membership has now grown from twenty seven to over eighty.

The following twelve months saw a lot of social activity. The first night competition consisting of twelve teams was run and is now a regular event from October to April. The "Commerce Shield" donated by the Coleambally Promotion Committee is played for annually.

The first presentation cabaret dance was held in May 1969 and is now an annual event. Club championships are played in June. The social committee were active in arranging inter Club matches and tournaments mainly played at weekends. During winter months there is mid-week social tennis for the ladies.

At present work is well under way for an additional three courts. The surface has been prepared and fencing materials purchased, also a motorised roller has been purchased.

Present club membership one hundred and eight seniors and eighty one juniors.

\$500 from club funds has been set aside for future club rooms.

#### **THE GOLF CLUB OF COLEAMBALLY**

Golfers are a special type of person – with a strong determination and a tenacity above the ordinary. The golfers of Coleambally are no exception, for the battle to have a golf course established in this growing area, has been long, hard and mostly unrewarding.

A meeting was first called to discuss the foundation of a Golf Course on 5th November, 1969. There were 27 enthusiastic prospective golfers at that meeting. Aerial and contour maps of the proposed area which had been allotted for the Golf Course according to the Town Plan were available and everyone was delighted with the 150 acres of land nearly opposite the entrance to the town on the main highway – not knowing at the time that we could not gain title to this land.

From that meeting investigating and fund raising committees were formed, and they set to with great heart to plan the proposed course, and raise funds for all the improvements that the course would need, but now nearly two years later we seem no closer to our dream.

The investigation and fund raising committees were disbanded and we officially became a Golf Club with Mr Keith Robinson, as the first President on 17th July, 1970 with a very small hopeful committee, but still without a course.

We have during those two years interviewed many people and organisations, attended numerous deputations, have raised some money with our Euchre Nights and Hundred Clubs, and been referred from one body to another, but we still cannot gain ownership or even trusteeship of any land on which to build our course.

Meanwhile ardent golfers are travelling many miles to other centres such as Darlington Point, Jerilderie or Griffith to follow the sport they love, which should be available in our own town. But we are not giving up, we are still petitioning and trying and will continue to do so, hoping that in the not too distant future we will be able to offer a first class 18-hole Golf Course to the people of Coleambally.

President: Keith Robinson

Vice Presidents: Jack Briggs – Terry Hogan

Secretary: Mrs Renee Symons

Treasurer: Mrs Audrey Robinson

Committee: Mesdames J. Daniels, J. Briggs, Messrs G. Madden, J. Daniels, C. Polkinghorne and G. Thompson.

#### **BASKETBALL**

A men's and women's Team were formed to play in the Darlington Point Basketball Competition in 1963. Coleambally has been regularly represented since and during the recent 1970-71 season the area sent two men's teams and one women's team.

The Coleambally women reached the finals and eventually won the grand final after a tough game, in which seven players were fouled off. The team consisted of:

Helen Kelly,

Sandy McGown,

Glenys McGown,

Jocelyn Cowie

Lorraine Kelly,

Desney McGown,

Judy Manson

Rhonda Shields

Because of the high interest in basketball in Coleambally, at the moment construction has begun on a court and it is hoped it will be in use in 1972.

## COLEAMBALLY PISTOL CLUB

The Coleambally Pistol Club was inaugurated in August, 1969; foundation President being Barry Wild, Secretary Ivy Gehrig, Treasurer David Foster and Captain Harold Gehrig.

Almost a year elapsed before permission was granted by the Forestry Commission for us to use an excellent site over the Pine Drive and main channel, opposite the football oval.

The necessary mounds were then constructed with the aid and generosity of Bruce and Barry McDermott. The area was fenced and at least some simple shooting could be had by the initial members.

At present the shooting shed is being built, allowing for three rapid fire and duelling frames and fifteen slow fire bays. Extensions can be made if required.

Pistol shooting is an international sport, controlled in this country by the Amateur Pistol Shooting Union of Australia, to which all clubs are affiliated. Permission for Pistol Clubs to be formed in N.S.W. was granted in 1961. An indication of its popularity is the eighty-five now formed. A sport followed by all sun lovers, rifle and shotgun, men and women.

There are six events available to the shooter, an event to suit every personality. These are slow-fire, rapid fire, large and small bores.

The events are Free Pistol Shot over 50 metres, Rapid-fire, Centre-fire, Standard Pistol, Ladies' Match, Shot over 25 metres, and Air Pistol shot over 10 metres.

Free pistol and rapid fire are included in the Olympic Games, and all events are shot in championships all over the world.

Shooters are graded similarly throughout the world, therefore giving all shooters an opportunity to win in competition matches.

Elevation through the grades involves ability and time, not unlike golf, tennis etc. Some shooters excel in competition, others shoot for fun. Both attitudes are enjoyable and relaxing.

Cost is not inhibitive, the new shooter usually confining himself, or herself, to one gun, usually a .22 for a considerable length of time, until the basic fundamentals are learnt.

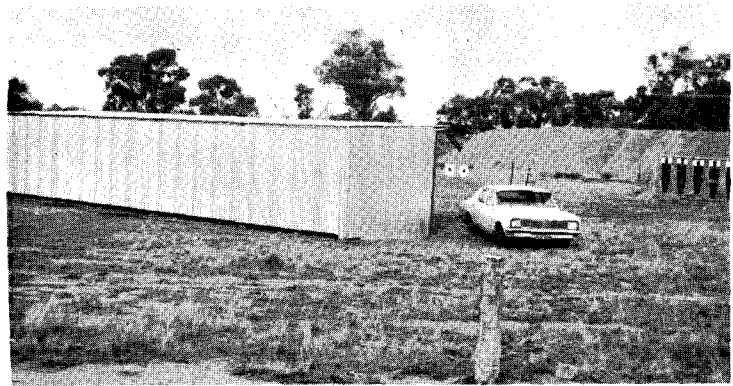
The Coleambally Club is fortunate in having Ivy Gehrig, our Secretary, as a very able and devoted shooter. Ivy represented Australia in the 1970 World Championships in Phoenix, and has been a state team member for the past four years; something very few clubs can boast.

Shooting is conducted each week-end. Visiting shooters and interested persons are always welcome.

**Barry Wild**



**CLUB SECRETARY IVY GEHRIG,  
N.S.W. Ladies Match Championship 1969-70**



**COLEAMBALLY PISTOL CLUB  
IN EARLY STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT**

## COLEAMBALLY SPORTING CLUB

Plans are well in hand for the establishment of a licenced Sporting Club in Coleambally. The Club has been in existence for over four years and finance has been raised by debentures.

Intending members are invited to contact Geoff Edmanson, Farm 27, the Secretary. The more membership that can be obtained the quicker the club can be established.

## LAKE COLEAMBALLY

The Coleambally Aquatic Club was formed this year. It is a representative group of people with one interest in common — an interest in one form of aquatic sport, — sailing, boating, water ski-ing or even swimming.

Detailed plans have been drawn up for the construction of a 120-acre lake on a site two miles from Coleambally town, where a natural depression already exists. Coleambally earthmoving contractors, including the secretary, Neil Hanmer, are very experienced in this type of work and the plans Neil has produced have been thoroughly checked by professional engineers. The plans have also been checked and approved by State boating organisations.

With the assistance of the Town Promotion Committee, the club is set to make an immediate start on construction as soon as approval is received from the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission. If this is given soon, the club president, Reg Cowie, expects to be ski-ing on the Lake this summer.

### COLEAMBALLY SWIMMING POOL

A public meeting called by the Murrumbidgee Shire President, Mr Ern Geyer, on 26th May, 1971, began efforts in the town and district towards the building of a swimming pool in Coleambally.

Office bearers elected at the public meeting were: Dr R. Byrne President; Mr J. Hagan Vice President; Mr D. Honybun Treasurer; Mr F. Cook Secretary.

Committee members elected were: Mesdames J. Carroll, D. Whelan, J. Harmatus; Messrs J. Marshall, R. Klaver, N. Mamner, G. Grady. The committee was given power to add if necessary.

Committee meetings are held fortnightly in the Shire Office at Coleambally. The main task is to decide on a project suitable for the town. Already, negotiations have been opened with several contracting firms, but especially significant is the contribution being made by the Murrumbidgee Shire Council as they assist and advise the committee in these early stages.

The project for Coleambally envisages a staged plan; Stage 1 a learners' pool to cater for immediate needs; Stage 2 a half-Olympic size pool and children's wading pool; Stage 3 extension of the main pool to full Olympic size.

Already fund-raising schemes have begun, following a donation by the past Principal of the school, Mr J. Foley, to open the fund.

The future of the pool rests not just with the committee but with all citizens of Coleambally district. We need a pool urgently. It is hoped that the enthusiasm shown at the public meeting in May will continue so that the construction of a pool in Coleambally will be soon realised.

F.W. Cook



**EULO TENNIS 1964**



**AUSSIE RULES 1971**



## THE N.S.W. BUSH NURSING ASSOCIATION

The N.S.W. Bush Nursing Centre was established in Darlington Point in 1960 because of the increasing population due to the Coleambally Irrigation scheme. A legacy from the estate of Miss Selina Heider made possible the purchase and alterations of the house and the furnishing and equipping of the centre. A plaque by the front door commemorates this.

Sister Ramsey, a stalwart of Bush Nursing was the first Sister and was present for the official opening of the centre by Mrs Bell, wife of the late Dr G. Bell C.B.E. President of the Bush Nursing Association. Several Sisters then spent a few months at the centre. Among them may be remembered Miss Jamieson, Judith Swain, Emily Rothery, Jean Abel, and Dorothy Kelly, also relief Sisters Audrey McKenzie and Heather Miller. Those last two are of course now members of the C.I.A.; the former as Mrs Neil Morton and the latter as Mrs Ray Reeves. Sister Pugh spent from May 1962 to New Year's Day 1963 at the centre and returned in November 1965.

As Coleambally grew further away from Darlington Point it was realised that the Baby Clinic would need to be taken to the new area. The W.C. and I.C. offered the use of the kitchen building at Argoon, and this was set up by Sisters Miller and Pugh. The Clinic opened on Tuesday 14th of December 1965 and young Alex Buchanan had the honour of being the first patient, receiving his Diphtheria Tetanus Booster before going to school. This room however was later used as a schoolroom and at Mr Cameron's suggestion a small room at the back of the house was the clinic's next home. Mr and Mrs K. Buchanan helped to clean the room and move the furniture and the Clinic lasted there until the children were moved to the new school in the town. A move was made back to the roomier kitchen building, but in a few weeks vandals had damaged it so much that it was no longer weather tight. Mr Cameron then offered the use of one of the portable classrooms. Mr E. Shaw kindly moved the furniture and the Clinic opened there in May 1967.

It was no use settling down, for as the population rose the old temporaries were taken back into use as classrooms, and so the Clinic moved again, this time to the staff room. This has since been its most constant home although it has been held in the hallway, the sick bay, and the headmaster's room when classroom space was at a premium.

The original hours were from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on the second Tuesday each month, but so few calls were made during the mornings that it was decided to change to the second and fourth afternoons from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. instead. This commenced in November 1966 and was carried on until February 1968, when because numbers were so small, it was felt to be a waste of time. The half day on the second Tuesday each month continued although it unfortunately had to be dropped on some occasions due to holidays and lack of transport. However, with the growth of the town, the numbers have risen and from July 1971 the bi-monthly visits have been resumed.

The Clinic is mainly for Baby Welfare but all immunisations are given as well as advice. The Antipoliomyelitis clinics have been done for Murrumbidgee Shire by the Bush Nurse with clerical help from the Shire. The Salk vaccine injections were given at the centre at Darlington Point, but the clinics for Sabin Oral vaccine were taken to the schools in the C.I.A. for both children and adults.

H. Pugh

### COLEAMBALLY MEDICAL CENTRE

With the arrival of Dr Byrne in the Coleambally Community it became apparent that his service to the area would be limited unless some type of hospital facility was available in the town.

At a public meeting convened by Murrumbidgee Shire, a committee was set up to seek a government subsidy on the medical practice. This committee also undertook to investigate the possibility of further medical and hospital facilities in Coleambally. Those elected to the committee were Messrs T. Hogan, J. Wilkinson and J. McInnes and Mesdames, Shepherd and Starkey. On the departure of Mrs Starkey, Mrs Jan Marshall was appointed to the committee and took over the office of secretary.

The committee immediately arranged a meeting with Dr Low (Department of Public Health) and Mr Mooney (Hospital Commission). The committee also discussed the matter with the Minister for Health, Mr H. Jago. The outcome of discussions was that preparation of a detailed submission.

At present the Committee is collating facts for a proposal that would provide a satellite facility under the administration of the new Griffith Base Hospital.

## THE MURRUMBIDGEE MAGPIES

One evening in 1961 Mrs Martin Bell, Mrs Donald Ross and Mr Cecil Lander got together and discussed taking advantage of one of the opportunities offered by the Department of Tutorial Classes, University of Sydney, for Adult Education. They decided to form a group to work through the speakers kit, which consisted of a series of programmes in a set of nine leaflets.

The original group was of twenty members with Mr Cecil Lander as President and Mr Martin Bell as secretary. The meetings were held at "Ercildoune" until the house was resumed.

The group had to have a name and Mrs Bell suggested the very apt name of Murrumbidgee Magpies. This name was adopted and has continued ever since.

Following the first speaker's kit, the group then did the second speaker's kit, and then the player's kit. They next studied current affairs through a discussion group, and in 1965, as nearly all the members were new, they did the first speaker's kit again. The following year they chose An Introduction to Logic — a rather disastrous choice. It was decided at the next Annual Dinner to try a year of purely speaking and reading similar to Rostrum programmes. This was so successful that it was carried on for a further two years. The majority of members then being new since 1965, the first speaker's kit was chosen for 1970.

The most difficult part of this kit was found to be meeting procedure, and so the group decided to study this in 1971.

The group has sponsored public meetings which have been addressed by eminent men. Mr H.D. Black, Professor G. Howie, and Mr Simon Pels are among the speakers who have made evenings interesting.

None of the original members now remain in the group, but it goes on from year to year with new blood and renewed enthusiasm for self improvement.

## APEX

Inauguration of the Darlington Point Apex Club took place on 16th November, 1963. Membership of the club consisted of young men from Darlington Point and Coleambally dedicated to the ideals of Apex — community service and citizenship. After successful charter application, the club became a chartered member of the World Council of Young Men's Service Clubs on 6th March, 1965.

In pursuit of its ideals, the fledgling club soon became prominent in community affairs. the club's first major project was the construction of facilities at the Darlington Point Apex Caravan Park.

Following a successful wheat drive within the district a children's playground was installed as part of the community sporting complex in Coleambally. Physical education fixed equipment was donated and erected within the grounds of the Coleambally Central School.

Substantial donations have been made to Gidgell, Egansford and St Peter's Schools for the specific purpose of purchasing library books.

Citizenship has been fostered amongst the school-age generation, academically through the annual "Apex Secondary Award", physically, through inter-school competition for the "Apex Sporting Shield.

## BROWNIES AND CUBS

A chance meeting between Leonie Blake and Chloë Smith in mid-1970 set the ball rolling for the formation of the 1ST COLEAMBALLY BROWNIE PACK and the 1ST COLEAMBALLY CUB PACK. Later enquiries were made to the Scout and Guide Associations for information and help was offered by the District Commissioners of both Associations. In October, notes, asking for support, were organised by Leonie Chloë and Jo Honeybun — these were distributed through the schools. The response to these resulted in a Public Meeting in November, to which Scouters and Guiders came. At this meeting it was decided to start Brownie and Cub Packs. Jean Middleton and Chloë Smith volunteered to train as leaders. A local Association — led by Jo Honeybun, Beth Buchanan and Pam McPhail — and a Group Committee — led by Ken Baker, Alice Cullen and Jack Rawlings were established. A rather unique situation developed here — the Local Association and the Group Committee decided to work together to raise funds for the two packs and this has proved most successful.

BROWNIES started in February 1971, with 11 girls, led by Jean and assisted by Denise Rawlings, on Wednesday afternoons, at St Mark's Hall.

Six hectic months later, Jean (Brown Owl) and Cathy Sidlow (Tawny Owl) with unit helper Joan Heffer and Denise Druitt as Badge Secretary, had a full pack of 24 Brownies.

The pack is able to look forward to a happy future in Guiding with Jean leading the girls through Brownies, and Pat Burge taking them on through Guides.

CUBS started in February with 12 boys. The Cubs, now 23 strong, meet on Wednesday afternoon at the Oval or Coleambally Central School.

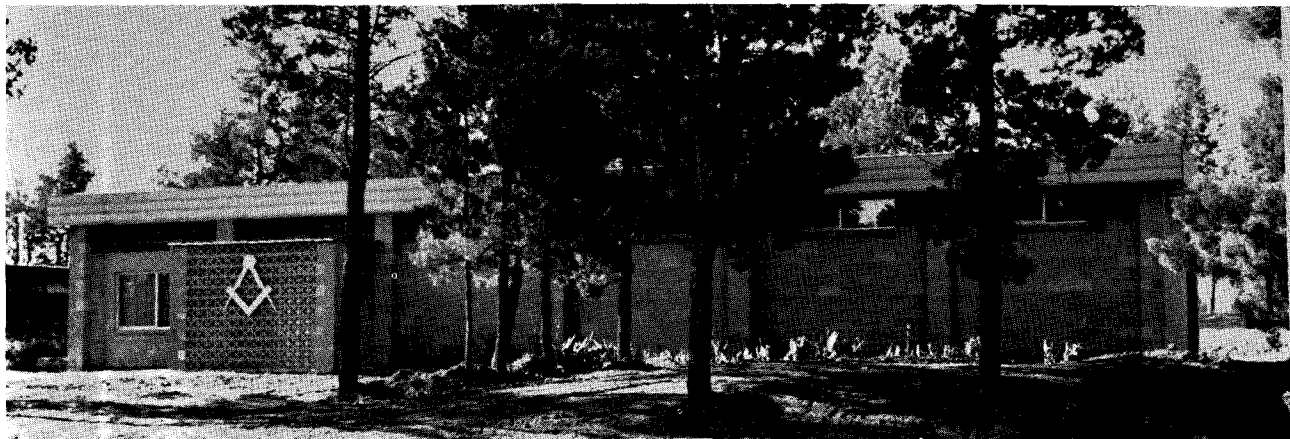
## FREEMASONRY IN COLEAMBALLY

At several meetings of interested Masons held in a shed at Coleambally during 1964 it was decided to apply to the United Grand Lodge of N.S.W. for a charter to start a new Lodge.

This charter was approved by the Grand Master (M.Wor. Bro.E.L. Beers) and in June 1965 the new Lodge was consecrated to meet in the Masonic Temple at Narrandera, monthly with a membership of 27. It is interesting to note that during the five years of travelling to Narandera an average attendance of over 60% was maintained and membership was increased 100%.

At the earliest meetings it was decided to endeavour to build a new Temple in the Coleambally township as soon as possible. An application for a site was duly lodged with the Murrumbidgee Shire Council. In due course this was granted and building was commenced in June 1970. Steady progress was made, mainly by voluntary labour, and the building was sufficiently completed by December to hold the Christmas meeting there.

On the 19th June, 1971 the new temple was officially dedicated by the Grand Master U.G.L. of N.S.W. (M.Wor.Bro. R.A. Hammond) and now stands overlooking the shopping center to show what the co-operation and perseverance of the Masonic Brethren in Coleambally has achieved.



## COLEAMBALLY RED CROSS

Following a suggestion of Mrs Martin Bell of "Noonameena" who was at the time President of Darlington Point Red Cross Branch, a public meeting was called on 29 June, 1967 at the Coleambally North School, as it was then called, and the following is an extract from the Minutes of that Meeting:—

"Mrs Bell opened the meeting by introducing Mrs Blight, the Zone Representative, and welcoming her on behalf of all those present. Mrs Bell then proceeded to explain why it was felt desirable for Coleambally to form either an Auxiliary or full time branch, and then called on Mrs Blight to tell something of the work done by Red Cross throughout the world. This she did in a very thorough and most interesting manner and all present were convinced that whatever assistance we could give, would be of real value.

Open discussion then ensued and it was unanimously agreed that Coleambally Branch be formed. The motion was moved by Mrs Graham, seconded Mrs King.

Election of officers then took place and the results were as follows:

President	Mrs Woodman
Vice Presidents	Mrs Graham and Mrs R. Robertson
Secretary	Mrs Edmanson
Treasurer	Mrs Druitt
Publicity Officer	Mrs Jennings
Hon Auditor	Manager Bank of N.S.W. Darlington Point.

It was moved by Mrs Meyer and seconded Mrs Beaumont that the branch hold its first meeting on Monday, 10th July, 1967 at 2.00 p.m. at the Coleambally North School."

After this meeting there was an enrollment of 49 members, and now four years later, the Coleambally Branch of the Red Cross is still an active organisation.

## PROGRESS ASSOCIATION

Perhaps the most widely based and far-sighted organisation in Coleambally is the Progress Association.

Formed in 1963, to handle the problems both large and small, domestic and of a larger nature, the association is rather unique in that it has only one rule and that is the amount of the annual subscription. No subject is barred from coming before the meeting and members bring to notice many matters on such diverse subjects as the cause of inflation in the Australian economy to the width of culvert pipes in the industrial section of Coleambally.

Immediately after the original meeting, which was held in Ray Vicary's shed, the venue of the meetings was moved to an old out-station building of Tubbo Station, which during the daytime doubled as the school — and was popularly known to the new settlers as "Hell's Kitchen".

Over the years the Association handled many bread and butter issues such as the provision of roads, schools, telephone, electricity and received good co-operation from most authorities so that now these services in most cases rival, and sometimes excel, those provided in older established areas. However, several highlights both achieved and still in the hopeful file and, alas, also some failures, need special mention and these are set out below.

**Rice Mill** Growers in the area felt that rice grown in the Coleambally area should be processed in the area and a detailed submission to that end was presented to the Directors of the Ricegrowers Co-Op Mill at Leeton.

Following an invitation to the directors to visit the area, Progress called a public meeting, held in Roy Growdens shed. The upshot was, as we have seen earlier, the establishment of the mill.

**Wheat Storage.** As has been mentioned earlier, Progress played a part in securing this also.

**Darlington Point Meeting 1964.** This successful venture was also organised by the Progress Association and an account is given elsewhere in this book. This meeting was addressed by A.J. Grassby. These "knockers" were effectively silenced for some years, but seem to be becoming rather noisy again lately.

**Commonwealth Banking Corporation.** During the initial years financial institutions were very loath to accommodate settlers regarding the development of their blocks.

Following several letters to the press, the manager of the Commonwealth Bank at Narrandera addressed a public meeting, also held in Roy Growdens shed, outlining the role of the Commonwealth Development Bank. Some time after this the Managing Director of the Commonwealth Banking Corporation toured the area.

For the next three to four years there appeared to be a rapid expansion of development within the area. **Inter-Shire Finance.** About half the farms in the C.I.A. are within the Jerilderie Shire while the remainder are within the Murrumbidgee Shire. The Murrumbidgee Shire is responsible for the development of the Coleambally town.

Settlers in the Jerilderie Shire felt that the rates they contributed did not help in the progress of the Coleambally town.

Following representations to the Jerilderie Shire the Councillors of that Shire saw the justice of the settlers claim and subsequently put money aside to assist the Murrumbidgee Shire with their development.

The Jerilderie Shires sense of justice is greatly appreciated by all Coleambally settlers.

**Water.** Possibly the most ambitious project undertaken by the Progress Association was to go to a Land's Board Court to try to reserve a decision by the W.C. & I.C. to grant an additional water licence to a large corporate owned property at Darlington Point. The particular property was already endowed with large quantities of water both from the Murrumbidgee River and from bores on the property.

The Association felt that the granting of the licence would create a precedent by permitting other properties along the river to also obtain extra water.

The water we felt should be reserved for future Coleambally farms and for the individual farmers greater needs for water in the future.

The Board decided after a five day hearing to grant the Licence to the applicants so it may be said that the Progress Association lost the battle.

But a closer examination of the judgement brings to attention the stringent conditions imposed on the applicant and we think effectively blocks future applications for additional licences along the river.

We may well have lost the battle but the outcome of the war could be said to favour the Association.

**Railway.** On the day men first landed on the moon (July 1969), the Association entertained the Minister for transport at Coleambally and presented him with a detailed submission for the provision of a rail link to Coleambally.

The submission had of course been the culmination of many years effort to establish the rail link.

The Minister made several promises to the Association and was very enthusiastic about the scheme.

Since that date the Americans and Russians seem to have built a transport system to the moon and back, but Coleambally still waits for the railway.

The Community Rice Crop was another project in which the Progress Association took a leading part. This crop, grown during the 1970-71 season raised over \$4,000 clear for the Medical Centre.

It was grown as a header testing crop. The overall planning and organisation was done by Frank Whelan and Ray Vicary.

The money raised was allocated at a Public meeting. Four projects were considered:

The Medical Centre;  
The Coleambally Bowling Green;  
The Swimming Pool;  
The Library.

At the suggestion of Keith Burke, the voting was preferential. Keith supported the Bowling Green project, but because of the distribution of preferences, this project was beaten by a single vote.

With the allocation of this money, the Jerilderie Shire Council have adopted the Medical Centre as their number one priority for assistance to the township. This has meant that sufficient money is now on hand to make the Medical Centre feasible.

### THE PROMOTION COMMITTEE

On 30th June, 1970, a meeting consisting mainly of town businessmen formed the Coleambally Promotion Committee.

This group works in various ways to assist and promote town development. It seeks to promote the growth of the town and to encourage local people to support their own town.

The foundation president was Reg Cowie, in 1971 Max Ridley became president. Over the two years, the secretary-treasurer has been Fred Partington.

### FARMING GROUPS

#### COLEAMBALLY SETTLERS ASSOCIATION

The above organisation was formed at a meeting of eight settlers held at Farm 8 (home of Mr and Mrs H. Burge), on Sunday 13th March, 1960. A committee was elected as follows:—

President	—	H. Burge
Secretary	—	R. Pike
Treasurer	—	W. Cater

The immediate aims were to be promoting the provision of telephone, electricity and a school.

Mr Miller, Darlington Point Postmaster was present, and informed settlers of mail deliveries by Mr D. McCoy, mail contractor.

Mr Dowsitt and Mr Thompson, of Murrumbidgee County Council, attended the meeting on 3rd April.

Motions carried at 3rd July meeting included one expressing our support for the earliest possible building of Blowering Dam and another that we press for a Coleambally member on the Rice Marketing Board.

Mr Don Wallin attended the meeting held on the 3rd August and gave advice on sowing of our *first* rice crop.

A committee to wait on the Rice Marketing Board for storage was appointed at the September meeting — H. Burge, R. Pike and B. Kelly were elected. At the same meeting a vote was taken for a school or bus to Darlington Point. School won and a school was opened in an old house on Farm 8, in February 1961.

Loaming of access roads, railway, telephone, electricity, and burning-off permits were the main topics of discussion until the Settlers' Association was disbanded on 1st March, 1961 in favour of forming a branch of the farmers & Settlers Association to deal with problems through a bigger organisation at state level.

The funds of the Association were equally divided between the Farmers & Settlers Association and Egansford Public School.

**COLEAMBALLY FARMERS & SETTLERS and  
UNITED FARMERS & WOOLGROWERS ASSOCIATION**

A public meeting at the home of Mr H. Burge on Farm 8 on February 14th, 1961 proposed the formation of a branch of the Farmers and Settlers Association. Twelve people were present and Mr Watts and Ron Carlon addressed the meeting on the advantages of forming a branch of the state organisation.

The Officers elected were:—

President	—	Mr H. Burge
Secretary	—	R. Pike
Treasurer	—	N. Dwyer
Vice President	—	J. Leach
		D. Graham

It was decided that the branch would affiliate with M.I.A. District Council.

On the 1st March, 1961 it was decided to enter a float in "Irrigana Festival" to be held at Leeton. It was also decided that the first delegation on rice storage to meet the Rice Marketing Board at Whitton would be H. Burge, J. Leach, R. Wallace, T. Forge and R. Pike.

7th June, 1961 Mr George Hoy, the State President addressed the Association meeting.

September, 1961. The Murrumbidgee Shire requested any suggestions for naming roads — the meeting suggested original settlers and Don Wallin, district agronomist.

January, 1962. Meeting held for the first time at Egansford School.

February, 1962. Last meeting of Farmers and Settlers, as such — this organisation being amalgamated in the United Farmers and Woolgrowers Association.

**COLEAMBALLY BRANCH OF AGRICULTURAL BUREAU**

A public meeting with sixteen present was held at Egansford School on 17th September, 1964, when it was decided to form a branch of the Bureau. Officers elected were:—

President	—	H. Burge
Secretary	—	G. Fowler
Treasurer	—	F. Mellington
Publicity Officer	—	K. Robinson

The aim of the Bureau is family education in rural areas with agriculture its main theme but varied along all the subjects available. This branch has conducted two schools for women: "Interior Decorating" by Incy Foksett, and "Understanding Ourselves" by Nina Martindale.

Other subjects covered were Forestry, Soils and Botany, Farm Management, veterinary subjects on sheep and cattle, Oil Seed Crops, Welding School, Tractor Maintenance, Field days for wheat and rice, Pasture Establishment, Annual Field Days for Rice at Leeton and Yanco Research Station and a Stock Exchange Seminar.

**YAMMA SETTLERS' ASSOCIATION**

(Prepared by committee members of the Y.S.A.)

The Yamma Settlers' Association represents Coleambally settlers who have received leases to large area irrigation farms within the C.I.A. since 1968, when rentals were increased.

This organisation commissioned G.P. McGowan and Associates to prepare a study of their particular problems with a view to having the rentals reviewed.

The method adopted has been to —

- (i) assess the cash costs and income associated with the development phase of farms released since 1968 and compare these levels with the cost and incomes associated with the development phase of farms released prior to this period;
- (ii) To assess the profitability at full development of farms settled since 1968 and to compare this profitability with farms settled before 1968;
- (iii) To assess the average level of rents in these periods.

The most significant section of the report deals with rentals.

Annual rentals are based on 5% of the unimproved value of the land suitable for irrigation after allowance has been made for timbered areas. A remission is granted to each holding based on the distance from railway facilities at the rate of 0.75% of the annual rental, for each mile in excess of 3 miles by road. Rentals were increased with the holdings released in 1968 and have been maintained at this increased level for the 1969 and 1970 allocations.

Sale prices for agricultural land increase rapidly during income booms.

Such a boom occurred in 1965-68 at Coleambally, as a result of buoyant grain markets. During this period U.C.V.'s rose, and influenced the rents set for the farms settled after 1967.

Following previous Commission policies rents, once set, remain fixed for all time. However, the boom was short lived and the new settlers in the subsequent years were faced with lower incomes and higher rents than the pre-1968 settlers.

The main aim of the Yamma Settlers' Association is to achieve an improvement in this state of affairs.

#### **THE YAMMA NEW SETTLERS' ASSOCIATION**

In March and May of 1969, the Irrigation Commission ballotted an additional 41 C.I.A. farms and every successful applicant felt good fortune had smiled upon them.

Our moments of joy were very short lived.

First, one of the wettest seasons on record prevented all but three of the forty-one farmers from sowing wheat or similar crops. Those who had sown wheat encountered greatly restricted wheat quotas. Those who hadn't sown wheat, were left with no reasonable basis for them to acquire a quota by.

Within a very short time we were to receive another blow. Our main product, rice, was to have a price cut. We felt something had to be done.

With no phones or power, communication was a problem, so with grape-vine communication and a little mail left at two known pick-up places, a meeting of all farmers was called to discuss our problems.

The meeting decided that we should form an organised body to be called the Yamma New Settlers' Association, to act on behalf of all new farmers.

We approached the Minister of Agriculture, regarding wheat quotas. He replied that it was unfortunate, but we would have to diversify to other crops. This again created problems, because we had to decide on what crops to grow and discover where the markets were.

Most marketable crops with an assured market and prices, were grown by contracts and contracts weren't available to new growers at that time. Some are still unobtainable.

Barley, sunflower, sorghum and corn were the most favoured substitutes.

Barley had no guaranteed price and still hasn't.

Sunflower contracts were allotted on a very limited acreage, after meeting with a contracting firm. Contractors controlled the seed so did they control the area they desired sown to suit themselves.

Our break-through with sunflower came when the Association was able to obtain seed from Victoria. Within two weeks of this, both major contracting firms offered unlimited acreage contracts.

The Coarse Grain Growers' Association was making its presence felt for the first time and has since also accepted sunflower as well as other products with a more favourable return for the farmer.

Our Association has been granted basic wheat quotas, Coarse Grain Contracts, and opened market outlets for our produce which once seemed hopeless.

**A.H. Pfitzner**  
**Hon Secretary**

#### **THE ARGOON BRANCH OF THE C.W.A.**

The Argoon C.W.A. was formed after two ladies, Mrs C.R. Taylor of "Pooginook" and Mrs N. Reid of "Cooimbil" called a meeting to be held at "Pooginook" on 20th November, 1948. Mrs Reid was a keen member of the Carathool Branch of the C.W.A., and, knowing the worthy aims, benefits and pleasures of C.W.A. felt that the Argoon ladies would appreciate its many interests if a branch was formed locally.

Mrs Reid presided at the first meeting, at which Mrs W. Frazer, then the President of the Sturt Group of C.W.A., gave an interesting address on the Association and its functions.

It was decided to form a branch and the first office bearers were:

President:	Mrs C.R. Taylor of "Pooginook"
Secretary:	Miss D. Bull of "Gala Vale"
Treasurer:	Mrs J. Steels of "Coleambally"
Vice President:	Mrs Ryson of "Goolgumbbla"
	Mrs C. Bull of "Gala Vale"
	Mrs J. Barber of "Walla"
	Mrs J.A. Culley of "Wonga"
Librarian:	Mrs K. Liddle
Publicity Officer:	Mrs Burden



Mainly because it was not connected with a township, the branch made no obvious material progress. The meeting days were happy friendly outings held at various members homes. Activities such as Speakers Kits, Handicrafts, International Studies, Group Meetings and functions, gave much pleasure and widened the interests of these Ladies placed so far apart.

As World War II was just over, food parcels were sent to Women's Institutes in England, as part of a Nationwide C.W.A. project and one grateful branch sent a supper cloth embroidered with each member's name on it. Unfortunately this cloth was burnt when "Stud Park North" Homestead was destroyed by fire during Mrs Macdonald's Presidency, along with most of the early records of the branch.

Food parcels were also sent to our soldiers in Korea.

Because we had no clubrooms of our own to support, we sent donations for building funds to Jerilderie and Darlington Point branches.

Donations were also sent to "Keera House", a C.W.A. holiday home for mothers and children in Sydney, where a room was maintained by us. We provided all the linen, mats, curtains, covers etc, required.

The Far West Childrens' Health Centre, Travellers' Aid and Disaster Relief funds also received donations from us.

A talking book was supplied to an afflicted blind person at Whitton.

We were particularly pleased when our folder on Denmark went through Danish Consular channels to Copenhagen, where it was on exhibition, then back to Melbourne for exhibition again before being returned to Argoon.

In the early period of the Argoon C.W.A. wool and stud sheep breeding were the main sources of the districts income and Argoon members remember with appreciation the various generous donations and friendly interest of supporters to their cause.

But this emphasis on wool and sheep was modified with the opening of the new Irrigation Settlement. Miss Bull and Mrs R. Taylor, welcomed the new settlers' wives either by writing to them or calling on them.

At a meeting on June 10th, 1964 there were nine settlers' wives present at the invitation of the Argoon C.W.A. and these later joined and were the first of the many to follow suit.

As most of these ladies had small children, it was no longer such a good idea to have the meetings in members homes, because of the need to closely supervise the youngsters.

The old "Coleambally" mess hut on farm 163 was offered as an alternative site and this was used for a number of years, until the town was opened.

To allow the town ladies to be able to join in our meetings we then started having our meetings in Coleambally and now our meetings are held in the Supper Rooms of the Masonic Temple, on the second Thursday of each month.

The branch has now changes its style from a group of station ladies to town and farmers wives, but the methods, the work towards achieving the aims and ideas of C.W.A., began in 1948 and remain the same.

As a token of gratitude for their help in starting so many ladies on their way in this great organisation, the two remaining original members, Mrs E. Graham of "Pine Park" and Miss D. Bull of "Gala Vale" were made Patronesses of the branch.

The branch still carries on the older and more usual traditions of drama, choral work, projects of international understanding and group work, with new ideas always being welcomed; such as the Public Speaking Contest which was introduced last year.

#### **COLEAMBALLY BRANCH OF C.W.A.**

"The single intangible thing which made the greatest difference to the life of the country woman was the formation of the C.W.A.," stated Lady Macarthur Onslow at the last State Conference.

How true this was in Coleambally. When Coleambally was first settled, there was little opportunity for women to meet, and it was not unusual for neighbours to be unknown to each other. The loneliness was appalling. The idea of a C.W.A. branch was conceived at a childrens' birthday party, when Mrs D. Slater, Mrs P. Rose and Mrs B. McDougall met each other for the first time, and found they all had a great interest in C.W.A. It was decided by these ladies that an invitation would be extended to Mrs N. Bouchier, Sturt Group President, to visit Coleambally.

On 22nd July, 1964, 36 ladies met at the home of Mrs McDougall, under the chairmanship of Mrs Bouchier, to form the Coleambally branch of C.W.A. This number included visitors from Argoon and Blighty branches and prospective members. Mrs B. McDougall was elected Foundation President, Mrs P. Rose, Secretary, Mrs J. Oliver, Treasurer, and Vice-Presidents were Mrs P. Schliebs, and Mrs E. Sheppard. It was decided that the new branch would meet at different members' homes on the third Wednesday of each month. At this meeting Mrs Bouchier presented a silver C.W.A. bell to the new branch.

Many gifts were received, and included a Secretary's case from Sandigo branch and £10.10.0 towards a Building Fund from Erueley branch. Following this present, a building fund was opened. Mrs Gilmore a foundation member, now deceased, also presented a C.W.A. Banner for use at meetings and functions.

During the first year, difficult times were experienced, the main one being irregular attendance and small numbers at meetings. This was mainly attributed to members being reluctant to take their small children to other homes, and the lack of telephones to advise members of future meeting places if they missed a meeting, so night meetings were commenced at the Coleambally North School for a trial period. However, these also proved unsuccessful, and were only held for four months, when day meetings were resumed at the Argoon Cottage.

Early in 1966, Mr and Mrs Bruce Cobden offered the use of their recently vacated shed living quarters as a permanent meeting place.

It was only then that our branch began to grow and prosper. Cobden's shed was used for three years for all meetings and activities, including handicraft days and play rehearsals. Mr and Mrs K. Morton's garage was then offered, and meetings were held there for 18 months, followed by four meetings at Mr and Mrs R. Reeves cottage. The generosity of these people was very much appreciated. Following completion of the Masonic Hall in Coleambally, this was offered permanently, and meetings are now held there.

During our seven years, there have been many memorable functions. The first was our international day on Japan, which was held at the Argoon Cottage and chaired by Vice-President, Mrs P. Schliebs. Mrs Axtens, Group International Officer, was guest speaker, and a feature of the entertainment was three members, dressed in traditional kimonos, who sang "Three Little Maids from School." An example of the Coleambally settlers' ingenuity was Mrs Rose's provision of an alternator to provide electricity for frypans to heat the sukiyaki.

Our next big event was our first birthday party, which was held at Mrs Slater's home, and which was notable for the number of guests. 46 members, visitors and V.I.P.'s helped us celebrate.

Another highlight of our early years was the Tennis Day and Fete held at the home of Mr and Mrs P. Schliebs, in May, 1965. In October, 1966, Mr and Mrs Schliebs again made their home and court available. Mr and Mrs R. Robertson's home was the venue for the November, 1967 Tennis Day. Since then our main fund raising has been by street stalls.

In 1967 a delightful day was enjoyed by a large crowd when we combined with Argoon branch to conduct a Baby Show and Land Cookery Day at the home of Miss D. Bull.

International work and international meetings have formed an important part of our activities. Each year since our inception we have entered in the International Scrap Book Contest, conducted by Sturt Group and in six years have been placed five times. The books have all been compiled either by Mrs Payne or Mrs Rose, who was assisted by Mrs B. Champion the first year. These books have been presented to local schools. Our international functions have all been memorable — commencing with our Japanese day, and continuing with days on Ireland and Israel, which were combined with Argoon branch.

An important part of C.W.A. activities is handicraft, and our branch has been most active in this field. Over the years we have learned to make attractive and useful baskets from cumbungi. Our husbands were surprised to find this cursed weed has at least one use! We have iced and decorated cakes, learned how to crochet Afghan squares and to make attractive bark paintings. Mosaic tile work and seagrass stools were enthusiastically tackled by members, and our homes now have many examples of both these forms of craft. Tapestry and floral art were demonstrated, and an interesting talk was also given on lapidary, with many lovely samples on display. Another very important and practical demonstration was on mouth to mouth resuscitation and first aid.

Our branch has also tackled drama. We commenced in a very small way in 1966, when Mrs McDougall presented a monologue at the Group Choral and Drama Day at Finley. In 1967, we entered our first play, "From Five to Five-thirty" in the Group Day at Jerilderie. Looking back, it was rather an amateur performance, as only the producer had previous stage experience, and none of the actresses had ever been on stage before. How we have developed since then! In 1969 our branch entered a play, "Room in the Tower" in the statewide Dunlop Award, and although we were unplaced, we were delighted when Mrs G. Druitt was

named as one of the most outstanding actresses in the Award. We also entered in the Dunlop Award in 1970. All our plays have been produced by Mrs McDougall. Following the Choral and Drama Day in 1967, we felt that as our husbands had all been so patient and long suffering in the weeks of rehearsal, we would show them what we could do. Accordingly, in November, 1967, with the co-operation of Mr Cameron, Headmaster and some husbands, who constructed a makeshift stage at the Coleambally North School, Argoon and Coleambally branches combined to present a concert which was received enthusiastically by the large outdoors audience. Proceeds of the function were presented to the school. In the following three years we also conducted concerts in the Coleambally Hall. Mr G. Grady was a great help in extending the stage and designing and erecting curtains.

C.W.A. as well as providing friendship and companionship for members, is a charitable organisation, and various donations have been made over the years.

Coleambally branch has been represented at every Group Council Meeting and Conference since its formation and is now very proud of its two Group Office Bearers, Mrs E. Sheppard, Group Vice-President, who has now also accepted nomination for Group President, and Mrs McDougall, Group Cultural Officer. Mrs Sheppard was also elected as our representative to the Coleambally Housing Commission Committee, following a letter from Mr Grassby asking us to nominate a representative. We also asked Mrs Sheppard to attend the Medical Centre Meeting as our representative, and she was subsequently also elected to this committee.

Next year, C.W.A. will celebrate its Golden Jubilee, and we of Coleambally branch feel very proud to part of such a vast and wonderful organisation which has brought so much happiness to rural women.

### **COLEAMBALLY HIGHLIGHTS**

by

**Mr A.J. GRASSBY, M.H.R., Member for Riverina**

My first recollection of Coleambally is driving over the gentle hills and the flat areas with my old friend, Simon Pels.

The land was very much the same as had been when the Warradgery roamed the area. Apart from the one or two station properties, it was a place of kangaroos, emus, some sheep, and open spaces.

Simon had the job of carrying out all the hydrological surveys before the great irrigation scheme was launched. By jeep and utility we bounced around choosing the prior streams which dated back to the days when the great inland sea came up as far as the Murray River. I used to get lost then with great regularity, and it's a tradition I have managed to maintain.

My next recollection was the opening of the Gogeldrie Weir by the then Premier, Joe Cahill. It was a night to be remembered because there were 21 speeches, and I well remember the last speaker saying, as the microphone went dead on three occasions, 'I will finish this speech if I have to do it on the train as it pulls into Central tomorrow morning'. Then the first developments and a barbecue meeting with my predecessor, the Hon. Ambrose Enticknap, then Minister for Conservation which reached a decision to give Murrumbidgee Shire the responsibility for developing the new town.

Then there was the first night function I ever attended. It was held in the machinery shop which was then the home of Keith Buchanan and his wife. I brought a city Senator and we reached the farm through the then bad roads and dust at 8 o'clock. The Senator coughed vigorously but nonetheless addressed the meeting. The meeting concluded at 11 o'clock, we then adjourned for supper and the ladies gathered and the supper was superb, and the city Senator by 1 a.m. was beginning to look a little sleepy.

After supper my wife Ellanor, who was with me, was induced to play the piano. We sang magnificently, and I drove the Senator back through the dust in time to greet the dawn at his Griffith motel. 'We don't have meetings like that in Sydney any more', he said, 'and if we did I could not keep it up, I'd resign'.

On the last occasion in which the man who has been called the father of Coleambally, George Enticknap, visited the area, I remember the presentation made to him by a group of the first settlers. It was the last time we were to see George as a Minister and a Member.

Perhaps the most dramatic moment of all was one night in 1964 when Coleambally was again under attack. It was described as a white elephant, a disaster worse than Gallipoli, and the anti-irrigation lobby wanted to see it abandoned. The Coleambally Progress Association held a meeting in the Shire Hall at Darlington Point. There were six Shire Presidents and there must have been a thousand people, and we met the destroyers head on and we won because the development continued.

It was the first big meeting ever chaired by Ray Vickary, now a veteran of hundreds of meetings, but it was his first and those who know Ray will be surprised to know that he was nervous.

The opening of the town, the churches, the schools, the buildings, have all been milestones, but for me the highlight is always another happy settler who says, 'This will do me'.

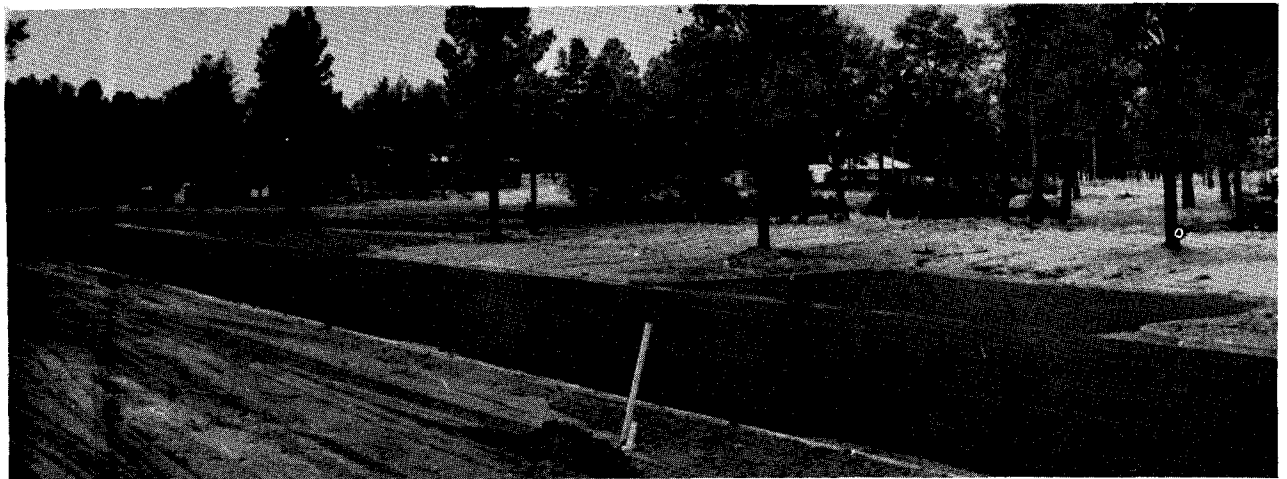
# THE TOWN



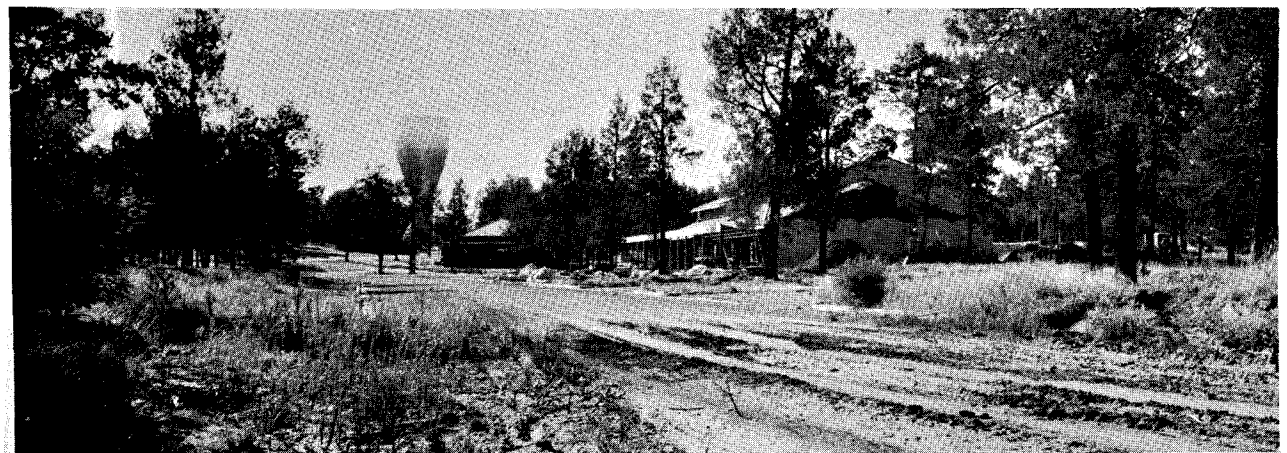
Kingfisher Avenue, 1967



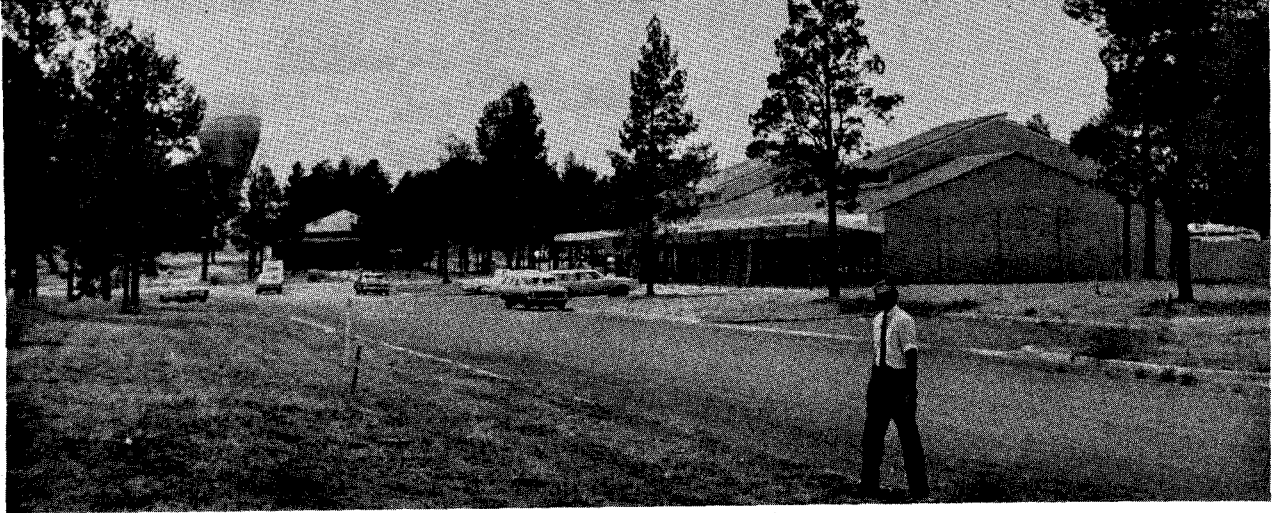
September, 1965  
Photo T. P. O'Rourke



Brolga Place, December, 1967. Methodist Church and Principal's Residence.  
Photo M.S.C. Collection



April, 1969  
Photo M.S.C. Collection



November, 1969  
Photo M.S.C. Collection



March, 1970  
M.S.C. Collection





## **THE RETAILERS**

### **THE CLAYTONS**

We came to Coleambally in April, 1961 to manage the Leeton Fruitgrowers Co-op branch store, set up in a cottage on Farm.

This cottage was previously the first Egansford school.

In the store we sold hardware, groceries, fencing materials, meat, machinery, rock pipes, fuel, etc. Deliveries were made by car to the farms twice a week, delivering as far down as John McInne's farm.

The roads were so bad that when it rained the only way you could get to the Store was in land-rovers or on tractors. The store closed down in 1963.

Parents approached Bill to start a bus run in 1963. We purchased a small commercial bus, and would collect about fourteen children from around the first thirty farms.

Wet weather we dreaded as the roads were shocking. It was nothing to see a tractor towing the school bus out of a bog.

We shifted to the Coleambally township area where we are still living now and started two more bus runs, which we sold in 1969.

### **JOE HARDY**

The name Coleambally became common-place to me, living in the Leeton area, about 1959-1960, at which time I had a fruit and vegetable run around the smaller towns surrounding Leeton.

I came out to look around the area in 1961, decided that there could be an opening for a day's work, and planned a run down the Canal Road, to a point south of the Egansford School, returning via "The Avenue" and "Tubbo" Stations.

One of my calls was at the Leeton Fruitgrowers Shop (managed at the time by Mr and Mrs Bill Clayton), situated in the cottage on Harry Burge's property. Bill knew the Coleambally area and everyone living in it, and each week seemed to have a new customer for me to call on.

My one day run quickly changed to a two day run, very shortly after to three four and then five day's run -- 700 miles per week, selling vegetables, over roads that to say the least left something to be desired.

In my first five years I estimated that I travelled a distance equal to five times round the world.

Road conditions being what they were -- wet weather brought its problems and the horror stretches seemed to deteriorate to mud baths in no time. I once made the distance of 3 miles in 2½ hours on the Canal Road, and during one winter I was bogged twenty-six times. The nice thing about this sort of experience is that almost every time I reached the stage where it became obvious that I needed assistance, the nearest tractor would be already on its way. People were very kind to me. I must have travelled many miles on the end of a tow rope.

Most people in the early days were living in sheds or batching and quite often both man and wife would be down the paddock when I called. I created a system of booking their likes and dislikes, and just used to leave what I thought they would like when they were not at home. I didn't get many complaints, but there was the odd sad mistake. I once left quite a large order at one farm, congratulating myself on how well the system worked. I found it unopened the following week -- Mr and Mrs So and So were in Brisbane.

One of my calls in those days was at the Coleambally School, the cottage at the western end of Channel 9 Road -- then an establishment of two teachers and 12 or 14 children. So as not to distract the pupils' attention I used to turn my back to the school and face north. I often had the thought as I looked at that desolate piece of country on the North side of the School -- that this is it, this is the end of road -- this is as far as a man should go.

When we finally moved on to that desolate piece of country -- our "shop" was a few boxes of vegetables under a tree. On the occasions that I had to leave the place I used to put a notice on the scales -- **HELP YOURSELF -- LEAVE A LIST OF WHAT YOU TAKE!**

I wasn't away often, but the system worked quite well.

It took ten years to reach a shop in the town.

### **PEMBLE'S STORE**

Just about all people living in the southern half of the Coleambally Irrigation Area are the friends of Jack and Mona Pemble. The Pemble family came to Coleambally in 1966 to visit Joe and Pat Daniells on Farm 192 and have since become Coleambally personalities.

With the help of Joe and Pat Daniells, Jack Pemble built the first shop on Coleambally called "Danny's Service Station", where his wife, Mona, started a mixed business by selling a dozen bottles of soft drink and a carton of cigarettes. She has since progressed to owning a fully stocked mixed business.

Jack, who is a builder by trade, constructed under sub-contract, the frame of the Headmaster's residence in the Coleambally township. He built the weighbridge office block at the Emery rice receival depot and many other homes and buildings in the Coleambally Irrigation Area.

#### **BRIAN CAUSER**

Brian Causer began a milk and bread delivery service to the C.I.A. in 1968 when the only buildings in the township were the school residence and Jack Boyle's shed.

This service based on Leeton, supplied three deliveries a week. Now a daily home delivery service is being provided, and Brian has plans for the erection of a permanent depot in the township.

#### **DALGETY N.Z.L. MELLINGTON and JONES**

In 1963 Mr F. Mellington of Farm 11, one of the original settlers, was appointed the first stock and station agent representative for the area.

The family had already begun to make its presence felt. Mrs Mellington, who is a qualified experienced music teacher had begun teaching music to Coleambally children in 1962. She also was the first needlework teacher at Egansford school, appointed June, 1961.

The results of Coleambally children at the Australian Music Board examinations have been consistently high. Many prizes have been won by young Coleambally pianists at the annual Musical Society Eisteddfods.

In 1963 Frank Mellington was appointed Manager of the first Stock and Station Branch Office and Merchandise Store of Dalgety - N.Z.L. erected in 1969 at Coleambally township. This provides a wide range of facilities for Coleambally farmers.

#### **THE MAIN STREET**

##### **ORIGINAL SHOPS OPENED 1969**

1. Mr Allen and Mrs Alice Cullen's Hardware and General Store, B.P. and Castrol Agency. Mr Cullen was formerly Castrol Agent at Gosford.
2. Kelly's "Foodland" Supermarket and butchery. The Kelly's are a well-known local family; Benie Kelly's trotting horses are described elsewhere.
3. Mr Fred Partington's Chemist shop and Bank of New South Wales Agency.
4. Mr Jack and Mrs Dorothy Rawlings' Newsagency. Jack was formerly with the W.C. & I.C. on the Murray.
5. Mrs Ross - "Gwendolyn" Boutique and beauty salon.

##### **THE 1970 ADDITIONS BUILT BY S & K McDONALD OF COLEAMBALLY, INCLUDE:**

1. Solicitor's Office
2. Bank of New South Wales, part time Agency, serviced from Darlington Point
3. Post Office
4. Offices for the Murrumbidgee Shire Council.  
The main headquarters of the Shire remain at Darlington Point, but this office is used by the Health and Building Inspector, Mr Roach who lives locally.

##### **IN 1971 WERE ADDED:**

1. Max's Men's Wear (Max Ridley). This shop supplies men's and children's clothing.
2. Mr & Mrs Joe Hardy's Greengrocer and grocery shop.
3. Mr & Mrs Ross White's store, opened just recently. Mrs White sells general haberdashery requirements and baby clothing. Ross White is beginning an accountancy practice.

These three shops were also built by S. & K. McDonald.



## THE BUILDERS

The first builder permanently to settle in the C.I.A. was Mr J. Boyle. He lived near Rowan's Camp for several years before becoming Coleambally township's first resident builder in 1967.

Almost every house in Bluebonnet Crescent was built by Mr Boyle, who continues his building activities, concentrating mainly on houses, both in the town and in the C.I.A. as a whole.

The Boyle family also own E.S.D.A. building supplies. This is managed by Mr Jack Boyle's son, Kevan Boyle, who has taken on this job after an accident in 1969, causing him to be confined to a wheelchair.



**BROLGA HOTEL-MOTEL – Robert Anthony Studios**

Stewart McDonald also camped and worked on various farms before moving to the township early in 1968. His house in Kingfisher Avenue was the fourth house built in Coleambally. The first house erected was that of the Central School Principal, and the second and third were erected by the W.C. & I.C. and by Mr & Mrs Bill Reeves.

The firm of S. & K. McDonald has built in the main street the Post Office, Shire Offices, Bank of New South Wales and Solicitor's office. The Brolga Hotel-Motel, Max Ridley's Menswear shop, Joe Hardy's Shop and the Anglican Church. The renovation of the Methodist/Presbyterian Church was also performed by Stewart McDonald.

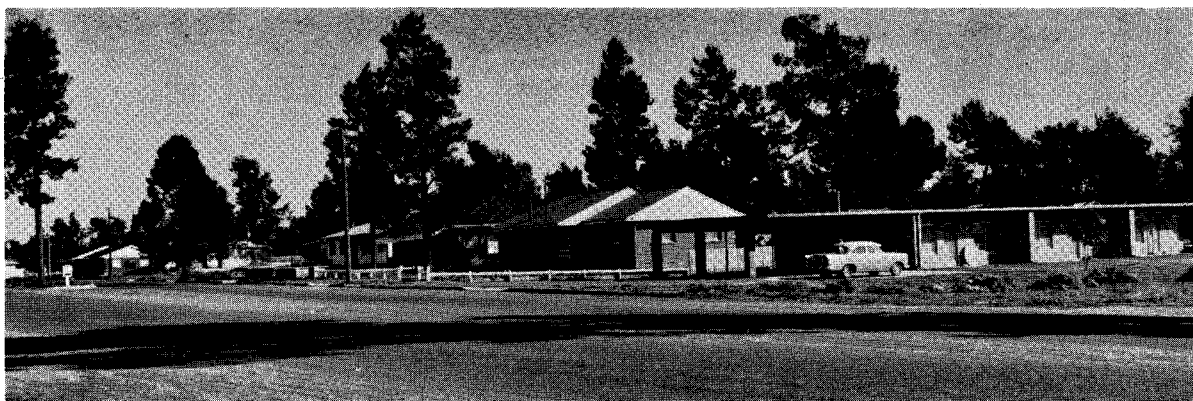
S. & K. McDonald have also built numerous houses in the town and in the area as a whole. This firm will tackle just about anything – no building job seems too big for it, and no job is so small that it doesn't receive Stewart's personal and competent attention.

Reg Cowie first came to Coleambally from Finely to build the Community Centre, in partnership with his brother George in 1967.

Seeing the potential of the area, Reg separated the partnership and set up business by himself in Coleambally trading under the name of Jorenson Pty. Ltd. He has built several houses both in the town and in the irrigation area as a whole, and has built a block of flats for which there has been great demand. Quality rented accommodation is otherwise in very short supply in Coleambally.

Reg prides himself on two things – firstly, "building to a quality not just a price" and secondly finishing each job quickly and competently. Frank Whelan's house of nineteen squares was finished in six weeks.

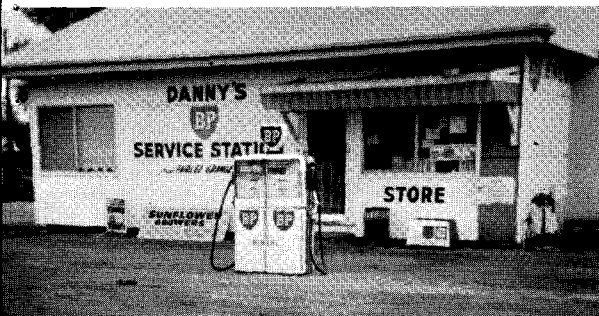
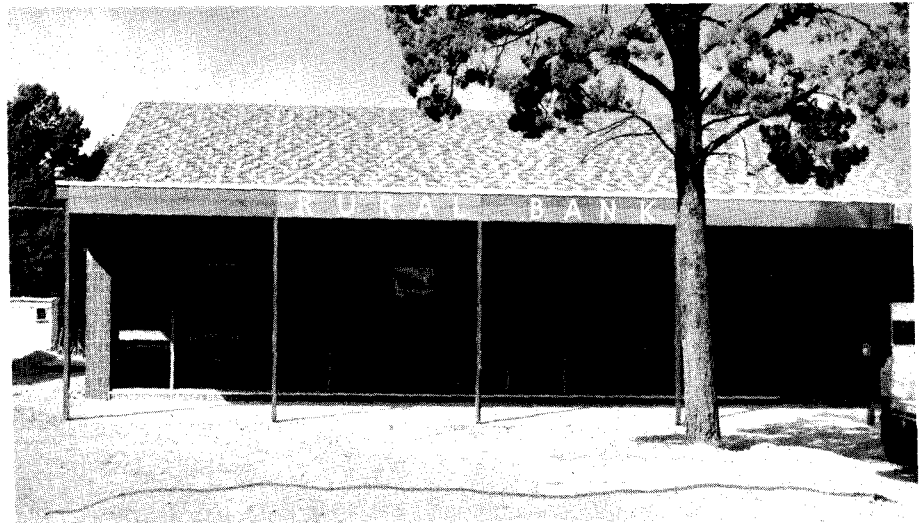
Jorenson Pty. Ltd., also has a builder's supplies store with agencies for many builder's requisites.



**KINGFISHER AVENUE – Robert Anthony Studios**



Above: COLEAMBALLY COMMUNITY CENTRE. The Fountain  
was built by Mr. P. Cost – Photo: Robert Anthony.





The house in the foreground is a Lloyds Transportable Home.

These homes are delivered in two or more sections on low loaders. Sizes range from 8 to 15 squares, 2, 3 and 4 bedrooms, and despite some restrictions in transport a multiplicity of variations is possible. Clients satisfied to accept stock design can be living in their home within a fortnight but generally 6 weeks from date of order would be required for commencement of building in factory. Stability and solidity must be recognised since anything transported must stand the stress and strains applicable to movement on our highways — how much more does this apply to a home!

These factory built, conventional construction homes, are transported completely painted and fitted internally with plumbing and electric wiring, together with equipment including stoves, hot water service, cupboards, bath, vanity basin, ready to be set down on soleplate and pier foundations of pre-stressed concrete. They fully comply with Building Codes, and are approved by Councils, Shires, Building Societies, Banks, Government Departments and other professional bodies involved in the building industry. They are relatively new to the State of New South Wales, but have provided a means of making "Homes" available at short notice for settlers in the State, and Coleambally people in both the town and on Irrigation blocks have recognised their advantages. Some seven or eight homes have been erected in the township and ten or twelve on blocks within the scheme area.

E.C. Sims  
General Manager

Most of the dwellings on Coleambally farms in the early stages are steel framed galvanised iron sheds — like those built by Peter Campigli's firm — Coleambally Steel Engineering. A few bays at the end are enclosed and set up as a house.

Some sheds provide a high standard of comfort and even luxury being fitted with oil heater, air conditioning and even wall to wall carpet.

Not only are these sheds important to the people in which they live, but also they have served as venues for many important functions, particularly in the early days of settlement. The main example, encountered many times in this story, is Roy Growden's shed.

Before the erection of the Community Centre, "Growdens" Shed was the venue of a number of very important public meetings. The Rice Mill Directors and Senior Officers of the Commonwealth Development Bank met Coleambally farmers there.

A very interesting meeting was held on 3rd March, 1966 when Sir William Hudson addressed the farmers. The meeting aroused considerable interest on both sides. This resulted in reciprocal visits between Engineers and C.I.A. farmers. A S.M.H.E.A. plane flew to Narrandera with nine engineers (twice) and returned with nine farmers to the Snowy.

So the engineers could see where their water was going to and the farmers could see where their water was coming from — very enlightening for all concerned.

The first meeting of the Coleambally Sporting Club was also held in this shed, as was the enormously successful farewell to Don Wallin.

At the same time dances were being held in Jennings' and Robinson's shearing sheds. In such surroundings as these began the now famous Coleambally Community spirit.

### THE "BROLGA" HOTEL-MOTEL

Mr Gordon Boyd, well known throughout the liquor trade both in Sydney and country areas, initially called a meeting of five persons with a view to forming a company to build and control a Hotel-Motel in the Coleambally area.

Mr Boyd was elected first chairman of the board of directors and the company was named "Dirtsa" Pty. Limited, the four remaining directors being Mr Eric Waterman, an Architect and the designer of the Hotel-Motel; Mr Stan Henry, an experienced Hotel-keeper, the Company Accountant and Adviser Mr. Reg Lydieth and finally Mr Laurie Christensen, a Sydney businessman.

At a subsequent meeting, Mr Henry was elected to choose a name for the Hotel-Motel, and after considerable discussions with his wife Marie, the name "Brolga" was selected.

Mr Stuart McDonald, a Coleambally builder was the successful tenderer to begin the building programme.

Starting the complex early in January 1971, he overcame several obstacles throughout the ensuing months and handed over the completed "Brolga" to the Company at the end of July 1971.

The Hon. John Waddy, Minister for Child Welfare and Social Services very kindly officiated at the opening ceremony on behalf of the New South Wales Premier, Mr Askin, who was unavailable at the time.

Mr Stan Henry was granted the Licence to control and operate the "Brolga" with his wife Marie as Manageress.

On Wednesday, the 28th July, 1971 a large group of invited guests were entertained in the Motel Dining-room by Stan and Marie Henry along with his co-directors and their womenfolk. After the luncheon and refreshments, Mr Waddy carried out the formal opening ceremony amidst a huge crowd of local personalities, the whole ceremony being televised by local MTN 9.

After the formalities were completed, free drinks were accorded all guests for some time, by Dirtsa Pty. Ltd., and some two hours later the trading began. An excellent afternoon and evening followed — so the "Brolga" was in full flight.

The "Brolga" Hotel-Motel now stands as a formidable complex with three distinct buildings. One, the trading section complete with drive-in and Bottle Department; Large and luxurious Bar and Lounge areas completely carpeted and with office attached along the drive-in section.

The second building comprises the spacious Dining room and kitchen area along with the Licensee's 3 room flat.

The third building comprises seven Motel Units complete with wall to wall carpet, radio and T.V. in each room, single, twin and double rooms. Electric blankets to all beds add to the completed comfort of the patrons.

### COLEAMBALLY BUS SERVICE

The fleet of buses shown below is owned by the Coleambally Bus Service — Tom Frazer and Tony Celi.

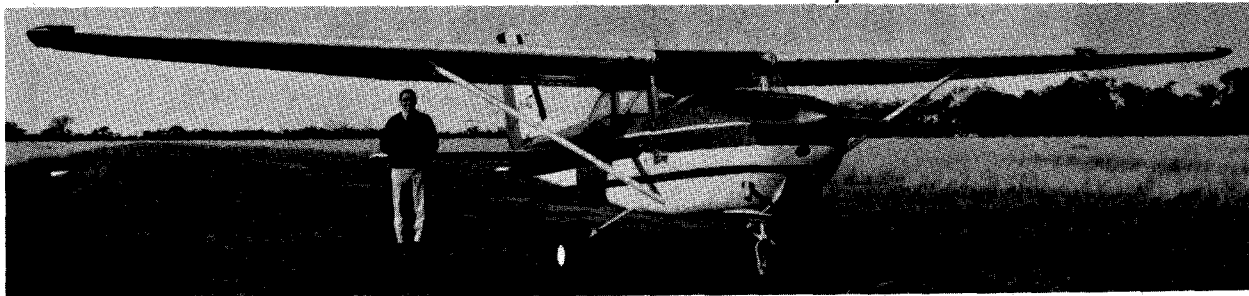
Almost all the children attending Coleambally School travel by bus, because of the distances involved. Many children travel over fifty miles per day.

Frazer and Celi buses travel over 100,000 miles per year on school runs and the individual journeys made by school children on school buses total around two-and-a-half million miles per year.

Another bus owned by Mr McKenzie of Griffith is also used to bring children to school.



## **THE AIR FIELD – Photo: Robert Anthony Studios**



The Murrumbidgee Shire Council maintains this Authorised Landing Area, three miles northwest of Coleambally. This landing area is receiving increased usage from aircraft engaged for business trips, private flights and agricultural work. There is no doubt that the Aerodrome will prove a great asset in Coleambally's development.

The Griffith Aero Club is the closest aero club to the Coleambally Irrigation Area and provides first class pilot training facilities as well as carrying out charter flights, aerials survey's, aerial photography and tours of the Griffith and Coleambally areas.

Since the establishment of the Coleambally Irrigation Area, a large number of people have utilised aircraft from the Griffith Aero Club to fly over Coleambally, photographing and viewing the area from the air. Many have flown with friends from the area who have undertaken their pilot training with the Griffith Aero Club.

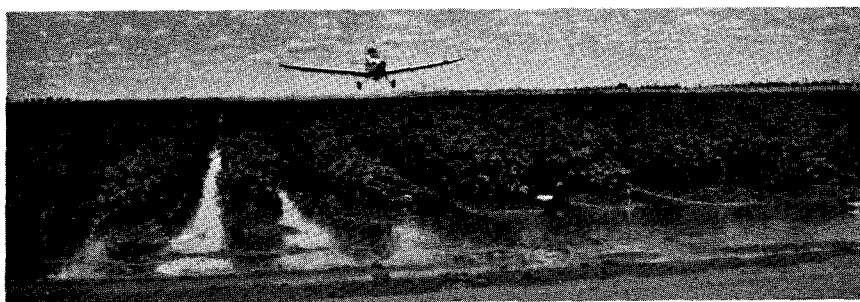
Those who have completed their training are Messrs J. Crawford, B. McDougall, K. Shields, J. McGowan and D. Foster. Messrs F. Partington, K. Cole and A. Burgess are at present training towards their private pilot license.

David Foster from Farm 153, Coleambally was nominated by the Griffith Aero Club as their candidate for the 1970 Australian Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Pilot of the Year competition, and was the winner of this Australia-wide competition.

This competition, held annually, brings together a representative from each state. The candidates were interviewed, a flight test carried out and a theory examination conducted.

The Canberra Aero Club were the hosts for the final. At the presentation dinner, the Director of Civil Aviation, Sir Donald Anderson, CBE, presented David with a magnificent trophy valued at \$500 which was retained by the Aero Club until the next competition and a cheque from the AOPA for \$1,000.00, which has been used by David in attaining his commercial pilot licence and his flight instructors rating.

## **AERIAL AGRICULTURE – Photo: J. Wilson**



During the period of the early 1960s, Super Spread Aviation became interested in the aerial sowing of rice. The interest was fostered mainly because of successive "dry" seasons, and the imperative necessity to conserve water. As water conservation is one of the virtues of aerial sowing, it was soon evident that it would be readily accepted. We undertook a comprehensive experimental programme under the direction of Mr Don McDonald, chief rice breeder at the Yanco Agricultural College. After many early difficulties we were soon able to produce good crops of rice consistently, which permitted us to commercially present ourselves. Although our main areas of activity were Leeton and Griffith we grew several crops around Coleambally about the 1964 season. The results were quite astounding and it is estimated by one of our growers that the yield was very close to 4 tons per acre. We have since grown this amount consistently and last year produced a 4½ ton



crop for one of our clients. The future of aerial rice sowing seemed assured, but owing to circumstances beyond anybody's control, we suffered a severe slump in the economy. This of course has curtailed further development but no doubt this industry will again flourish when the situation rights itself.

Another of our activities to suffer was the aerial top dressing of pasture lands associated with the Coleambally Irrigation Scheme. This was proving a boon to the landholders because the somewhat irregular shapes, and the holding ridges of the bays, made conventional methods quite a laborious procedure. No doubt this activity will also resume when the economy rights itself. Looking at the overall picture and summing up for the future we feel that it should not be long before our exports will again be in high demand and production will again be our main requirement, and Coleambally will resume its place as an important producer of "needed" commodities.

Super spread aviation therefore, as a company playing perhaps a minor role to this stage of Coleambally's Development is proud of its association with the scheme, and will look forward with great interest to its eventual prosperity.

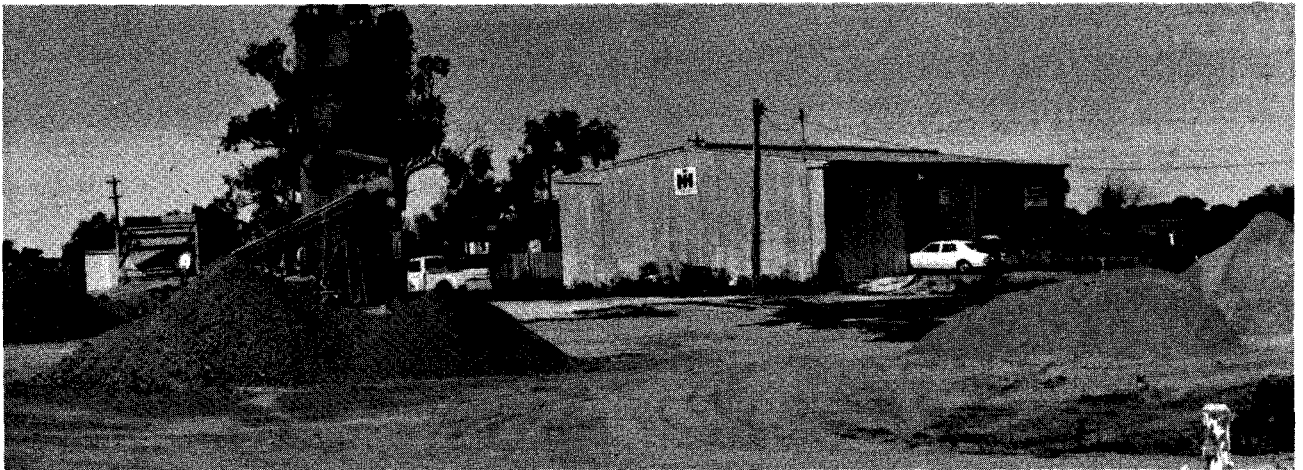
### **CROPAIR**

Cropair Pty Ltd was established by Jim Darbyshire in 1966, and provides aerial agricultural services in the M.I.A. and Coleambally areas.

These include aerial sowing; spraying and top-dressing.

Cropair has pioneered aerial application techniques covering weed control in rice and the application of pesticides and fungicides in orchards.

All staff including pilots live locally, and are based at Griffith.



**left: STEVENSON'S DEPOT, Right: BRUCE WRIGHT'S INTERNATIONAL GARAGE.**

**Photo: Robert Anthony Studios**

### **STEVENSON'S READY MIXED CONCRETE**

Stevenson's Ready Mixed Concrete Plant was first set up on a temporary site adjacent to the Rice Mill to provide concrete for the Rice Mill built by Austin Anderson in 1968.

We moved to our present site in January, 1970.

Our concrete has been supplied to all businesses and cottages in Coleambally and also used in construction of the Rice Mill and storage sheds as far south as Gala Vale. All bridges, culverts and water stops built by the W.C. & I.C. used concrete from the Coleambally Plant. In fact, every farm in the C.I.A. has concrete somewhere from this plant.

Our Coleambally plant and equipment is valued at \$30,000 and one or more mixer trucks come from Griffith daily to service the area.

**D. Jackson,  
Manager**

## **THE BANKERS**

The Bank of New South Wales is proud to have provided the first banking facilities available in the new shopping centre, appointing Mr F.W. Partington, chemist, their Savings Bank Private Agent from 25/8/69 after having in March 1969, purchased the lease of the corner block, at the instigation of the Manager of Darling Point Branch, Mr W.H. Wheeler.

The bank, then, in a joint venture with the Murrumbidgee Shire Council, commissioned Messrs S. & K. McDonald of Coleambally to build the present building for use as an Agency with facilities for conversion to a branch at a later date. The Agency opened for business on 30/6/70.

Since the establishment of the township of Coleambally, the Rural Bank has played a significant part in the growth and development of the town and the associated irrigation area.

Under the administration of its Griffith branch the Bank opened an office in Coleambally on the 17th October, 1969 with Mr. A.J. Bonham officer-in-charge. The office operated twice weekly, Tuesdays and Fridays during normal banking hours.

Since its opening, business at the Coleambally office increased to the stage where the Bank decided to build a permanent branch building in Brolga Place. The new branch, which blends with the other buildings in the shopping centre, is being constructed by T.G. Forlicq Pty. Ltd, of Griffith and opened for business on 6th September, 1971, under the managership of Mr. N.A. Fearnace.

Over the years the Bank has assisted many settlers in the Coleambally area to become established on their holdings. It has also provided finance for home building through the Building Society Agency which it administers on behalf of the State Government.

The district will undoubtedly continue to grow and develop into one of the important farming areas in New South Wales.

The Bank's confidence in the future of the area is underlined by the building of the new branch premises, a managers' residence in Bellbird Street, together with a staff cottage in Kingfisher Avenue.

### **BP IN THE COLEAMBALLY IRRIGATION AREA**

BP Australia Ltd. has been closely associated with the C.I.A. Its first agents in Coleambally were the Muntz brothers, who had been farmers in the district for 15 years. They were well-known and well received as agents for BP.

When they were appointed in October 1962, Coleambally had 103 irrigated farms producing rice and wheat, but the increasing potential of the area could be envisaged.

Keith Peterson and Co. were the company' agents between October 1969 and June 1970. They were crop dusters and carriers who were based in Griffith, 40 miles away and travelled to Coleambally each day.

BP's present agents are Mr Allan Cullen and his wife, Alice. They also run the local hardware store, which was the first shop to open in the town of Coleambally.

### **MURRUMBIDGEE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Since 1961, when electricity supply was made available to the first 26 irrigation farms in Coleambally, the Murrumbidgee County Council has played a significant part in the development of this area.

Approximately 200 farms have been supplied with electricity. Urban reticulation, including street lighting, has been provided in the Coleambally township.

Important industrial loads which have been connected include a Rice Mill for Ricegrowers Co-op Mills Ltd. and the Rice Marketing Board storage shed.

A 33Kv high voltage supply line now serves the Area and, this year, Council has commissioned a new 33Kv/11Kv Zone Substation in Coleambally.

Council's investment in the above works is approximately \$600,000.

The development of Coleambally has led to Council erecting premises in the township shopping centre and appointing a District Electrical Mechanic to provide a complete electrical service.

Council's Showroom and Office, with an upstairs flat for the District Electrical Mechanic, forms part of the original Brolga Place Shopping complex officially opened by Mr. N. Ashton, Chairman of The State Planning Authority, in 1969.

Expenditure on this facility was approximately \$18,000.

The Showroom is operated by an electrical appliance retailer who is also an agent for Council and accepts payment of electricity accounts.



Any requests for electrical service, connections to supply, troubles etc. will be handled promptly if left at Council's Showroom.

On 31st August, 1970, Mr. K. Baker commenced duty as the resident District Electrical Mechanic in the Coleambally Irrigation Area thus providing prompt service to the needs of electrical consumers at all hours.

#### **AUSTRALIAN FERTILIZERS LIMITED'S COMMERCIAL HISTORY IN COLEAMBALLY**

Australian Fertilizers Limited has served the Coleambally Irrigation Area since 1960, when the first farmers moved to the area. At that time Geoff Taylor was the A.F.L. Field Officer for Coleambally.

This service was improved when the company opened their Griffith depot in 1964. Farm delivery to Coleambally, and a more personal service from local men, were then available.

A.F.L. drew the block for their Coleambally Depot in the first industrial ballot in 1966. The Murrumbidgee Shire Council, at the company's request, located the block on the future rail line to town.

Later in 1966, the Anhydrous Ammonia Static Tank was installed — in time for that season's rice sowing.

Australian Fertilizers Limited set up a depot in Coleambally in 1968. This has traded as Fertilizer Services since late that year. The present grain receipt and handling facilities followed in 1969 as a joint venture between A.F.L. and the Japanese firm, Mitsui and Co. They are now fully owned and operated by A.F.L.

The Ammonia Tank, Depot and Grain Installations represent A.F.L. investment of some \$150,000 in the township of Coleambally.

Hire-out rigs were used in Coleambally in 1964, with the farmer applying his own Anhydrous Ammonia. George Heffer, on Farm 78, and Ray Vicary, Farm 77, were two of the first to use this service.

Contractural services became available the following season, and this was a "typical" Coleambally start.. Mike Straker lived in a caravan to supervise the 1965 rice Anhydrous Ammonia Contractors.

A.F.L. introduced coarse grain crop contracts in 1968 and contracts for oilseeds in 1969. This coincided with a forklift loading service in the depot.

A.F.L. now offer a complete range of technical services to the Coleambally farmer, to support their other services and investments in the area.

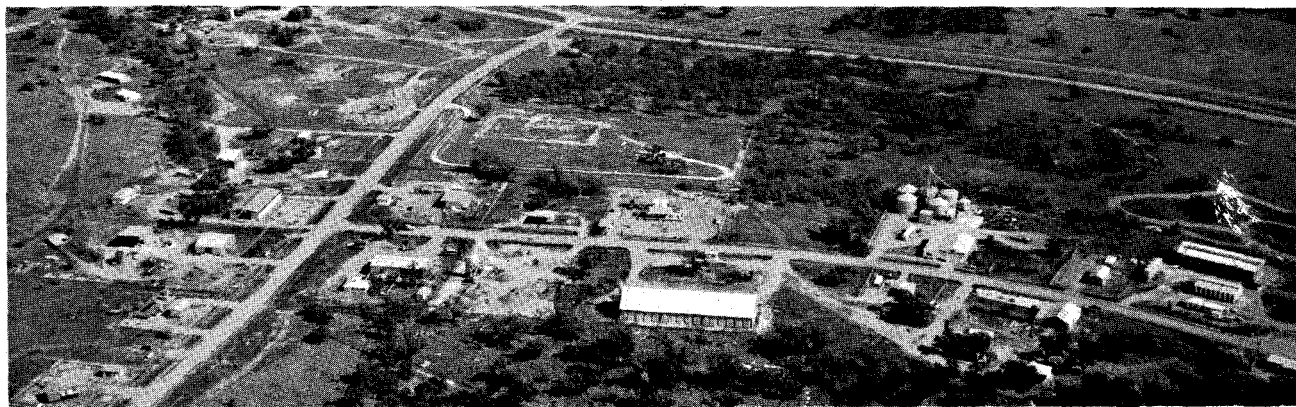
Gerald Smith is now resident Manager of Fertilizer Services' Coleambally Branch; Ray Jeffrey is the A.F.L. Field Officer covering the area.

#### **M.I.D. FARMERS CO-OPERATIVE**

**Fred Wiltshire**

The M.I.D. Co-Operative with headquarters in Leeton established a branch at Darlington Point in 1964 to service the then new Coleambally Irrigation Area.

The Coleambally Branch was officially opened by Mr F.H.C. Walsh, on the 19th November 1969, in the industrial area of the new Coleambally township.



**INDUSTRIAL AREA — Robert Anthony Photo**

The Shell Fuel Depot which is under control of the M.I.D. was opened in 1968.

Prior to establishing the Darlington Point and Coleambally branches, the M.I.D. serviced its Coleambally Shareholders from Leeton.

The M.I.D. is owned by farmer shareholders in the Leeton and Coleambally districts.

Mr R. L. Davidson is the Coleambally representative on the board of directors of the Co-Operative.

The policy and objectives of the Co-Operative are to give its shareholders the best possible service at the lowest possible price.

The M.I.D. sells a complete range of farmer and grazier requirements.

The range includes, Case Tractors and Headers, Fiat Tractors, Western D grain handling equipment, implements manufactured by Connor Shea, Farmor, McKay, Rawlings and Moblico, pasture grain seeds and summer crop seeds, a complete range of fertilizers, chemicals to handle any problem, a full range of drenches, dips and vaccines together with all veterinary lines. Also in the range are fencing materials and hardware.

The M.I.D. also sells Barley, Oats and Hay on behalf of its clients.

The M.I.D. are agents for the Farmers and Graziers Co-Operative in Coleambally

Also the M.I.D. are agents for the Co-operative Insurance Company and the Commercial Union Assurance Group.

The M.I.D. has plans to expand its operations within the Coleambally Irrigation Area.

### **L.S. HARDIE ENGINEERING**

The firm of L.S. Hardie Engineering, started in July 1970, in a make-shift shed built to cover machinery, until a factory could be built.

The need was so great that as soon as Mr Hardie built his residence and moved his family from Sydney his business began.

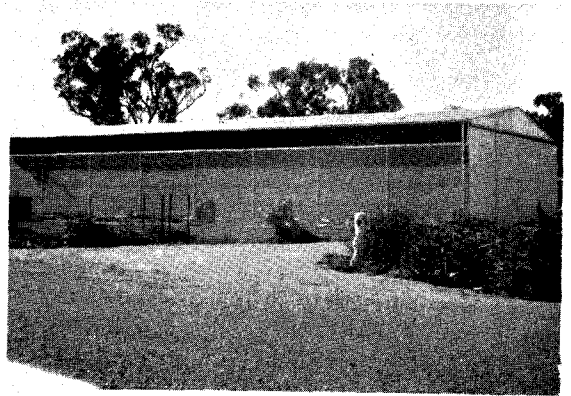
In September he employed his first welder, Alan Gladman. They continued until the end of November when he employed a third year fitter and turner, Stephen Hoare. Soon after that came Greg Boyle, apprentice welder.

Mr Hardie had a very exciting first year. He designed a new machine which found a market in Sydney, built two sheds, two farming machines, eight sets of sunflower seed trays, manufactured gates, water stops, swings, carryalls, installed 3 air-conditioners, did all the steel work on the Hotel Motel and shops, some hand rail for Coleambally Central School, gears, sold webbing which his own designed machine manufactures, and made thousands of repairs.

This next year he hopes he will succeed even more. With his new 5,000 square feet factory nearly completed he hopes he can stock enough supplies in the way of bearings, pulleys and belts and engineering supplies to keep the Coleambally farmers happy all through their harvesting.

Mr Hardie also hopes to design yet another two machines. One to help him produce Auger Flights and one to help him manufacture Mini Trusses, which will be sold in up to twenty feet lengths of all shapes and sizes, and sold all over Australia to aid the building trade.

His staff will be expanding with the opening of his new factory.



**BEFORE & AFTER at L. S. HARDIE ENGINEERING**

## POSTAL SERVICES

In May 1962 a request was made to the Honourable Hugh S. Robertson, then Minister for Social Services, for the introduction of a Post Office at Coleambally.

The request for the Post Office, however, was declined as the development in the Coleambally area had not reached the stage where establishment of an office was justified.

In September 1968 the Coleambally Progress Association elected a special committee to investigate the feasibility of a Coleambally Post Office and the advisability of mailruns being based on the new town. This was three months after the new town of Coleambally was officially opened and the committee were to figure prominently in future developments concerning the township and post office.

A letter receiver and public telephone were installed in the Coleambally township on 16th October, 1968.

By January 1969, 57 new building blocks in the area had been allocated and of these 23 were occupied. There were further deputations at this time for a post office and at a meeting held at the Coleambally School the Acting District Postal Manager, Narrandera, pointed out that representations would result in the early provision of postal services in the town.

In the same month a letter was written by the Shire Clerk, Murrumbidgee Shire Council, to the District Postal Manager, Narrandera, advising that Council was considering the construction of a "shop-type" building in the Retail/Commercial centre of the Coleambally town. He requested the Departments view on the set-up of a post office in the future.

In his reply the District Postal Manager stated that the establishment of a post office was proposed as soon as suitable accommodation was available.

After a short building delay, the opening of the Post Office was effected on 1st April, 1970.

Mrs. Louisa Elizabeth Woodland was appointed the first Postmistress, Coleambally.

Approximately 350 farms in the area are served by three road mail runs which radiated from Darlington Point, Morundah and Jerilderie official post offices three times a week. The service from Darlington Point serves farms in the Argoon-Egansford area, the service from Morundah serves farms in the South and South-eastern section of the Irrigation area and the service from Jerilderie serves farms in the South and South-western sections of the area.

The Shire Clerk advised that it was anticipated that a building for post office purposes would be available to the Department on 1st March, 1970. The Council agreed to provide additional space if necessary at a later time and also agreed to the installation of 105 private mail boxes in the front wall of the building.

In August 1969, as a result of representations from the Egansford P. & C. Association a supplementary mail service was introduced to convey mails from Griffith to Darlington Point three times weekly. This service eliminated delays in delivery of letter class mail in the Coleambally area.

## TELEPHONE SERVICE

In the early days of the Coleambally Irrigation area, the only telephone services which existed were three party lines connected to Darlington Point. These were the Darlington Point 10 line with two parties, the Darlington Point 7 line with five parties and the Darlington Point 27 line with two parties.

The Australian Post Office prepared to plan the Coleambally area in conjunction with the Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission for the establishment of a series of country automatic exchanges in line with the Irrigation development.

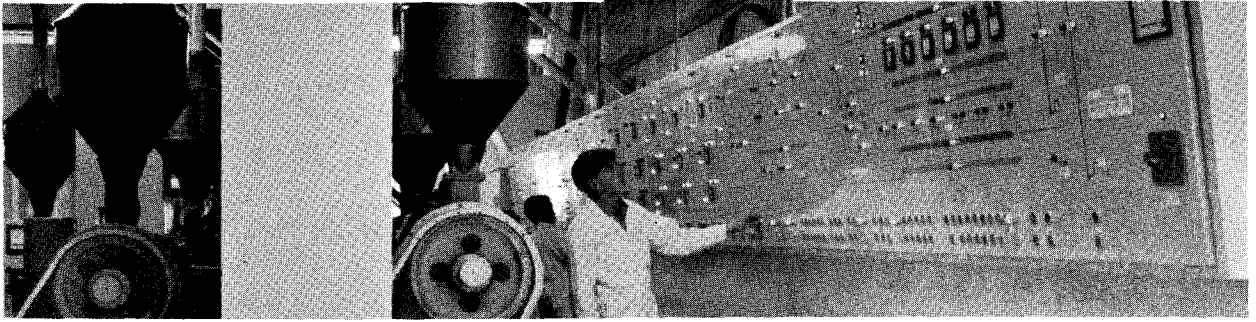
The first of these exchanges was to be established in the Egansford area but, as farms were settled prior to the establishment of this exchange, the very first telephone office in the Coleambally area was established in the home of Mr and Mrs H. Burge. This was established on 3.7.61 and was known as the Egansford Telephone Office.

The Australian Post Office owes some debt to the Burges since they voluntarily offered to provide this telephone service and they were, in fact, connected across the trunk line which had been established into the area for the Egansford Automatic Telephone Exchange.

No attempt was made to connect telephone lines to this telephone office, but a public telephone was established to which residents and settlers could travel to make telephone calls.

Nine exchanges have been established since 26.6.62 at a cost of \$395,000 and serve 385 subscribers.

Urban Systems Corporation Pty. Ltd.



Coleambally mill and its associated paddy storage installation cost \$1.3 million. (The Rice Marketing Board has subsequently built additional paddy storage adjoining the mill).

The Coleambally mill has a capacity of twenty tons of paddy rice per hour or 60,000 tons of paddy per year. It is equipped with the most modern equipment available. Since its erection it has been inspected and studied by leading European and Asian rice milling experts.

In fact, it can be fairly stated that the Coleambally Rice Mill is one of the most technically advanced Abrasive Rice Mills in the world to-day, capable of milling Short, Medium and Long Grain Rice varieties. It is a blend of the best rice milling equipment available in the world. It contains machinery from Japan, England, Germany, Canada, as well as Australian equipment and some machines designed and built by Ricegrowers' Co-op Mill staff.

Although the Coleambally Mill is semi automatic and contains many labour saving devices it still has a big labour requirement. There are already twenty four persons permanently employed on a two shift basis, and when the total Rice Milling Complex planned for Coleambally is completed employment will rise to approximately one hundred persons.

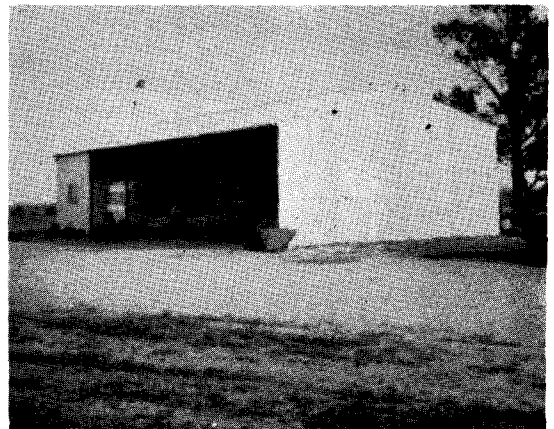
Coleambally mill also provided the basic design of the new Deniliquin mill which was completed twelve months later.

The Water Conservation and Irrigation Commission which at present administers the Coleambally Area from the town of Darlington Point proposes to establish its operational headquarters for the Area at Coleambally Township within the next few years.

Implementation of the proposal will be undertaken immediately the necessary detailed planning can be completed. Funds have been allocated for the construction of the required office and associated buildings as well as accommodation for staff.



**HANMER & WEBSTER EARTHMOVING**



**STEEL SHED BY COLEAMBALLY  
METAL ENGINEERING**

## DIRECTORY OF COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

The names shown are not necessarily office bearers, but are names of people who will give information on the group concerned.

### ST. MARK'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND

Archdeacon V.E. Twigg  
The Rectory  
St. Alban's, Griffith

### ST. MARK'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND LADIES GUILD

Mrs E. Shaw  
Farm 168,  
Coleambally  
Phone Fairlie Grange 546735

Meetings held at St. Mark's Church of England on the first Thursday in each month at 2.00 p.m.

### METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH in co-operation

Mr Les Morton  
Farm 69,  
Coleambally  
Phone Rowan 549148

### METHODIST/PRESBYTERIAN LADIES FELLOWSHIP

Mrs B. Reeves  
Kingfisher Avenue,  
Coleambally  
Phone Coleambally 544148

Meetings held at the Church Hall on the fourth Tuesday in each Month at 8.00 p.m.

### ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH —

St. Peters  
The Presbytery  
Darlington Point

### SCHOOLS ST PETER'S SCHOOL

Principal Mr J. Doherty  
Phone Coleambally 544178

### ST. PETERS PARENTS AND FRIENDS ASSOCIATION

Mr J. Doherty  
St. Peter's School  
Coleambally

### COLEAMBALLY CENTRAL SCHOOL

Principal Mr F.W. Cook, B.A.  
Telephone 544131

### COLEAMBALLY CENTRAL SCHOOL PARENTS AND CITIZENS ASSOCIATION

President: Mr. W. Manson  
Farm 173  
Morundah  
Phone Rowan 549163  
Secretary: Mrs D. Robertson  
Farm 49,  
Coleambally  
Phone Gidgell 511

Meeting held at the Central School on the first Monday in each month at 8.00 p.m.

### MOTHERS' AUXILIARY OF COLEAMBALLY CENTRAL SCHOOL

President: Mrs I. Sim  
Farm 505  
Coleambally  
Phone Rowan 549117

Meetings held at the Central School on the third Monday in each month at 2.00 p.m.

### CANTEEN COMMITTEE OF COLEAMBALLY CENTRAL SCHOOL

Chairwoman: Mrs E. Brain  
Farm 180  
Coleambally  
Phone Fairlie Grange 546718

Meetings held at the Central School on the third Monday in each Month at 3.00 p.m.

### EGANSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOL:

Principal Mr P.F. Naismith  
Phone Egansford 230

**EGANSFORD PARENTS AND  
CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**

Mrs B. Mellington  
Farm 11  
Coleambally  
Phone Egansford 213

Meetings held at Egansford School on the  
second Thursday in each Month at 8.00 p.m.

**GIDGELL PUBLIC SCHOOL**

Phone Gidgell 530

**GIDGELL PARENTS AND  
CITIZENS ASSOCIATION**

Mrs O. Mansell  
Farm 47  
Coleambally  
Phone Gidgell 510

**GRIFFITH TECHNICAL COLLEGE**

Principal Mr R.G. Young  
Phone Griffith 572109

**MURRUMBIDGEE MAGPIES**

Sister H. Pugh  
Hay Road,  
Darlington Point  
Phone 684131

**COLEAMBALLY GOLF CLUB**

Mrs R. Symons  
Farm 161  
Coleambally  
Phone Argoon 546126

**BASKETBALL CLUB**

Mrs Jocelyn Cowie  
Kingfisher Ave.,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544175

**LITTLE ATHLETICS**

Mr R.K. Buchanan  
Farm 63  
Coleambally  
Phone Rowan 549132

**TENNIS; JUNIOR TENNIS**

Mrs M. Burke,  
Farm 150,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544118

**JUNIOR CRICKET**

Mr R.K. Buchanan,  
Farm 63,  
Coleambally  
Phone Rowan 549132

**CRICKET**

Mr A.R. Reeves,  
Farm 74,  
Coleambally  
Phone Rowan 549145

**AUSTRALIAN RULES**

Mr B. Reeves  
Kingfisher Avenue,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544148

**RUGBY LEAGUE**

Mr I. Bowditch,  
Farm 165,  
Coleambally  
Phone Argoon 546135

**SPORTING CLUB**

Mr G. Edmanson,  
Farm 27,  
Coleambally  
Phone Egansford 207

**AQUATIC CLUB**

Secretary: Mr N. Hamner,  
Kingfisher Avenue,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544145

**PISTOL CLUB**

Mrs I. Gehrig  
Bluebonnet Crescent  
Coleambally  
Phone 544137

### **SWIMMING POOL COMMITTEE**

Secretary: Mr F.W. Cook,  
Central School  
Coleambally  
Phone 544131

### **UNITED FARMERS & WOOLGROWERS ASSOCIATION**

Mr Rod McCleary,  
Farm 531,  
Coleambally  
Phone Gala Vale 548356

### **COARSE GRAIN-GROWERS ASSOCIATION**

Mr P. Smith,  
Farm 185,  
Coleambally  
Phone Fairlie Grange 546716

### **YAMMA SETTLERS ASSOCIATION**

Mr J. Smith,  
Farm 524,  
Coleambally  
Phone Rowan 549138

### **YAMMA NEW SETTLERS ASSOCIATION**

Hon. Secretary Mr A.H. Pfitzner  
Farm 554, M.C. 333 Morundah  
Coleambally  
Phone Yamma 548554

### **PROGRESS ASSOCIATION**

Secretary: Mr C. Brain  
Bellbird Street,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544142

Meetings held at the Central School on the second Monday of each month at 8.00 p.m.

### **PROMOTION COMMITTEE**

Mr F. Partington  
Brolga Place  
Coleambally

Meetings held at the Central School on the second Wednesday of each month at 8.00 p.m.

### **BUSH FIRE BRIGADE**

Mr A. Cullen  
Brolga Place,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544138

### **ARGOON COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

Mrs L.J. Geyer  
Farm 162  
Coleambally  
Phone Argoon 546127

Meetings held in Masonic Supper Rooms, 2nd Thursday of each month at 2.00 p.m.

### **COLEAMBALLY COUNTRY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION**

President: Mrs B. Rose  
Farm 174  
Coleambally

Meetings held at the Masonic Temple on the third Wednesday of each month at 2.00 p.m.

### **MEDICAL CENTRE**

Mr J. McInnes  
Farm 81,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544121

### **CUBS AND BROWNIES**

Mrs A. Cullen  
Brolga Place,  
Coleambally  
Phone 544138

### **BUSH NURSING ASSOCIATION**

Sister H. Pugh  
Hay Road  
Darlington Point  
Phone 684131

Meetings held at the Bush Nursing Centre, Hay Road, Darlington Point on the second Monday of each month at 8.00 p.m.

### **SCOTTISH DANCING TEACHER**

Mrs G. McGown,  
Bluebonnet Crescent,  
Coleambally

Music Teacher Mrs F. Mellington  
Bluebonnet Crescent,  
Coleambally  
Phone Coleambally 544177



## **PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**

### **MEDICAL**

Dr. R.P. Byrne  
Kingfisher Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544154

Bush Nursing Association  
(Sister H. Pugh)  
Hay Road, Darlington Point  
Telephone: 684131

### **SOLICITORS**

Matthews & Dangar  
Box 6 P.O.  
Narrandera

Ryall, Clark & Gressier  
34 Kurrajong Avenue,  
Leeton

Oliffe, McRae and Vardenega  
Broadway Buildings,  
Kooyoo Street, Griffith

Noyce, Salmon & D'Aquino  
91 Yambil Street, Griffith

### **FARM MANAGEMENT**

G.P. McGown & Associates Pty. Ltd.  
Farm Management Consultants

#### ***Local Representative:***

D.L. Honybun  
Kingfisher Ave., Coleambally  
Telephone: 544146

### **ACCOUNTANCY**

R.J. White, Taxation Consultant  
Brolga Place, Coleambally

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### **AERIAL AGRICULTURE**

Cropair Pty. Ltd.,  
P.O. Box 871, Griffith  
Telephone 622992

Super Spread Aviation Aust. Pty. Ltd.,  
P.O. Box 7,  
Cheltenham, Victoria  
Telephone 903355

## **BUS SERVICE**

Coleambally Bus Service,  
Kestrel Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544189

### **BANKS**

Bank of New South Wales,  
Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544192

Rural Bank of New South Wales,  
Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544191

### **BUILDERS**

S. & K. McDonald  
P.O. Box 63, Coleambally  
Telephone 544150

Reg. Cowie (Jorenson Pty. Ltd.)  
Kingfisher Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544175

J. Boyle (E.S.D.A.)  
Kingfisher Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544134

Lloyds Transportable Homes  
Sturt Highway, Wagga Wagga  
Telephone Wagga 4988

### **BUILDING SUPPLIERS**

Stevensons Ready-Mixed Concrete  
Calrose Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone Griffith 622770

Area Brickworks Pty. Limited  
P.O. Box 729, Griffith  
Telephone Wilbriggie 231  
or  
A.H. Griffith 623364

Liefting Bros, (Brickworks),  
Stewart Street, Deniliquin  
Telephone Deniliquin 811289

E.S.D.A. Pty. Ltd.,  
Kestrel Road, Coleambally  
Telephone 544134

Jorenson Pty. Ltd.,  
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Telephone 544175

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(H. and P. Burge)  
Farm 8, Coleambally  
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"Trevail Park" Poll Hereford Stud  
T. Hogan,  
Farm 202, Coleambally  
Telephone Fairlie Grange 546743

"Argoon" Santa Gertrudis Stud  
E. and J. Geyer  
Farm 162, Coleambally  
Telephone 546127

"Jomarin" Murray Grey Stud  
R. and M.A. Klaver  
Farm 210, Coleambally  
Telephone Argoon 546112

"Engelmark" Angus Stud  
D.J.A. and K.M. Holloway  
Farm 171, Coleambally  
Telephone Rowan 549147

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Hamner and Webster,  
Kingfisher Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone

### **ELECTRICIAN**

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Kingfisher Avenue, Coleambally

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L.S. Hardie Engineering  
34 Bencubbin Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544184

Coleambally Steel Engineering Co.,  
Calrose Street, Coleambally  
Telephone 544129

### **FARM SUPPLIES**

Jack Ryan  
Seed Merchant  
Farm 534, Coleambally  
Telephone Gala Vale 548362

Murrumbidgee Irrigation Distributors  
Co-operative Society Ltd  
Bencubbin Avenue, Coleambally

Fertilizer Services Pty. Limited,  
A.F.L. agent,  
(Calrose Avenue, Coleambally.)  
Box 1012 P.O., Griffith  
Telephone 621991

B.G. Rutledge, Fertilizer  
Spreading Contractor  
70 Bluebonnet Crescent, Coleambally  
Telephone 544163

### **FUEL SUPPLIES**

Amoco Australia Pty. Ltd.,  
Agent — B.F. Aylett  
Bluebonnet Crescent, Coleambally  
Telephone 544180

B.P. Australia Limited  
Agent — A. Cullen,  
Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544138

### **HOTEL — MOTEL**

Brolga Hotel-Motel,  
Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544195

### **MOTOR GARAGES**

Caltex Service Station and Cafe  
Kingfisher Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544155

International Harvester Dealer  
Hi-Trac Equipment,  
Calrose Avenue, Coleambally  
Telephone 544171

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112 Brolga Place, Coleambally  
*Manchester, Dress and Curtain Materials,  
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Dairy and Bakery Products  
Telephone 544116

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(Chemist)  
Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544161

Foodland Supermarket  
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Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544174

Rawlings Newsagency,  
Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544166

Pembles Store & Service Station,  
Jerilderie Road, Coleambally  
Telephone 546764

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Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544159

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Brolga Place, Coleambally  
Telephone 544138

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Rice Marketing Board of New South Wales  
Jimmy Cull Road, Coleambally  
Telephone 544182

Ricegrowers Co-op Mills Limited  
Jimmy Cull Road, Coleambally  
Telephone 544136

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9 Larmer Street, Narrandera  
Telephone Narrandera 130

### **STOCK AND STATION AGENTS**

Dalgety Australia Ltd.,  
Kingfisher Ave., Coleambally  
Telephone 544176  
A.H. 544177

Younghusbands Pty. Ltd.,  
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61 Bluebonnet Crescent, Coleambally  
Telephone 544162

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| Kerrie Mortimer and Fredrick         |                                 |                                     |
| Christian                            |                                 |                                     |

## HORTICULTURAL FARMS

## ABOUT THIS BOOK

The idea of producing this book was first suggested at a Progress Association meeting in June, 1970. The idea was received enthusiastically and planning began at that time.

In March, 1971, the idea was discussed with a meeting of the Coleambally Promotion Committee. The joint committee of management, four from each organisation was set up to handle details of planning and finance. At the same time, Mrs Joy Lovell began to act as secretary. She has typed all correspondence — over 100 letters — and about 90% of all material in this book. Without her help, the book would certainly still be submerged in a sea of scribbled pages.

In June, businesses and individuals were approached for support, and the response during the next few months was most satisfactory, providing both the necessary financial basis for the project to proceed and the necessary editorial material to enable the book's aims to be fulfilled.

Particular appreciation must be made of the financial support of the Rice Marketing Board, the Rice Growers Co-op Mill and the Murrumbidgee County Council, but the support of the business community as a whole can only be described as magnificent.

We also received considerable financial and editorial support from many social organisations, notably the two Country Womens' Association groups.

In August 1970, Robert Anthony Studios supplied a photographer for the photographs attributed to them. The aircraft for aerial photos was flown by David Foster.

This book was printed by Ever-redi Press of 1320 Wakaden Street, Griffith.

To Mr. Jim McCudden of Ever-redi Press we express our particular thanks for his help, advice and efficiency. The production of a book of this size in three months is no mean feat.

This is a list of some of the many people who contributed ideas, articles, time and effort to the production of this book, but whose contributions have not been acknowledged in the relevant place. We apologise to those people who we feel we must have omitted, but we assure everyone that all assistance has been deeply appreciated. We hope that anyone who has been omitted will understand that this has been an oversight caused by pressure of time rather than to lack of appreciation.

Mr Bob Blake	Mrs T. Forge	Mrs N. McDougall	
Mr Ian Bowditch	Mr G. Grady	Miss S. Mourot (of the Mitchell Library)	
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