

Gunning, New South Wales Our 200th birthday celebrations 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> March 2022





#### A SNAPSHOT OF GUNNING'S HISTORY.....and what to look for today.

Gunning is "Australia's accessible rural heritage". It is a quiet transport and service centre that was important in Australia's colonial and 19th Century history. The area was originally occupied by the Pajong "Fish River Tribe" people. Today the broader Gunning and District is mapped as Ngunnawal land. 'Meadow Creek was on a pathway from Yass to Lake George and the coast. It was close to neighbouring Wiradjuri, Gundugarran and Yuin people'. Wally Bell, Ngunnawal Custodian/Elder

Until 1820 Gunning was at the "Limit of Settlement". The colonial government banned settlers acquiring property outside the 19 Counties centred on Sydney. The Lachlan River near Gunning was the local boundary and Gunning was the crossing over the swamp that ran into the Lachlan for all land transport, horses, sheep and bullock carts daring to leave "civilisation". The swamp is now Meadow Creek and the last major flood was in 1959.

European settlement didn't take long. It started in 1821 with exploration by a party led by Hamilton Hume and in 1824 Hume, famously with William Hovell, pioneered the route from Gunning south to what later became Melbourne. Since then, Gunning has been on the main route from Sydney to Melbourne for both road and rail. In the last 200 years horsemen, bullock carts, the railway, which arrived in 1875, and the Hume Highway, which went through Gunning village till 1993, have passed through Gunning though the highway is now less than a kilometre away.

In 1901 Gunning was described as "A prosperous town supplying the needs of travellers, villagers and the surrounding rural communities. Court House, banks, stock and station agents, blacksmiths, 5 hotels, produce store, Universal Providers department store and mail order business, saddlers, bakers, butchers, bootmakers, chemist, three churches, flour mill, soft drink manufacturers, boot polish factory, printing works, rabbit freezing works, barber's shop and a wool store.". Despite reductions in rail services and improved roads, it still provides a wide range of services though the soft drink manufacturer, bootmaker and boot polish factory have disappeared and other forms of accommodation and eating have replaced some of the hotels.

The Cullerin Range, 10 kilometres to the east, is where you cross the Great Dividing Range. The Cullerin Road, which was the Hume Highway till 1993, is the scenic drive over the range including the Cullerin Loop, the highest point on the road and railway between Sydney and Melbourne, where the road and railway wind in two great loops to accommodate the gradient.

At Fish River, four kilometres east of Gunning, is the commemorative memorial erected in 1924 to mark the hundredth anniversary of the Hume and Hovell expedition. Also at Fish River are the old pumping station and water tower that supplied water for the steam engines before they climbed up the Cullerin Range.

While there had been property in the district from the 1820s, it was not until 1838 that the government made the first land sales in Gunning. The wide main street, Yass Street, still shows many examples of 19th century architecture, especially the ground floor of the Telegraph Hotel, London House, the post office, the old printery, the old bank, the courthouse and the commercial precinct that was once centred around Caxton House. Some other examples of architectural development sit next to them like the wonderfully whimsical Bailey's Garage and the delightful Coronation Theatre, now called the Picture House Gallery & Bookshop.

The Uniting Church, in Warrataw Street and St Edmund's Anglican Church in Biala Street were both built in the 19th century. St Edmund's Church features some superb stain glass windows. The Catholic church in the east of the town is modern but the adjacent convent (now a private house) and the neo-Gothic schoolhouse are well worth visiting.

Of particular interest is Pye Cottage, a slab-built hut that was moved from Dalton and re-erected for opening in September 1974. Pye Cottage now stands proudly as a museum dedicated to the pioneers and settlers of the region, run by the Gunning & District Historical Society.

Other significant 19th century buildings in Gunning include the Aratula Inn (then named) the Do Duck Inn, now a private residence), at the western entrance to town, and Frankfield, on Warrataw Street near the railway line. Today, these guesthouses are now private residences, but their exteriors still show their heritage.

Bushranging featured in the Southern Tablelands until about 1865 and Gunning is famous for two murders. In 1840 bushrangers - the Whitton Gang - attacked Gunning and John Kennedy Hume, brother of Hamilton, rode in to assist in defending the town. Hume was shot dead during the hold up and the raid later became known as the 'Siege of Gunning'. The Hume brothers erected a tomb for their brother, which is in Gunning's general cemetery, with the story of his demise engraved on its top. Many other members of the Hume family are also ensconced here.

A couple of years later Lucretia Dunkley, together with their servant Martin Beech, murdered her husband Henry at Dunkley's farm at Gunning. Two columns of the Sydney Morning Herald were devoted to the report of the case, in great and grisly detail. The trial took place at Berrima in Sep 1842, as did their execution a year later. Henry's grave lies in the now Water Treatment Plant – the only one to reside in such a place in Australia.

Another of Gunning's traditional claims to fame is wool. The earliest flocks arrived in the 1820s and Gunning has since then been regarded as one of the major centres of fine wool production in Australia, or indeed the world.

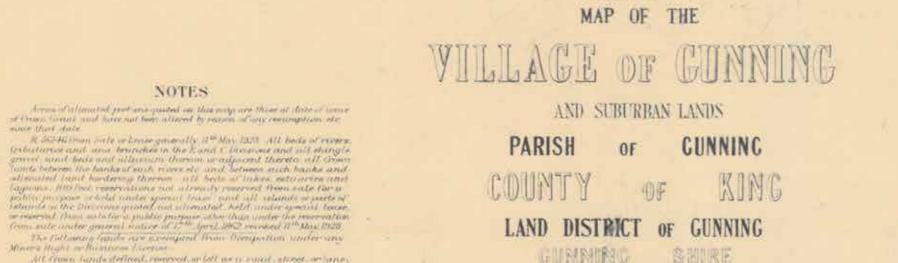
Gunning retains its traditional atmosphere in a peaceful setting but every year there are major events – the Gunning Arts Festival, the Gunning Show, Gunning Patchwork Weekend, as well as the monthly Lions Markets and many music events featuring some of Australia's great classical musicians.

The Gunning district is a driver's delight, whether you're in a car, a motorbike or cycling through. Picturesque drives wind through Gunning and the surrounding villages, Jerrawa, Dalton, Breadalbane and Collector. Historic buildings, old wares, country food and accommodation abound in the villages and on the land. The road to Crookwell sees you drive deeper into the upper reaches of the Southern Tablelands.



The information in this publication was compiled by members of the Gunning Focus Group, the Lions Club of Gunning in conjunction with the Upper Lachlan Shire Council and updated in 2021 by The Gunning & District Historical Society.

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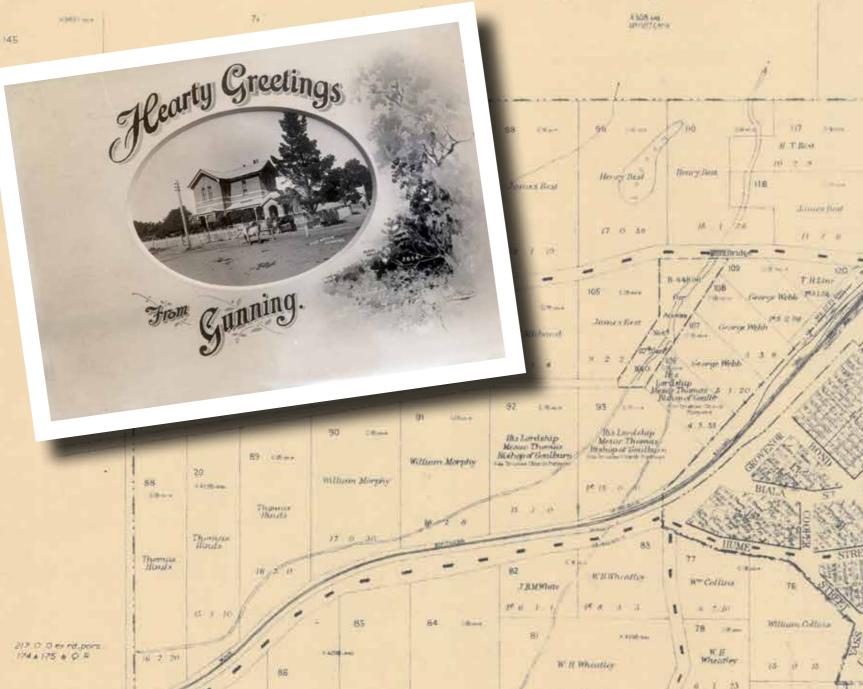
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Third Edition



W. H. Wheelley Richard Sherraft





Schedule of Events

#### FRIDAY 4<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022

7.30pm - Acacia Quartet, Court House, Gunning Focus Group To reserve a seat contact 0429 906 834 or gunningfocusgroup@gmail.com

### SATURDAY 5<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022

10am – 2pm - Pye Cottage open, Gunning & District Historical Society

10 - 2pm - Library open - display

**2pm** - Unveiling of commemorative plaque on the library

6.30pm - Gunning Glitz & Glamour Gala in the Garden, The Old Coach Stables, Show Society

Merchandise will be available for sale on the weekend. Limited edition memorabilia is available.

Schedule of Events

## SUNDAY 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2022

9am – 2pm - Lions' Club markets, Court House & Main Street

9am - Ecumenical church service and sausage sizzle, Anglican Church

10 - 2pm - Gaol cells open, Gunning & District Historical Society

1-1.45pm - 200 Years of Road Transport Bailey's Garage forecourt A horse and carriage typical of the 1820s, a vintage car from the mid 1920s, and a modern electric vehicle.

**2pm** - Open mic event, Court House, Gunning Focus Group









# Gunning, New South Wales, 2581

**200** *1821 - 2021* 

Many thanks to the Gunning200 committee and all who contributed to the Gunning200 celebrations, and continue to make this village and community one which is rich in culture and history.

