

IN TOUCH

Newsletter of the Echuca Historical Society Inc.



Cover Photo

State School 208
Hare Street, Echuca.

The Minister of Public Instruction, the Hon. Angus Mackay, part owner of the Riverine Herald, opened the first part of the building on 21 October 1874. The building was found to be inadequate so in 1877 the school was enlarged to cater for 632 pupils despite having 1339 enrolled. C.W. Hartshorn, principal held the position from 1870-1890. In 1890 fire destroyed most of the High Street frontage. It was partially rebuilt but major reconstruction was not carried out until 1915. The last classes were held in March 1995, before the school relocated to a new building in High Street.

Editors Notes...

Welcome to the Spring edition of the Echuca Historical Society newsletter.

It's hard to believe that we are almost at years end. Our calendars are printed and available for sale. We have had two new air conditioners installed thanks to funding from the Federal Government's stronger communities grant. We are currently safeguarding the photographic record of the Murray Bombers football club, while Vic Park undergoes its renovation and on top of all of that we still continue to open 7 days a week while indexing and research carries on in the research centre. Not bad for a small historical society.

Please keep an eye out for Bev's Southern 80 ski race exhibition to start in November

Occasionally while scouring the newspapers for information I will come across strange or interesting items and articles published in the Riverine Herald. These are just some of them...

VERY DOMESTICATED. - On Saturday afternoon the vagaries of a cow in Hare-street created some amusement. The animal, apparently of a domestic turn, entered the premises of Mr W B rker, chemist, and after a brief inspection of the interior, was chased into the street again, when it immediately sallied into the tailoring shop of Mr F. J. Eudey. The unwelcome visitor was once more turned into the street without doing any damage.

Article from the Riv
dated 1894

Article from the Riv
dated 1888

ECHUCA POLICE COURT.

Tuesday, November 20th 1888.

(Before Messrs. Wyatt, P.M., His Worship the Mayor, A. W. H. White, and W. Martin, J's.P.)

PETTY LARCENY.

John Ryan was charged with the larceny of 2s, from one named Smith. He pleaded not guilty. George Smith said he was a laborer residing in Echuca; was in company with prisoner drinking with him; did not know if he took anything from him. (Laughter.)

Constable Harris said the prisoner was given into his custody by Smith, for robbing him of 2s. They were both drunk.

Discharged.

DRUNK.

George Smith was then charged with being drunk and disorderly the previous day. Constable Harris proved the offence. Fined 5s or 24 hours.

Where Echuca Began

After the first Land Sales in Echuca, following the survey by the Government Surveyor, Phillip Chauncy in November 1854, much of the town section between Heygarth Street and Victoria Park was taken up by the entrepreneurs, such as Hopwood and Thomas Mitchell.

The first hotels to be built to serve the growing community were Mitchell's new Echuca Hotel, and Hopwood's hastily built New Road Inn, on the Esplanade.

But as High Street developed, to be the main road between both Hopwood's Ferry and Maiden's Punt, to the now thriving towns of Sandhurst southwards, so did the trade develop along that town section.

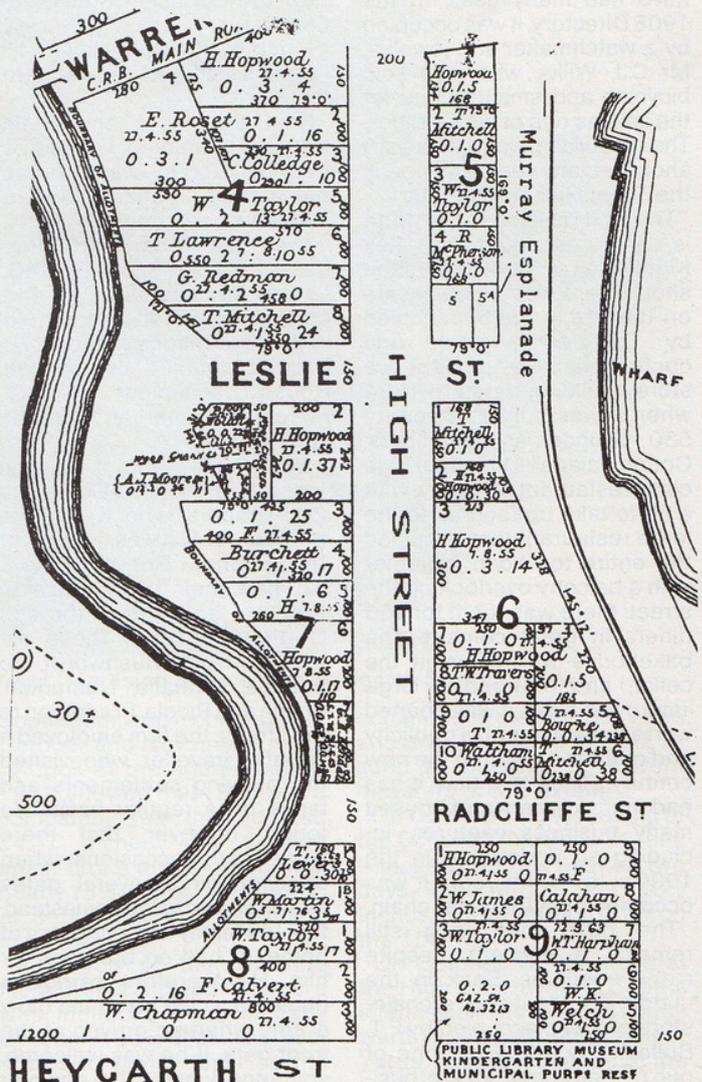
We can now look at the section on the east side of old High Street, from Radcliffe Street, down as far as the Bridge Hotel. This was the most favoured side of the street, as it was the closest to the thriving wharf area, and consequently derived its custom from the wharf labourers, steamer passengers, shipwrights and those whose business was concerned with the river trade. At the Radcliffe

Street corner was the Town Hall Hotel, which first opened in November 1868 and was owned by the Gleeson family. It appears both on the water-colour by Gus Pierce, and in the Kendall photo of the 1870 flood. It is shown in the present form of a brick built, two storey hotel building of the period. But in the Local Option hearings of 1897, it was listed as one of the 20 hotels that were to be closed as redundant.

Giving evidence, Mr John Stokes, grazier of Echuca, said that he was the executor of Mr Gleeson's estate, and the property was on 'the best site for a hotel business in Echuca.'

Editor: It was close to the original Town Hall and Magistrate's Court (now the Echuca Regional Library), and very close to the wharf area.

Mr A.J. Moore, builder and member of W.W. Moore and Sons, stated that it had been renovated by him after a fire some two years previously and was now in excellent condition. The Court ruled however that it was an unnecessary hotel, as it was not such a good building as others in High Street. The Estate received 1215 pounds in compensation, and 367 pounds was awarded to the



A section of the Echuca Parish Map that shows the original allotments from the 1855 lands sales. It bears little relation to the frontages of the properties today.



Where Echuca Began- Geoff Waters

WHERE ECHUCA BEGAN continued.

current licensee, one Thomas Hancocks, or Hancox. After it was delicensed it appears to have had many uses. In the 1905 Directory, it was occupied by a watchmaker and jeweller, Mr C.J. Wilks, who also sold bicycles and small motors for the same as one of his sidelines. The old building was a Chemist's shop for many years and now is the Town Hall Tea Rooms.

The next building to the north is now occupied by Rex Kightly, as a boot and shoe shop. There was an early cafe on the site in 1865, occupied by D. Dewar, cook and confectioner. The present two storey building dates to 1884 when it was built at a cost of 530 pounds, as 'Chambers' Coffee Palace'. This was a high class restaurant in its day, with a lift to take up food up to the large restaurant that occupied the entire top floor. Together with a balcony overlooking the street, there was room for 150 diners in great comfort. The bakehouse was down in the cellar, and featured a large 'improved' oven. It was opened with a large amount of publicity and operated well into the new century. Since that time it has had many owners and housed many business ventures, including an undertaker in the 1930's. In recent years it was occupied by a footwear chain.

The next shop long still remains a mystery, despite many enquiries. Back in the middle 1930's it was a chain-store grocery, occupied by F.T. Bullock Pty. Ltd. But none of our research can locate businesses prior to about 1933.

The double shop next door, has also provided little information, other than it was built by Miss Elsie Murray in the late 1920's as an investment and housed a men's wear shop and a boot seller about that time.

The next building, however, comes right back to 1866, when it was owned by the Waylen family, and operated as

a store, and a fruiterer. In the years after World War II it was Somerville's Fruit Shop, and is now the Occasion Studios of Les Hall.

Much of the old building still remains, altered to modern tastes.

Next door is a one chain frontage occupied by Shaw's Echuca Stores, whose name has carried on under different owners since about 1909.

There was a hardware shop here in 1865, run by R.G. Lewen, as an ironmongery and crockery warehouse, and then in the illustrations of the 1870 flood it appears as 'London House', occupied by P.O. Pierce, silk mercer, outfitter and draper.

By at least 1880, it was the local store of Brown, Corke and Co., Drapers, who were here probably until it was taken over by J.F. Shaw. Brown, Corke & Co had their head office in Prahran, and stores through Northern Victoria. These extended from Rushworth, to Echuca, Nathalia, Numurkah, Waaia and Picola. In addition to the stores, the firm employed a country traveller who visited the outlying settlements and farms on a regular basis. He found, however, that there were many occasions when after opening several gates and driving up to the homestead, that the family was either not at home, or had no business for him. He therefore carried a bugle on which he would blow a tune when he arrived at the front gate. If he was welcome, someone would come down to assist him get through the time consuming gates.

Two small shops to the north, had various occupiers over the years, but the large shop adjoining was a grocer's shop, run by Harry Bartlett, and more recently by Harry White, Len Pascoe and Millers' Stores. It was developed by Bill Main in recent years as a furniture store, and now is the Warehouse

Centre. Our research does not go back before the mid 1930's.

The little shop now re-cycled as Belle Lingerie was Hopwood's residence and office while the "Palace" — Apsley House was being built for him. The counting house where his takings from the river crossings and his other enterprises were counted, is still there.

The two delightful little shops at the corner of Hopwood Lane were 'Melbourne House', the drapery owned by Hugh C. Lewis as far back as 1865. They are now occupied by Marnie Riddell, and Kenlynn's shoes and accessories. An up-market version of the original business.

Over the lane, which marks the track from Hopwood's New Road Inn to his vegetable garden on the banks of the Campaspe, is the lovely old two storey building once occupied by Caleb Vines, Auctioneer and General Agent. It is now occupied by the Old Aussie Grain Store, and its neighbour the Frame Workshop and Gallery. Built about 1880 it is a feature of our urban streetscape.

The next range of buildings are of modern origin, replacing an early hotel, 'The Duke of Edinburgh' that was here from about 1868 to 1895.

After a gap caused by the demolition of old buildings in recent years the next building was Chenhall's Drapery, and next door the Steam Packet Motel and Steak Tavern occupies part of the site of the Murray River Hotel, that was burnt down at Christmas 1866, but eventually rebuilt to become the first C.B.A. Bank in Echuca.

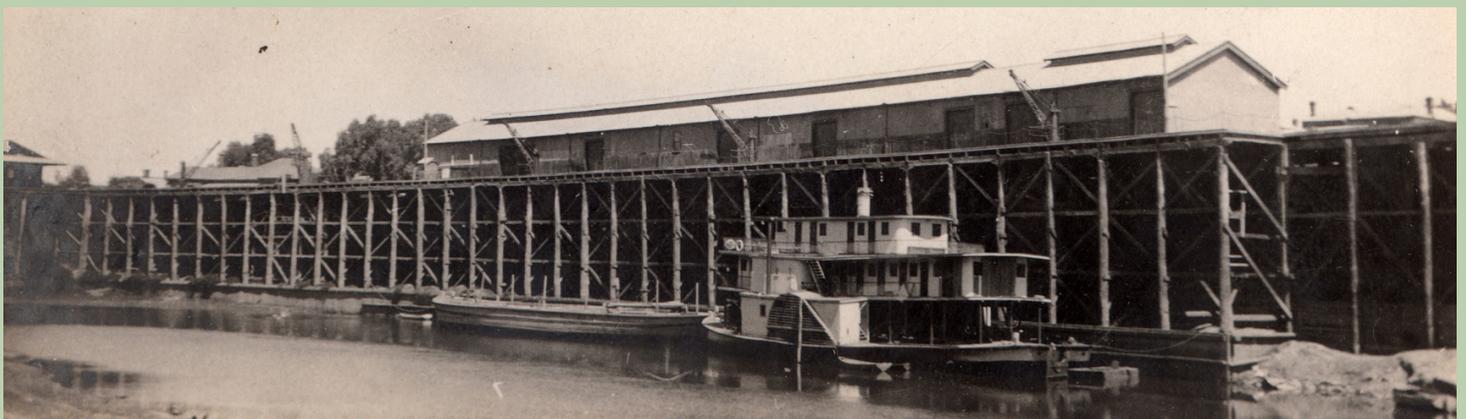
Now skilfully recycled to utilize the old Federal Hotel building on the Esplanade, this is next door to a building that

dates back to at least 1866, when it survived that spectacular fire.

Across Leslie Street is the site of the Wharfmaster's House, and then the Old Bond Store, the Permewan Wright building that dates to James Shackell. The three old shops that are now occupied by 'The World in Wax Museum', and the Coach House Museum that was at various times the site of a former hotel — 'The Rainbow', a salt works and a carriage factory. The vacant space is the site of St. George's Hall, unfortunately demolished in the days before we valued our historic buildings, and then the beautiful Bridge Hotel, Hopwood's masterpiece that dates back to 1858/59 and represents the Colonial architecture of Northern Tasmania, that apparently inspired Hopwood to chose this particular style. Restored as a 'living museum' of the period, it no longer provides overnight accommodation, but is one of our most famous restaurants.

A few years back, the emphasis was to pull down all the old buildings in Echuca and replace them with modern ones that would be more in keeping with our change in lifestyle. But there were people who fought to retain the old business centre, and especially its wide verandahs and footpaths. To them we must give thanks for their foresight, and it is pleasing to know that the television series of Nancy Cato's trilogy — "All the Rivers Run" is still the most successful production ever made in Australia.

None of this series could have been made without the river, the wharf and old High Street. We earnestly hope that the second series will eventually be made here.



Saturday 22nd November



**Echuca Historical Society
Christmas Party**

12 noon

at

**Moama R.S.L. Club
Fromelles room**

EHS 2026 Calendars

Our Calendars are HERE! Get them before they are all gone.
A huge thank you to our sponsors below.



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Calendar 2025

Coming General Meetings:

13 Nov

11 Dec

No Meeting Jan

Start 5pm @ Research Centre

Executive Meetings:

5 Nov

3 Dec

No Meeting Jan

Start 430pm @ Research Centre



Find us on facebook

Around the Traps

We are looking for volunteers to help out with our displays and exhibitions. If this sounds interesting to you, or you'd like more information, please reach out. Our textile displays are approaching change over time, so here is your opportunity to get up close and personal with some of our exceptional artefacts.

Contact the President or Treasurer

WANTED

Have an idea for an article or a photo you would like to see published in the newsletter? Put pen to paper or have a hunt through those personal archives and see what you can find.

All related content welcome.

Please drop the president a line at eh.soc@bigpond.com or mawilson85@gmail.com



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