



# IN TOUCH

Newsletter of the Echuca Historical Society Inc.



**Cover Photo**

Christ Church  
Church of England  
High Street, Echuca.

The foundation stone was laid in 1864 and work commenced thanks to the generous donation of bricks by prominent Echuca figures such as Henry Hopwood, George Redman and M.J. Webb. The first public service was held in September 1865, although the building was not yet finished or fully furnished. The transepts were begun in 1866 to the design of William Vahland, with the building being completed with the addition of the nave in 1875.

# Editors Notes...

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

It's been a smashing Christmas period, with plenty of visitors coming through to see the '60 Years of the Southern 80 Ski Race' exhibition. It's been so popular in fact, we have decided to extend it to the Easter holidays. So please come and see it before it's gone.

In other news, I am proud to announce that we have partnered with the Echuca Federal Band to lend our expertise for their big celebration happening later this year, which will coincide with our next exhibition, 'And the band played on...' which will be a history on the various bands that have existed in Echuca over its history. Watch this space!

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...

## A GERMAN PROPHECY.

The following German prophecy has been furnished to us by Mr. A. Rosel, of Echuca:—A Prophecy: Father Tranquil Wolfgang, a native of England, who died in June, 1873, in a Franciscan Monastery in Munich, has left among his papers the following prophecies for the years 1874 to 1890.

1874.—Consolidation of the Spanish Republic. Disaffection in France. General arming in Italy. New chief executive officer in France. Death of Pius IX.

1875.—War between France and Italy. The Italian armies besiege Paris. French armies defeated. Algiers occupied by the Italians. National plebiscite in Corsica, Nice, and Savoy. Floods in Austria.

1876.—In the month of March Paris surrenders. Ratifications of peace in Corsica, Corsica, Nice, and Savoy, incorporated in Italy. Revolution in Spain, and downfall of the Government. Plague in Russia. Prince Frederick Emperor of Germany. Revolution in England.

1877.—Communism and famine in France and Spain. European Congress in Rome. The new Pope reconciled to Italy. General arming in Europe. France divided into four parts. Floods and hurricanes in Italy. Severe frosts in Germany.

1878.—New European Congress in Berlin. Death of Queen Victoria. New Government in Spain. The Christians liberated in Turkey. Disaffection in Portugal, Poland, and Hungary. Cholera in France. A Bavarian discovers a remedy against it.

1879.—Tremendous storms in England. Peace everywhere. General disarmament and great discoveries at sea. Severe measures against those who instigated the Governments and are stirring up the people. The Pope abnegates the infallibility, reforms the Church, and abolishes the order of Jesuits.

1880.—New era of Peace. Death of the Emperor of Russia. All nations fraternize. Prosperity of agriculture, trade, and commerce. Important discovery in Munich. All Europe happy. The Pope blesses all the people, and peace lasts till the year 1890.—*German Paper.*

Article from the Riv  
dated 1874

A HIGHLAND COOPER.—The customers of a cooper in the Highlands caused him a great deal of vexation by their saving habits and and persistence in getting their tubs and casks repaired, buying very little new work. "I stood it long enough, however," said he, "until one day old M'Cawbrie brought in an old bung-hole to which he said he wanted a new barrel made. Then I quitted the North in disgust."

Article from the Riv  
dated 1874

# WHO WAS HENRY HOPWOOD?

Henry Hopwood was born in Bolton, Lancashire, England in 1813, when in the later years of the reign of the elderly King George 3rd, England was engaged in the wars against Napoleon in Europe. The French had lost their Grand Army in the Retreat from Moscow the previous year, and their other armies in Europe were facing defeat as well.

Henry Hopwood's father was a manufacturer and sent his son to a good school, where he at least acquired a knowledge of the classics.

Employed as a gilder in Liverpool, he married a young widow, Fanny Walkden (?) in December 1832, and a son was born to them in June 1834, after he had been convicted at the Lancaster Assizes for receiving stolen silk. Sentenced to 14 years transportation, he arrived at Hobart Town on 4 September of that year on the "William Metcalfe".

As his conduct on the transport was recorded as 'orderly', he was made a police constable in February of the following year.

A man of some education and limitless ambition, he must have found the repressive conditions in the Tasmanian penal settlement very irksome, and he was soon in trouble with the strict regulations then enforced. For living with a woman not his wife he was sentenced to a road gang for a year in 1835, and in May 1839 "he aided and assisted the abduction" of his master's daughter, and was sent to Port Arthur for two years. However, he received a ticket of leave in December 1842 and rejoined the police in Northern Tasmania. In February 1844 he had submitted a plan for supplying water to Launceston from the Southern Esk River.

This plan was not accepted and he served out the rest of his sentence in Northern Tasmania where he was described as "an active, intelligent and well disposed clerk" in a district constable's office in 1845, but was denied a post in the public service when he applied in April 1846.

When his sentence expired, Hopwood left Tasmania for the Port Phillip District and became overseer at a boiling down works in the parish of Tattalia, a few miles west of Moama.

With the establishment of squatting runs throughout the river country, there was a

surplus of aged sheep, and these unsaleable beasts were slaughtered and boiled down in huge vats to provide tallow for export, as well as their skins. Pigs were fed on the meat and offal and bones were ground down for fertilizer.

The foundations of this establishment still exist under a later shearing shed on a property on the Perricoota Road, just west of the present 24 Lane.

However, with the discovery of gold in both NSW and Victoria in 1851, the need for the boiling down works changed to the movement of all surplus stock to the new settlements to feed the miners and their families.

Hopwood was quick to realise that this new development was an immense business opportunity, and he moved quickly to provide both a new river crossing and an inn close to the stock route now in use. Although it has been said that he altered the defunct boiling down works to an inn by using the building materials that he could salvage there, it is most possible that he moved away from the contaminated and very smelly site to a track marked on some old maps as 'Hopwoods Lane' and built his New Road Inn there in the same style that he used a few years later when he built on a new riverside site in Echuca.

His second 'New Road Inn' was built of upright split box logs and roofed with bark. It was possible to create rooms with calico or other cloth partitions, and many settlers used this style for several years afterwards.

His first site can be found on Block 40, Parish of Tattalia today, and there is a track cut down along the bank to the river flat and a large redgum with the marks made by a ferry cable.

It was an excellent site, and the light which it was obliged to display each night to mark its front door, could be seen by travellers on the Perricoota track.

It was at the crossroads of the track from along the Wakool River, and the alternative track that Hopwood was now promoting south from the Deniliquin area to the Victorian Goldfields.

The bulk of the present traffic could divert after reaching the Yellow Water Holes north of the tiny settlement of Maiden's Punt, and approach the Murray through the Green Gully area

with its waterholes. Hopwood now had a punt at the New Road Inn, and after crossing the river the stock could be driven down to Sandhurst on the less travelled west bank of the Campaspe, where they would not have to compete for feed with the larger mobs coming south from Maiden's.

But Hopwood soon realised that he must get nearer to the established traffic, and he altered his original plan to develop a square mile of ground opposite his punt on the southern side - and instead selected the superb site above the Campaspe junction and at the narrowest point between that river and the Murray.

The township of Jaenganya was never built, although it appeared on the Department of Lands and Survey map of the Castlemaine - Echuca - Deniliquin area published in 1865. The relevant section appears in Susan Priestley's "Echuca" published in 1965.

The 'Government Gazette' of 6 April 1853 proclaimed a town reserve of nine square miles south of Maiden's Punt, and Hopwood realised that his chosen site, held under occupation licence was neatly placed in the north-west corner of their reserve. He lost no time in building a second "New Road Inn", and relocating his punt at this place.

Hopwood's confidence was proved when the tiny "Mary Ann", steamed past on 26 September 1853, on its way to tie up at Maiden's Inn. Maiden may have had the glory but the astute Hopwood was developing his little settlement with all his energy, and in addition to having men building his second "New Road Inn" on the riverbank close to his punt, had men further up the Campaspe

building a police barracks for the Government.

In a first attempt to ascertain the number of people living in the new State of Victoria, a Census was taken on 26 April 1854, and while the population on the goldfields may have been guesswork, the small population of Hopwood's Ferry was recorded as 26, of whom eight were police troopers at the barracks on the Campaspe. The others were Hopwood and his wife at the Inn. (His daughter Alice was away at boarding school in St. Kilda), Thomas Lawrence, with a wife and three children, and William Taylor with a wife and small son. The other were single men at Hopwood's sawpit, the ferryman and a blacksmith.

In November 1854, the Lands Office Surveyor, Philip Chauncy, rode into town with his equipment and an assistant, and proceeded to lay out the township between the two rivers.

The slight watershed between the two rivers was the natural track from the marshalling place for the teams crossing the Murray, and as the main road it became, to be designated as High Street on the town plan. Two chains (132 feet wide) it continued as the main road to Sandhurst on the east side of the Campaspe.

The framework of streets crossing at right angles were named by the surveyor, probably honouring friends or families of people in England known to him.

It was later on when streets south of Pakenham Street were surveyed that names of Australian explorers, or state premiers were used.

The blocks were usually rectilinear, but when this was not possible due to the railway



easement or the rivers, there was some adaptation, and unusual shaped blocks resulted.

Hopwood had 'squatted' and developed in the best position, and the new blocks were designed to fit in with the least inconvenience to "the founder of Echuca". When the plan of the first auction to be held on 27 April 1855 was made available, the township had been renamed 'Echuca' rather than Hopwood's Ferry as formerly.

At that first auction the main bidders were Hopwood and Thomas Mitchell, a comparative newcomer to the township.

Mitchell was a free emigrant and living on a property in the Moulamein district, when a daughter was born there. Good Catholics, they wished their new child to be baptised in a church, rather than by a visiting priest who might visit the district at irregular intervals.

They made the long journey to Bendigo for the christening, and came north to Maiden's Punt to see what that settlement offered them. The family then settled there and Thomas Mitchell became a carrier.

At the first Echuca auction both Hopwood and Mitchell had ready cash and often bought adjoining blocks, sometimes with a view to development, or usually for eventual capital gain.

Hopwood bought the superb site overlooking the square where the teamsters waited, and Mitchell bought the ones next to it.

At the Leslie Street corner, Mitchell bought the corner block, and Hopwood at the sale in August was able to buy the area on which he had built his first hotel, store, bakery and butchery.

Mitchell bought the corner block on the corner of Leslie Street, diagonally across from his first purchase, and built a rival butchers shop there to break Hopwood's present monopoly. When Hopwood

started his masterpiece, the new brick built Bridge Hotel, Mitchell tried to outdo Hopwood with a new hotel of his own. He converted the shop but was refused a hotel licence by the local Magistrates on the grounds that the bedrooms were too small. He then bought the block next door from George Redman, who planned a hotel himself on that site, and was able to open the first 'Echuca Hotel' in September 1858, in a single storey building with a wide verandah. Hopwood was meanwhile having difficulty in obtaining a continuous supply of bricks from men working in Sawpit Gully. The new 'Bridge Hotel' finally opened its doors in March 1859, and Hopwood then leased his original hotel on the riverbank. It was first known as 'Hopwood's Old House', and from 1872 the 'Criterion Hotel' being replaced with a single storey brick structure.

Hopwood based the design of the new Hotel on the colonial style of the buildings of Northern Tasmania, where he had served with the police force. But he added the balcony and verandah as a concession to the harsher climate of Northern Victoria.

A single storey wing at each end served as bar and dining room. Early photographs show a wing of the building along the Esplanade, first as single storey and later as double storey. This may have provided the bedrooms the hotel was said to possess.

With the punt and pontoon bridge over the Murray and the Toll Bridge over the Campaspe at Warren Street, Hopwood now controlled the main approaches to his new Hotel.

The Government of the day having insufficient funds to build a bridge over the Campaspe, Hopwood obtained a private Act of Parliament that permitted him to build and operate a Toll bridge there for a time of ten years.

Hopwood was first and last a

developer.

But as early as 1857 he saw the need of a public school for the growing community and was instrumental in setting it up and arranging for its staffing.

On one of his visits to Melbourne he apparently saw a circular asking for donations to fund a new expedition that would make the first crossing of Australia from south to north.

Donors were offered the chance to have their names commemorated on some geographical feature, and Hopwood generously donated the large sum of one hundred pounds. But when the Victorian Expedition, known to us as the Burke and Wills Expedition reached the Darling River, Henry was commemorated for ever by the naming of the Pituri, a native drug tree as 'Duboisia hopwoodii' by Baron von Mueller, the famous Victorian Botanist.

Hopwood also saw the need for a local newspaper, and persuaded the proprietors of the 'Bendigo Advertiser' to start the 'Riverine Herald' here in July 1863.

He had developed a small garden on the Campaspe bank to provide fresh vegetables for his first Inn on the Esplanade, but later developed an orchard, market garden and vineyard of some 11 acres between Connelly and Crofton Streets. His experimental planing of wine grapes provided him with wine for his hotel, and he was associated with a group of local residents to subscribe to the new Echuca Vineyard Company with plantings on their new 520 acre property at Yambuna. Unfortunately this venture later went into decline.

In July 1864 Hopwood leased the Bridge Hotel, and retired into private life. In December of that year he engaged an architect to build him a new residence on the one acre block at the corner of Connelly Street, and he retired there for active life.

In 1867, his only daughter, Alice, was married from this house to James McCulloch, the local manager of the W. McCulloch and Co.

He died there on New Years Day 1869, from Colonial Fever and general debility, and was buried two days later. He was only 55 years old, and probably the harsh years as a convict in Tasmania may have contributed to his early death. He remarried, this time to his seamstress, Charlotte Walter, from Bendigo. They had no children, neither did his daughter Alice, who through her husband inherited the Toll Bridge rights, and the freehold of the Criterion Hotel, as well as other assets.

After his death, his widow Charlotte, apparently destroyed his personal papers before returning to England. This concealed his convict past, a fact that was not discovered until Susan Priestly researched his history for her book - "Echuca - A Centenary History" in 1965.

The handsome black marble stone in the Echuca Cemetary also records the burial there of his brother-in-law Richard Walter, who was drowned in the Warrego River, Queensland in August 1869, aged 40 years. His body was brought here in 1872.

In 1876, James Shackell organised a memorial to Hopwood to be placed in the square opposite the Bridge Hotel, but the Town Clerk, Mr C.E. Pascoe caused it to be placed instead at the end of the avenue in Victoria Park. It was brought by bullock drays from Bendigo, and is made of Harcourt granite. It was unveiled in February 1882.

Both the Bridge Hotel and Apsley House were auctioned on behalf of Mrs Grove (Charlotte Hopwood) by James Shackell to release her Colonial investments. The hotel was

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sold to John Vettler, and Apsley House to Echuca flourmiller, David Stratton, who apparently purchased it on behalf of the Brigidine Nuns who were shortly coming to Echuca to open their Convent and School here.

## The Best Hotel Out Of Melbourne

This was in Henry's own words in a small advertisement in the 'Riverine Herald' in 1863.

In July 1864, Hopwood retired into private life, leasing the Bridge Hotel to J. Ewers. From his little residence in High Street (the present Belle Lingerie" shop, with its counting house at the rear, he was able to keep in touch with his many business ventures through the lane at the rear.

In December there was a report in the "Riverine Herald" that Mr Douglas, architect of Echuca, had designed a new residence for Hopwood on the "ground adjoining his vineyard". It appears that the king is about to prepare for himself quite a palatial structure.

Hopwood spent his remaining years at "Apsley House", which at the time was Echuca's most substantial private residence.

Over the next few years the hotel had several licencees, and it was apparently under the agency of James Shackell after Hopwood died on New Years Day 1869.

There were some alterations in the form of a new kitchen and additions in 1875, and Shackell offered the hotel for sale in July 1876. It then had 25 bedrooms. But it was eventually sold by auction in March 1882 to John Vettler - who had come to Echuca as winemaker for

Hopwood at his Connelly Street vineyard, and had then designed and operated the new Echuca Vineyard out a Kanyapella.

After renovations Vettler advertised board at one guinea a week, and remained there until he transferred the licence to John Flugg in September 1885. This new owner advertised the premises as the 'Bridge Hotel and Sanitorium' apparently in opposition to the other private hospitals then operating in the town.

At the Local Option Enquiry in November 1897, the hotel, under the management of former riverboat captain Bervin Wilson, retained its licence because of the favourable evidence submitted on its behalf. It had no less than 42 rooms, 39 being for public use.

However, the Licencing Court considered all licences in the area at about five yearly intervals. In 1915 the Court heard evidence regarding the Bridge Hotel as the population of Echuca was still in decline.

Mr F.C. Mueller appeared for the owner, Joseph Tucker of Caulfield who said that he has spent between two and three hundred pounds on the building since he purchased it in 1910.

It was stated to then have 22 rooms and a bar, four parlors, a dining room and kitchen. There were 13 bedrooms for public use. It was said to be in fair order, nicely furnished and clean. The balcony and the slate roof on the east wing were out of repair, and a 15 stall stable and three loose boxes in poor condition.

Sgt. Corby of the Echuca Police stated that trade had improved at this hotel in the past three years, but Mr Mueller said that there had been no river trade for the past two years. But riverboat captain, F.O. Wallin said that in a good year there were over 30 men working at the slip over the river.

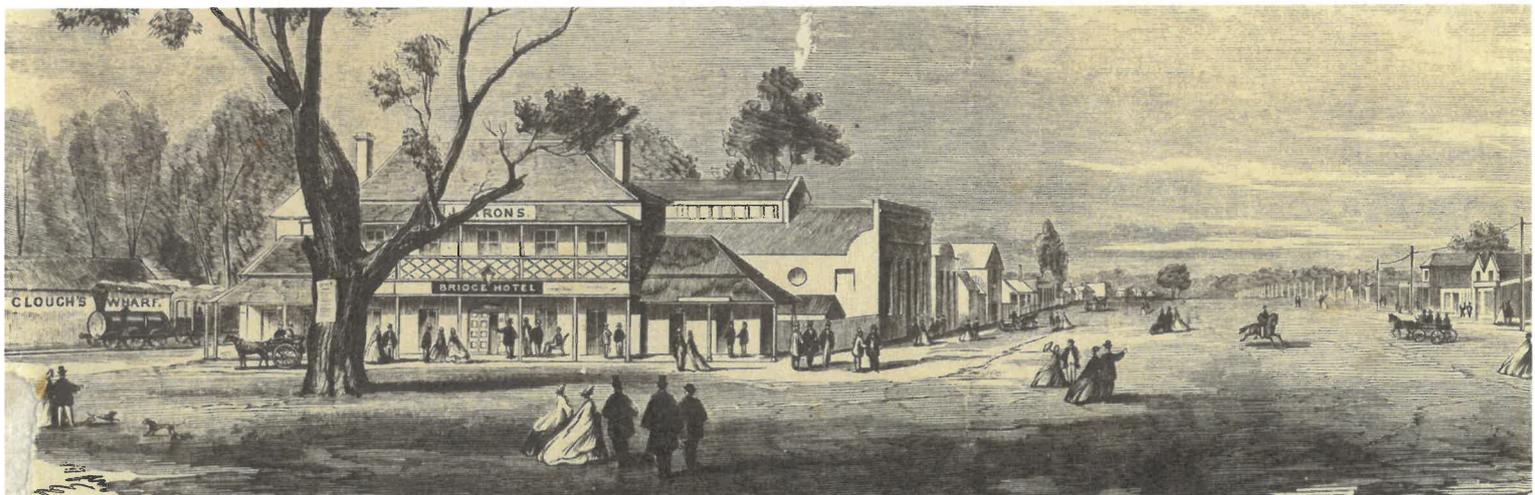
The licence was cancelled, however and the building purchased about 1920 by local draper Hart Hicks and used as the family residence.

It was sold to R.J. Evans in June 1936.

In the 1970's, the old building was purchased by the City of Echuca as the focal point in the restoration of the historic buildings still remaining in the wharf area, and although it no

longer can offer accommodation due to the loss at some time of the wing once flanking the Esplanade - can offer superb dining facilities on its ground floor.

The Port of Echuca restoration would have been useless had this wonderful old building been demolished as was its neighbouring St. George's Hall - in the 1950's.



# EHS 2026 Calendars

Our Calendars are all gone.

Thank you to everyone who purchased one.

A huge thank you to our sponsors below.



**Michael Dixon Engineering**  
7 Murrumbidgee Drive Echuca VIC 3564  
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## Calendar 2026

Coming General Meetings:

**12 March**

**9 April**

**17 May**

**11 June**

Start 5pm @ Research Centre

Executive Meetings:

**4 March**

**1 April**

**6 May**

**3 June**

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](mailto:eh.soc@bigpond.com) or [mawilson85@gmail.com](mailto:mawilson85@gmail.com)



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