

*Tumbarumba, Mundaroo, Jingellic, Munyang, Bago* - our Upper Murray and South Western Slopes home abounds with voices that confirm and preserve the spirit of the land custodians past. The area has indeed always been a fine place to live, a special place where for millennia the Wolgalu guarded the ancient pathways through the land to places of significant gathering and celebration.

In 1824 Hume, Hovell and their six assigned convicts often travelled such pathways and rested near Tumbarumba on their way to the Southern Coast.

These very pathways became the paths of invasion as exploration, sheep, cattle, a grab for land and inevitable settlement disrupted the lives of the ancients. Commissioner Bingham by 1839 visited Tumbarumba Station where 500 cattle and almost 13 000 sheep were declared for taxing. Some 30 people were employed tending even more sheep at nearby Mannus. The white invasion was irreversible.

The following year Macarthur and Riley with two convicts and Aboriginal guides brought Strzelecki this way en route to the highest peak on Munyang, to change it forever into Kosciuszko.

Gold! Gold! became the force of change from 1855. Tumbarumba's creeks still show the scars of the alluvial miners while we proudly proclaim the ingenuity of our own G T Heinecke's patent hydraulic elevator a device that radically increased the treatment of the wash. Sluice mining demanded large quantities of timber for tail race boxing. A lasting industry was born utilising the fine stands of Alpine Ash in our magnificent forested ranges. More recently native timber harvesting has been almost superseded by a thriving softwood plantation industry.



1859 was a special year - Assistant Surveyor Fisher imposed straight lines to formalise the array of tracks and races that was Tumbarumba. Miners and itinerants became citizens and basic necessities were no longer considered sufficient. Associations, clubs, schools, churches, the law and other government instrumentalities followed in surprisingly quick succession. There were hiccoughs though, none grabbing national attention more than the murder of Sergeant Maginnity by bushranger Dan Morgan in June 1864. These were still pioneering times.



The Closer Settlement movement and changes to squatting rules changed our landscape yet again as stations and runs became small farms, a larger population with more intensive agriculture. Dairy, pork, rabbiting, peas and potatoes all had their day and demanded supporting infrastructure.

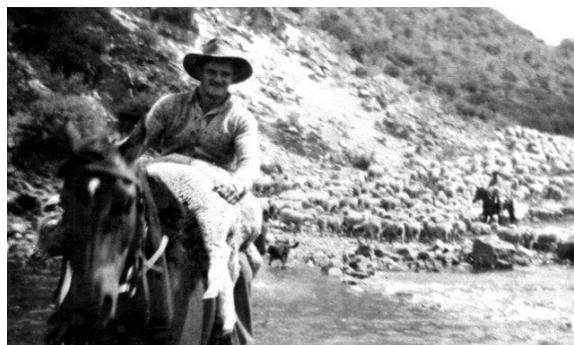


Hidden in the foothills there came a call for better access to the wider world. Roads improved but ever so slowly and Tumbarumba farmers saw the need for connection to the expanding rail network. This flirtation was however brief, the planning and building taking almost as long as the period of operation of the Wagga to Tumbarumba line (1921-1976). A legacy has been left however for future recreational development and the *Downfall* section remains a marvel of engineering and labouring tenacity.

War takes its toll on any community and many Tumbarumba men, women and their families paid full price especially in World War One. A postscript to both World Wars changed our character again with several large properties being resumed and divided for soldier settlement.

A bane to rate collectors but a boon to our environment, much of Tumbarumba Shire is covered by State Forest and National Park. From National Chase (1906) to State Park (1944) and Kosciuszko National Park (1967) identity and use of the area evolved. The Bogong moth hunting lands of ancient times became lush summer grazing for sheep and cattle brought to the high country along the same ancient pathways.

As the importance of conservation was recognised grazing was wound back and stopped. At the same time the Snowy Hydro Scheme altered forever the natural water flow, sending much of it back to 'our' side of the range. Snowy Hydro works opened this once inaccessible wilderness area and today it is very much a recreational and conservation asset. Pushing roads and pipelines into the wilderness did solve one long-standing mystery. The *Southern Cloud* lost with eight passengers and crew in March 1931 was found after twenty-seven years by Tom Sonter a young Snowy Scheme carpenter out for a Sunday walk.



And so it is today that the jet liners overfly Tumbarumba to and from state and national capitals, but Tumbarumba is by no means out of the way. We have become a dynamic thriving centre – rich in history, with much cultural, sporting, industrial activity - and world recognised viticultural development - yes undeveloped in some ways – but that's how we citizens and our visitors like it.

Ron Frew 2014

Photographs: GT Heinecke and his jet elevator - Jack Arnold, Hussell and Gaylard mill - Tumbarumba Historical Society, Morgan shoots Maginnity – Illustrated Sydney News 17 Aug 1864, Lower Bago school – Gail Arnold, Railway construction - Tumbarumba Historical Society, Tom Sonter at Southern Cloud wreck and sheep crossing the Tooma River - Rex & Ursula O'Brien.