

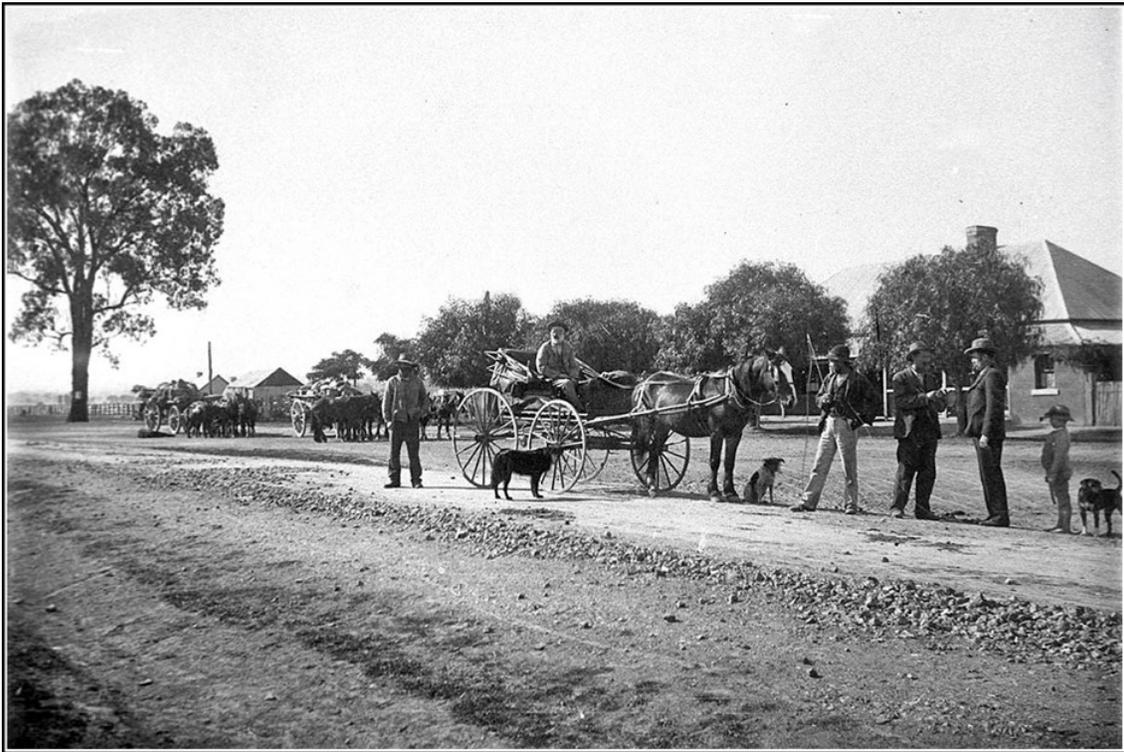
## Bowna Village

*A condensed version of an article researched and written by Albury journalist and historian, Howard Jones in 1989.*

Bowna, a village of about 150 people, was on the Albury-Sydney road on the Mullengandra Creek where it joined the Twelve Mile Creek. The site was drowned by the rising waters of Lake Hume in 1933. The further raising of the dam level in the 1950s flooded further land.<sup>1</sup>

White settlement began in the Border District in 1835, and a small Bowna Station was later formed between the Table Top and Cumberoona stations. Bowna Station was absorbed in Cumberoona Station when Henry Calder sold Cumberoona early in 1859 to John Hore with 1500 cattle and about 50 horses for £12,000.

A village was mapped in the 1850s and sales of surrounding allotments began in mid-1858, mostly adjoining the Mullengandra Creek and to the east of the Twelve Mile Creek. A parish map records 26 such sales in 1858, but development was very slow. A further sale of 21 two acre town lots occurred in October, 1880, at upset prices of £2 per lot. Bowna acquired a Catholic church in 1865, a National School in 1865, a Presbyterian church in 1866, a post office in 1868 and a police station at an unknown date. Bowna was officially proclaimed a village on March 20, 1885.



The main street through Bowna, looking towards the White Horse Hotel.

The man in the sulky is the licensee, William Boundy.

On the left near the large tree is the blacksmith shop of Milton Daley.

**WHITE HORSE HOTEL:** Probably the earliest substantial building was the *White Horse* Hotel, at the junction of the Sydney Rd and the Upper Murray or Wymah road and near the spot where a road to Table Top crossed the Mullengandra Creek. It was built in late 1858. An Albury builder and

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<sup>1</sup> Originally known as 'The Sydney Road,' the Hume Highway went north of Albury through Bowna, but now skirts to the north and west around the area flooded by the Hume Weir about fifteen kilometres north of Albury.

undertaker, John Hunter Kirkpatrick, opened it as licensee on January 1, 1859. Kirkpatrick moved to Bowna from Albury, where he was one of three contractors who built St Matthew's Church.

The *White Horse* was a single-story brick building with an iron roof, plus weatherboard staff rooms, stables for 14 horses and 22 acres of grazing land. Royal Mail coaches called at the *White Horse*, giving it daily contact with Albury and Germanton (Holbrook). Mails were dispatched from Bowna to Wagra (Wymah), Maracket and Tooma twice weekly. Cobb and Co coaches ran from Bowna to the Upper Murray twice weekly.

Records of licensees after Kirkpatrick are incomplete but included A Baker (1881, 1883), W J Waite (1886), William Boundy (1886-1906), T P Rutzou (1911), J G Wigg, who moved from the Brocklesby Hotel early in 1914, William Murray (1920) and Norman McKenzie (1921).

Later the *Ivy* Hotel was built on the Albury side of the Twelve Mile Creek and in 1895 the licensee was Thomas Latham, in 1897 J Barwick, 1898 Alexander McDonald. After losing its licence, the *Ivy* became J Smithenbecker's Temperance Hotel by 1911.

PROPERTY AND POVERTY: Bowna never reached the size of the settlement envisaged in the "town map" prepared in the 1850s on a traditional grid pattern. The Sydney road was called Telegraph St, the telegraph lines from Sydney to Albury being completed in 1858. The map named many streets, some of which were never laid out or built upon.

An appalling example of a poverty-stricken household at Bowna was given in the *Wodonga Herald* newspaper in 1873. It reported on the accidental death of a drunken shoemaker, William Larkins, who was burnt to death when sleeping in front of the fireplace. A log had rolled off the fire and set his clothes alight, and his wife and lodger, both intoxicated, had been unable to save him. A reporter who attended the inquest at the house described it as a "dilapidated hovel, not fit to be used for a pig sty." While the inquest was being conducted at the house, the corpse lay on the floor and the children "half-starved and almost in a state of nudity were scrambling about over the corpse, roasting potatoes."



The Village Blacksmith

COACH STOP: A blacksmith's shop was the most important roadside establishment after the *White Horse* hotel and maintained mail and other coaches. A member of the McEachern family (who were well established in Albury) might have been an early blacksmith. Bowna had two blacksmiths, G Webster and W Waite, in 1882, as well as two shoemakers, J Drummond and J Meehan. A man called T H Hicks was a blacksmith in 1897 and invented the noted "Hicks' Poison Cart," the Hicks' fire cart and a "pom pom water cart."

Milton Daley, a renowned sportsman, was a blacksmith and wheelwright in 1911 and for many

years afterwards. He called himself an "agricultural implement maker and repairer, horse shoer and general blacksmith." His large shop to the north of the *White Horse* employed several men. Daley was agent for Hicks' fire fighting machines and H V McKay's farming implements. Daley was also an insurance agent.

G Palmer's Royal Mail passenger and parcels coaches between the Albury Hotel and the Criterion Hotel at Germanton (Holbrook) changed horses at John Betts' stables at Bowna. The Betts family occupied the first building on the left after north-bound coaches crossed the Twelve Mile Creek. This line ran well into the 20th century, at least to 1914, when the fare between Albury and Bowna was two shillings.

Francis Edward Fielder was the roadman in charge of the Bowna section for many years. He and his wife had 12 children. The family moved from their weatherboard home in Church St to Albury in 1912.

<p><b>G. PALMER'S,</b> ROYAL MAIL, PASSENGER and PARCELS COACHES, ALBURY and GERMANTON. COACHES leave MR. JAS. McNARN'S ALBURY HOTEL DAILY at 2.30 p.m. Leave GERMANTON 6 a.m., arriving at ALBURY 11 a.m. FARES: Albury to Bowna, 2/; to Mul- lengandra, 3/; to Woomargama, 4/; to Germanton, 5/. Looked Fares Extra.  BOOKING OFFICE: Albury Hotel, Albury; Criterion Hotel, Germanton.</p>
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CHURCHES: A Presbyterian minister, the Rev John Kennedy McMillan, of Beechworth, opened a "kirk" at Bowna on October 28, 1866. The Presbyterians allowed the Anglicans to hold services there as well, the Anglicans never proceeding to build their own church. Baptisms, marriages and funeral services were held at the church sheltered by big elm trees.

In 1933 the Lands Department resumed it, paying the church £465 for the brick shell. An organ given by the McEachern family of Albury, pews, pulpit and other items were kept for a new church at Table Top, together with some building materials and fencing. The last service was held in September, 1933, the last hymn being "O God Our Help In Ages Past."

A Catholic Church was built in 1865 of brick with pointed windows and had a fireplace and chimney. It reputedly cost £135 and was opened clear of debt. Two pine trees flanked the gates. In the early 1880s, a Miss Keogh kept a Catholic school opposite Patrick Mullavey's home *Avondale* at the town's northern end, but only six scholars were recorded in those years.

A cemetery<sup>2</sup> was divided among Anglican, Catholic, Wesleyan, Presbyterian and general sections with tiny portions for Independents and Jews.

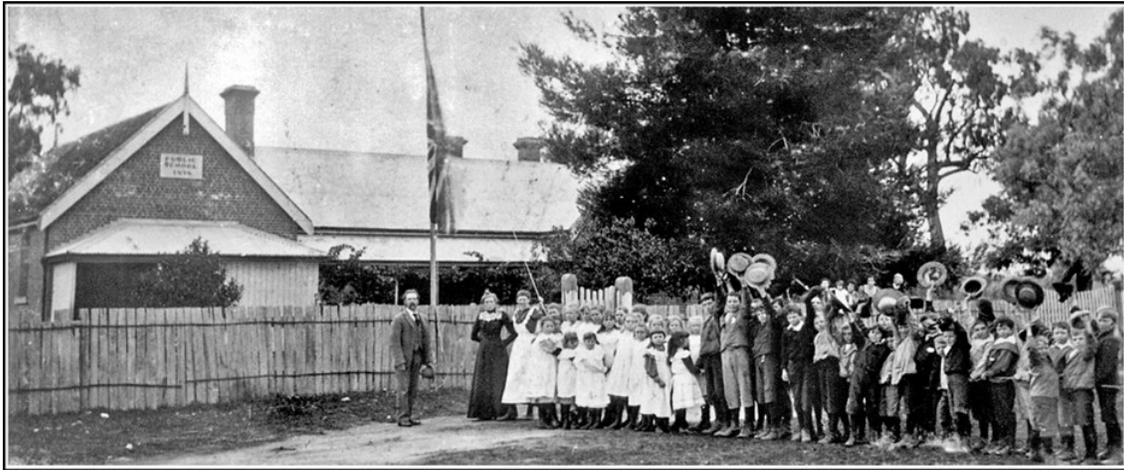
STORES: Bowna must have acquired a general store early on, and from 1878 until 1933 had two stores. The village also had a butcher (R Hatch in 1911), a baker, apiarists, S Pyke's flour mill (taken to Coolaman after the village was flooded) and a public hall. In March, 1874, The *Border Post* advertised under Bowna that "parties can have a meal at the Post Office Store, opposite Chant's shop; tea and coffee at all times, cocktails, lemonades, ginger beer, etc." From about 1906 to the end of Bowna, the stores were Goodfellow's and Norman's.

POST OFFICE: The post office was opened in 1868. Telegraphic communication was established early on and there was a telephone line to Wagra and Jingellic by 1898. The old post office stood at the corner of Telegraph and Wentworth streets. Remnants of a row of ossage orange trees to the south of the post office could still be seen when the Hume Weir was very low in 1988.

<sup>2</sup> The cemetery still survives above Hume Weir waters. In 1878, trustees for the Bowna cemetery were John Hore, Patrick Mullavey and Nicholas Devine.

Undoubtedly the biggest crowd puller at Bowna was the annual raceday, Easter Monday. The Bowna Turf Club had its own racecourse north of the village, on the eastern side of the highway. Officials in 1914 were: President, T Plunkett; secretaries, Charles Mullavey & Alf Mangan; stipendiary steward, C Wilkinson, Albury.

SCHOOL: Bowna Primary School was opened in 1865 and was replaced by a brick building in 1878. Old photographs show a substantial brick building, probably including the teacher's residence. It was sited between the Catholic and Presbyterian churches. The Union Jack was occasionally hoisted on the flagpole.



Bowna Primary School – Hoisting the Flag

SPORT AND SOCIAL LIFE: Tennis courts, football ground and cricket pitch were located to the east of the village. Bowna Bicycle Club held events on the sports ground, a 1905 meeting attracting riders from Albury, Wodonga, Culcairn, Gerogery and Holbrook, as well as Bowna. The hall (also known as the School of Arts or Mechanics Institute) at the corner of Telegraph and Mitchell Sts held dances right up to 1933. A “Big Military Dance” was held there in April that year with buses running from Albury. Dance music was supplied by Mrs D Mullavey, Miss Coleman and Miss Jenkins, and the ladies provided supper. A World War I honor roll from Bowna was relocated outside the Mullengandra hall after the destruction of Bowna. Part of the hall was also moved to the Mullengandra hall.

POLICE: Bowna's brick police station, diagonally opposite the *White Horse* hotel was built in the summer of 1895, but police were stationed in the village before that. The empty station was bought by Clem Keogh to demolish in 1933 after the last policeman, Constable Griffin and his wife moved to Walbundrie.

THE DROWNING: Plans made before World War I for a big dam on the Murray River proposed a site at the Hore family's Cumberoona Station, just upstream from Bowna. In 1918, the various Governments decided to build the dam nearer Albury because of the suitable line of granite running across the valley at that point. Cumberoona Station was drowned just the same. Gold was worked on the Cumberoona Station at the turn of the century and the crushing machine could be heard for miles around.

SUBMERGED ROAD AT BOWNA; Many People Disregard Notices; MAN DRIVES RIGHT INTO WATER  
Reporting to the Hume Shire Council, which met yesterday, the Engineer, Mr W A Welsh, stated that during the early part of this week, part of the old Sydney road via Bowna, became submerged with the raising of the weir wall at Hume Reservoir.

The Bowna bridge and approaches are now covered to a depth of several feet and traffic should

proceed via the Wagga road and Table Top deviation. Temporary road signs and "road closed" notices have been erected on the 10 mile hill and 15 chain reserve directing traffic via alternative routes, but notwithstanding these limitations and Press advertisements, people still endeavour to traverse the closed route.

The President, Cr B P Bell, said that everything possible had been done to prevent people getting into trouble. Drivers of cars and lorries had rushed through brush barriers and took no heed of the warnings. "During last week," said the President, "so many people attempted to go along this closed road that I came to the conclusion public mentality was much lower than I thought it was."

The President added that a man with a truck ran into the water on the road in broad daylight. He said he did not see it until he reached it.

The Main Roads Board is to be written to asking that signs be supplied for junction roads for the information of tourists and travellers generally.

*Border Morning Mail, September 9, 1933*

The former Bowna bridge was left intact in 1933. An attempt was made to demolish it in 1968 when the Hume Weir water was low, but the work was stopped by rising waters. North Albury Apex demolished it on May 17, 1981. The Hawksview-Talmalmo bridge which allowed Bowna residents to cross the Murray, was demolished in May, 1932, after the Bethanga Bridge was opened.

*Willow Park*, then home of the Plunketts, survived the first drowning, but was evacuated when the dam rose in the 1950s. Two palm trees and a water tower mark the site at the village's northern edge.

A "Back to Bowna" was held in May, 1985, when the Hume Weir was low. About 21 people who had actually lived in the village turned up, most of them in their 70s and 80s. Another was held in May, 1988 when Claude Mullavey, at 86, was one of the oldest former residents to return.

*A poem entitled "Bowna" was written in 1934 by J C McLean, not long after the village was flooded:*

Ah! what memories 'twill sever;  
Stirring tales of great endeavor,  
When the flood shall close forever,  
O'er its one-time busy street;  
For the waters of the Weir are  
Creeping nearer, ever nearer,  
And old Murray's waters clear, are  
Slowly lapping Bowna's feet.  
  
Strong men here would once foregather;  
Sweating horses flecked with lather;  
P'raps intoxicated rather,  
(These men rode and drank like hell);  
And they'd talk of sheep and cattle,  
To the glasses' merry rattle.  
Or recount some hard fought battle,  
At the old *White Horse* Hotel.

Names like Plunkett, Hore and Conness,  
Are a few that dawn upon us,  
Sharing equally the honors,  
With Mullavey and Devine;  
Keogh and Ogilvie are others,  
And of course the Coleman brothers.  
These, with sisters wives and mothers,  
Made the Riverina shine.  
Now, hens, wild duck and plover,  
O'er deserted ruins hover,  
But the water cannot cover,  
One small hallowed spot, where still,  
Those who claim our admiration,  
Pioneers who made our nation,  
Far above the inundation,  
Sleep death's sleep upon the hill.