

School Prayer

Dear God, we thank you for health of mind and body, and for the opportunity, in school, to develop these gifts. Fill our hearts with your grace, so that growing in wisdom and goodness, we may become worthy citizens of our nation.

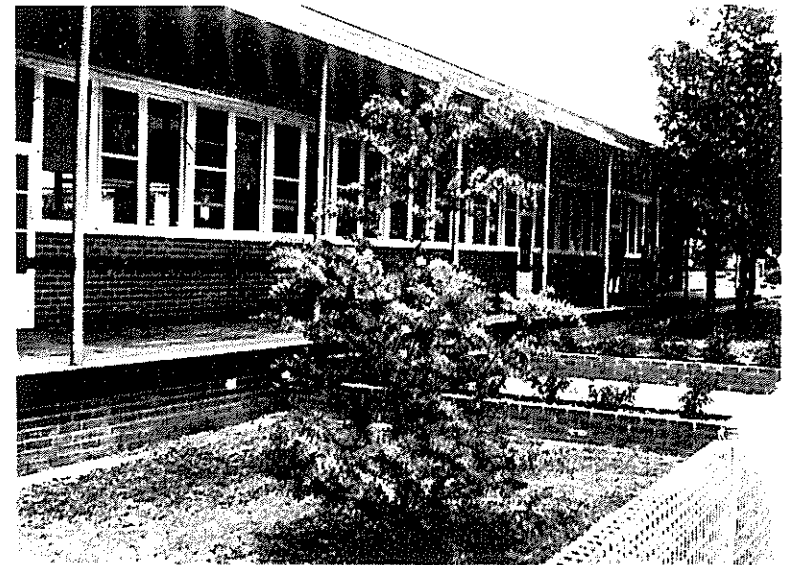
School Song

Ashford, we will honour always,
As we travel o'er life's highway,
This the motto for our school days,
Ashford, play the game.
Blue and gold, our flag is flying
Over us, as we are striving,
On freedom, God, and right relying,
Forward on we march.

Rolling hills surround us,
The Severn ripples near us,
Staunch and true in all we do,
Comrades all around us.
As the years go rolling by,
We'll remember ideals high,
Let our voices reach the sky.
Ashford, play the game.

In our classes, on the field,
We'll stand strong and never yield,
We've emblazoned on our shield,
Ashford, play the game.
Sons and daughters of our homeland.
For its rights, we'll ever stand,
People of a great and free land,
Faithful to our queen.

Ashford 1868 - 1968



Ashford Central School, 1968. Secondary Block — viewed from corner of Albury and Martyn Streets.

ASHFORD CENTRAL SCHOOL

1968

PRINCIPAL

R. A. Prowse, B.A.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Mr. T. R. Burke

ASSISTANTS

INFANTS : Mrs. M. Dennis, Miss C. Long, Miss P. Naughten, Miss P. Harrington.

PRIMARY : Mrs. C. Hills, Mr. P. March, Mr. J. Clay, Mr. M. Dennis, Mr. T. R. Burke.

SECONDARY : Miss M. Wait, Mrs. R. Prowse, Mr. T. Weaver, Mr. P. Nelson, Mr. D. Beal.

Department of Education North West Directorate.

DIRECTOR

Mr. L. A. Weaver, M.A., M.Ed.

DIRECTORATE SECONDARY INSPECTOR

Mr. M. Delaney, B.A., M.Ed.

DISTRICT INSPECTOR, INVERELL INSPECTORATE

Mr. K. J. Burns, B.A., M.Ed.

Parents and Citizens' Association Executive

PRESIDENT :

Mr. R. F. Kneipp

VICE PRESIDENTS

Mrs. Mallise, Mrs. Brown.

SECRETARY

Mr. A. Straw

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

Mr. K. Rogan

TREASURER

Mr. S. Pearce

Editorial

The compilation of this booklet has been a demanding, yet rewarding task. It represents the combined efforts of many people and reflects the interest of pupils, both past and present, parents, citizens and teachers. No claim of absolute reliability is made for any of the information presented but every effort has been made to authenticate the material used.

The task has been rewarding in as much as the compilers have seen the light of memory shine in old eyes and the light of aroused interest shine in younger eyes. Perhaps this slim volume may serve to arouse further interest which may even lead to the formation of an Ashford Historical Society!

The present is the product of the past and nothing which has been, or is being achieved, in Ashford today could have been possible without those influences, both direct and indirect, which have been our heritage. We dedicate this History to those who have paved the way, and offer it to those who will follow, as a brief record of "Our First Hundred Years".

MESSAGE

. . . . from the Hon. C. B. CUTLER, E.D.,
M.L.A., Deputy Premier and Minister for
Education and Science.

Education has come a long way since Ashford Central School was established in 1868, under the name of Ashford Public School. Today the rate of growth of education in N.S.W. is without parallel in this State's history. The number of pupils, teachers and schools is higher than ever before.

This year we are spending about \$322 million on education compared with only about \$70,000 a hundred years ago.

Schools such as Ashford Central School have had a most important role in the development of education in this State.

Along with 56 other schools who celebrated their centenaries this year Ashford has helped lay the education traditions of N.S.W.

Unfortunately, I am not able to be with you to join in your centenary celebrations but I do hope that as many old boys and girls of the school as possible will attend.

I take this opportunity of wishing the best success to all those concerned with the school's centenary celebrations and my best wishes for the future.

MESSAGE

. . . from the Member for Tenterfield, MR. J.
C. BRUXNER, M.L.A.

I am pleased to be associated with the Centenary of the Ashford Central School. 100 years is indeed an important milestone in the comparatively short life of our Nation.

Our pioneers, who first established the town of Ashford, and its school, would be gratified to see the progress that has been made ever since.

We must continue to provide the best possible education so that our young people may be equipped to take their place in the world of tomorrow.

Plans are already in hand for further developments at the school, which will follow the work already carried out, and will cater for the expected increase in enrolments following completion of the Pindari Dam, and its consequent effect on the town of Ashford and district.

I offer my sincere congratulations to the Principal, his staff, the parents and pupils, both past and present, on the celebration of this centenary.

MESSAGE

. . . . from MR. L. A. WEAVER, M.A., M.Ed.,
Director of Education, North West Directorate.

A COMMUNITY AFFAIR

Education these days is almost a universal topic. Seldom does a day pass without public reference in the press, radio, television, all powerful and influential mass media of communication.

At the same time it is difficult to find any two persons who agree upon what education may mean and the processes by which it may be said to operate.

Even allowing for this, however — that education means different things to different people — there is general agreement that the task of equipping our children, and even adults, for facing up to the demands of a complex world has a degree of urgency about it. In all, then, public interest in education is at an all-time high and there is every reason to expect it to remain so.

Coming nearer to home, any observer will identify a similar strength of interest and involvement in the community of Ashford and that is why so many hopes are centred upon the school which in turn is to be commended for its ready acceptance of responsibility and the discharge of functions far beyond the strict line of duty.

Best wishes for continuing successes in the years ahead.

MESSAGE

. . . . from MR. K. J. BURNS, B.A., M.Ed.,
District Inspector of Schools, Inverell.

After a century of education in Ashford there are many significant and worthwhile changes to be observed and considered carefully in retrospect and under present conditions so that further progress may be ensured.

Over the years many trends in education have made their marks on the pattern of life in Ashford and surrounding districts. Primary educational practices have been varied almost beyond recognition of the original. Secondary education, once started, barely managed to survive at first, but after several shifts of emphases has settled, and now is assured of continued growth and success.

Implementation of modern ideas by competent teachers working with interested children in well designed and attractive accommodation has inspired confidence and guaranteed the provision of more and increasingly challenging courses of instruction from this time forward. Ordinary, credit and advanced courses at School Certificate standard are now available and a wider range of choice will be encouraged when pupil enrolment steadily grows and new buildings are erected to cater for demands and needs.

The development of closer ties between community and school and, in particular, the continuance of support for secondary education in Ashford, must serve to act as a spring for hope and as aims worthy of people who are proud to know that, after a century, educational aspirations and policies are stronger and more likely to be realised now, and in the immediate future, than at any time in the dim or not so distant past.

DISTRICT SCHOOLS

In addition to the Ashford School, numerous other schools were established in the area from time to time. Most were established on station properties to cater for the owner's children and for the children of shepherds and other employees. There is some evidence to suggest that one of the earliest in the area may have been established about seven miles west of Ashford between the Wallangra and Limestone Roads for the children of shepherds on Toolooka Station, but no definite details are available.

Ashford Public School 1868 to Ashford

Central School, 1968

When a new school was established one hundred years ago there had to be evidence of public support for the school to be sanctioned by the Council of Education. This evidence was usually supplied through a public meeting. But before the public meeting was held there was generally one keen and progressive individual, with the cause of education at heart, who provided the first initiative

From the records it cannot always be ascertained who this person was but sometimes the constant appearance of his name in correspondence identified him. Sometimes he was a local land-owner, sometimes the parson; in Ashford's case it was Mr. William Cornwalle Elliott, who became the school teacher.

A long letter from him, dated 25th June, 1867, provides some interesting information. He wrote following a meeting in the Court House on 18th June, 1867, at which it was decided that Mr. Elliott, who kept a private school in the town of Ashford, should write to the Council asking for assistance in starting a public school. The private school had been opened on the 8th April.

"The only building at that time obtainable was a small four-roomed, bark-covered hut in which ten scholars, all that it could accommodate have been regularly taught."

The Inspector, Mr. W. McIntyre, reported favourably on the proposition. The teacher was "a sober man" but as the Inspector did not know about his qualifications he suggested he spend a month at the Inverell school to learn about school management and records.

Mr. Elliott's problem concerned a possible examination for which he might have to sit and he explains (in English which might well have gained him a pass in that subject):

"My scholars, barely able to read, stumbling painfully through the sixth line of the multiplication table and dangling on their pot hooks, do not require much knowledge of the higher branches of learning on the part of their teacher."

On 1st July, 1868, he again excuses himself, *"Living in a state of absolute isolation at Ashford, and possessing neither maps, appliances nor any of your school books, I felt, after a fortnight's attendance at the Inverell School, that my examination would be a mockery and a farce."*

On 30th November, 1868, Mr. Elliott acknowledged that his Grade III Certificate had been received. On 21st December he reported an enrolment of 20 and an average attendance of 15. An attempt to get his salary increased does not appear to have been successful but the letter reveals that Mrs. Elliott taught sewing and music.

Equipment and books valued at £1.17.2 and ordered on 22nd May, 1869, were supplied at the end of June and sent by the Hunter River Steam Navigation Company on 4th August. They reached Mr. Elliott on 2nd December. Things did not move very fast a hundred years ago!

Mr. Inspector Jones report, in September, 1869, said, in part,

- "1 The schoolhouse is a slab structure, commodious, eligibly situated and in fair condition. The playground is without fence, out-offices or water and the furniture is rough and inadequate. There is a tolerable supply of working materials.
- 2 As regards the appearance and behaviour of the school pupils, the aspect of the schoolroom and the character of the discipline and school routine, the moral tone is passable.
- 3 The prescribed subjects are taught with tolerable earnestness and ability, but the instruction is defectively regulated.
- 4 The mental culture and general proficiency of the pupils is moderate."

On 6th January, 1870, the Inspector (Mr. Jones) wrote to the Council about Mr. Elliott's removal to Warialda and asked about a male teacher to replace him. The reply is indicated :

"No male teachers available. There are several single females if they will answer."

Mr. Jones reluctantly agreed but insisted that the school obtain:
"A female teacher of tolerable attainments and good disciplinary power, a very requisite qualification of one who will have the control of bush boys and girls of advanced ages."

But the Local Committee met on the 3rd February, 1870, and Mr. William Slack wrote about the position. The Miss Donnellan appointed had married and there appears no evidence in the correspondence that she went to the school. But on 21st June Mr. Slack wrote again to say that Mr. William Lees had been appointed. The Inspector labels him "tolerably competent."

A letter of 19th September from Mr. Lees reported an enrolment of 24 and on 31st October, 1870, acknowledges receipt of £12.0.0 for a quarter's salary.

But his stay was to be brief. A meeting of the Local Committee on 13th February, 1871, "thought proper to dismiss Mr. Wm. Lees from the office of Teacher to the above school for being drunk and disorderly." Notice of the appointment of Mr. Samuel Horan was given at the same time. The Council concurred.

Attendances seem to have dropped below the requisite figure of 20 and it appears that Mr. Horan was not able to recover the situation. Mr. Slack wrote again on 6th November to indicate the appointment of Mr. Robert Bevan Jones from 16th November, 1871.

Mr. Jones' son, G. A. Jones, later became M.L.A. for this district.

More books and equipment reached the Ashford School on 1st June, 1872, by the Australasian Steam Navigation Company and via Mr. Jaques at Muswellbrook. Their value was £1.17.9 and the freight 18/3.

Mr. R. B. Jones, the teacher, wrote to explain why his attendances were down in October, namely the death of a parent of four of his most regular pupils (Mr. John Ezzy, Publican), asking that his salary be not cut from £4 to £3. The Council made no deduction.

Then Mr. R. B. Jones wrote again to the Council on the subject of having closed the school in September and not having submitted proper returns. He complained of a parcel lying at Cobb and Co's. office at Inverell for which he was expected to pay freight, says of the 27 pupils that 19 were "Gratuitous Scholars" "and of the remaining 9 several only paid 6d a week."

"During the 22 months I held the situation Ashford Prov. School Teacher I have involved myself in debt to the extent (sic) of upwards of £25.0.0. besides expending on my family the proceeds of labour in a garden."

The attendance in 1876 was 8.5 so that it is not surprising to learn that in 1877 the school closed. But in 1878 it had reopened with an attendance of 10.7.

For some time after 1878 Ashford School led a spasmodic existence, without a sufficient enrolment to guarantee its continuous operation.

Honorary Secretary of the Local Committee, Mr. Joseph Slack, and a prominent citizen of the township, made numerous efforts over this period to keep the school open. In January, 1878, he wrote to the Council of Education inquiring about repairs to the school. He asked if the Council would grant sufficient funds if the school premises were transferred to the Local Committee, but it was felt that the attendance did not warrant the expenditure.

Mr. N. D. Bourke arrived in July, 1879, to take up his appointment as teacher, but on finding the building in poor repair, he declined to accept the appointment. He wrote:

"I was shown the School, which is a most miserable hole, the roof being perforated with apertures resembling those of a lantern, but much larger." — "The School Registers and Maps are destroyed by the rain that has fallen on them through the roof. Were there sufficient number of children — which there is not — they could not be taught in the buildings."

Several reports seem to conflict with Mr. Bourke's statement.

In November of the same year the Inspector reported :

"At Ashford the school house is in excellent repair. It is a large building in which tuition of about 30 children could be comfortably conducted."

Without Mr. Bourke as teacher, the school was closed, and Mr. Slack continued his efforts to have the school re-opened. The following are extracts from his letters to the Council : (in 1880).

"In the meantime we wrought and sought and begged and prayed and hoped that a teacher would be sent, but all in vain and at length we came down from the Mountain of hope and settled in the cold dark Valley of despondency and despair . . ."

"That glorious day is rolling on, that righteous work is now begun when the balance will be held in an even hand and the children of the poor in the Bush will get even a bit of the hundreds of thousands of pounds spent upon Education in the Colony as well as the children of the Rich and the Mighty who live in costly homes in and around Sydney . . ."

"Now it comes to this that if our poor children are left out in the cold to perish for lack of knowledge while the children of the Rich and the Mighty are receiving an expensive Classical education at our cost, we then are resolved and determined that we shall neither shoulder a Rifle or draw a Sabre if your great Superb buildings should be demolished and left a heap of ruins . . .

"P.S. Please give this a place in the waste paper basket and not in the fire."

In 1880 an inspector gave the following report of children residing within one mile of Ashford :

Names :		Names :	
Durman	= 3	Slack	= 4
Langworthy	= 2	New	= 3
Richards	= 3	Moyse	= 3
Booth	= 3	McDonald	= 6
		Plus 8 near Ashford	

This gave a total of 27 children. There was clearly a need for the school to be re-opened.

Mr. Slack's efforts were rewarded, for in November, 1880, Mr. Gillis was appointed as teacher. Mr. Slack reported the event as 'causing the hearts of the parents and guardians of the children to rejoice with exceeding great joy.' He also wrote —

"We all hope and pray that the blessing we now enjoy (the School) may be long continued unto us, and then the dear children in after life will have cause to bless your bones in the grave."

However small attendance remained a problem and the school was again closed from October, 1881 to July, 1883 when Mr. J. H. Cook arrived as teacher.

In the same year the Inspector reported :

" . . . some children are seldom present two days a week . . . The population here is migratory and the school attendance has always been supplemented by children from other places."

Concerning Mr. Cook the Inspector wrote :

"The teacher is an old man. He is very dissatisfied with the school and he is very anxious for removal. He appears to have no interest in the work. Neither the teacher nor the school is popular."

By 1886 Mrs. Rebekah Elliott was appointed. In that year repairs to the roof, flooring boards and window shutters were carried out.

On 30th August, 1887, Mr. J. Begley was appointed as teacher.

On 2nd December, 1887, a Petition was received by the Department of Public Instruction from the parents of the school children requesting a new building. They wrote —

" . . . and this being a mineral district it is but reasonable to suppose that should the minerals which abound in this neighbourhood become developed (which there is every reason to believe will be the case) the town of Ashford must increase in population as a result. Limestone and coal of the first quality exist in inexhaustible quantities. There are also silver antimony and alum lodes all within a few miles of the town."

The petition was signed by Edward Naughton, William Slack, C. Slack, H. Marshall, S. M. Robertson, E. New; Mrs. H. M. Robertson, Sarah Carroll, Edward Booth, John Lubman, James Beckenstaff, Mrs. G. Booth, John Louff, Henry Moist, Arthur Merry and William Bryant.

The Inspector reported that it was improbable that a new lease of the present building could be obtained and that the existing building was erected with slabs and a bark roof and was without a chimney or water closet. As a result (it is believed) a small school building of one room 17 feet by 14 feet, was erected on a new site in Duff Street, for approximately £60.

In 1889 the problem of small attendance was still present. From July to October of that year the school was again closed but the inspector reported :

"It appears that the small attendance was due in some measure to the people's carelessness. They afterwards showed considerable anxiety to have the School re-opened with the result that work was commenced again about the middle of October."

By May of 1890 there were 23 on the roll with an average attendance of 20.1 and in August the school was converted to a Public School, with Miss Marion Fox taking temporary charge. By October the schoolroom had been ceiled and a 400 gallon water tank had been provided.

Miss Fox resigned in April, 1893, to be married and Mr. Harold Denshire was appointed to Ashford.

An application to enlarge the school was received in August, 1894 but the Inspector reported " . . . the prospect of any large increase of population at Ashford is very remote" and the application was declined. However two new forms were provided and the windows were repaired, and in September of 1895, a verandah six feet wide was erected along the southern end of the building. More furniture was provided, and repairs and painting were carried out.

The teacher, Mr. Denshire, was married in 1895 and accordingly rented a building as a teacher's residence. It was customary at this time for the Department to erect a building for this purpose but as the school was not considered large enough at present to warrant this, Mr. Denshire was given the annual rental of £20. By 1899 he had rented another building, made of sawn slabs and an iron roof, 250 yards from the school.

1897 seems to have been the turning point in the enrolment at Ashford. From this year the number of pupils attending the school began gradually to increase and moves were begun to have a new and larger school building erected.

In November, 1898, Mr. Thomas Beveridge wrote on behalf of the parents of the school children —

"It is quite impossible to pack the children into the school building and in consequence the teacher is compelled to draft his pupils outside and instruct them under the shade of the trees."



Bill Clifton (left) veteran of the Crimean War, who carted timber to build the school in 1901. Mr. Len Merry's father is pictured on the right.

In December 1898 the Inspector supported this statement :

"For more than twelve months the people of Ashford have been urging that the school accommodation there is insufficient. Correspondence which has taken place will show that while admitting the existing accommodation to be somewhat limited, I have no doubts of the permanence of the increased school population, and have advised delay. I have recently visited Ashford two or three times and have come to the conclusion that the prospects of the school not only demand increased accommodation but warrant a substantial expenditure in buildings."

As the existing building was badly lighted and inconvenient in other respects it was decided not to extend it, but to erect a new building. In September 1899 a tender of £134 was accepted from Mr. Joseph Thomas of Inverell. The old school site was retained but the new building was erected on two adjoining acres. Old Pound Yards were removed to make way for the new school. The building, with one room, was completed by 20th February, 1900. It measured 30 feet by 18 feet and was 11 feet high. New school furniture and a 600 gallon tank were provided. The fencing was completed by Mr. W. J. Knox for £23.18.0.



Ashford Public School — 1901. Some well known ex-pupils are Len Merry (3 rows from back, beside the tall girl in the white dress); Albert Bryant (half hidden behind the second boy from the left — front row); George New (5th from left — front row); Laban (Mick) New (6th from left — front row.)

By 1901 the new teacher, Mr. R. A. Peberdy, had arrived from Bora Creek, and he occupied the house rented by his predecessor.

In February, 1902, a school bell was erected at Ashford after Mr. Peberdy had written :

"Most of the parents live within hearing of a bell and it is my opinion that one would tend to improve the punctuality of the pupils, by enabling the parents to keep uniform time."

Mr. Peberdy applied to be transferred in 1904 on the grounds of ill health. The inspector in his report wrote :

"Mr. Peberdy is an earnest and capable teacher. He has done good work at Ashford."

Although his application for transfer was not successful, he was given an assistant teacher, Miss Mary Egan in June of 1905.

In the same year an inspector wrote :

"The question of providing a weathershed or verandah at Ashford School has long been a burning one in the district."

As a solution to this problem the local residents erected the framework of a weathershed 24 feet by 15 feet and the Department supplied Rubberoid for the roof.

By 1906 it was evident that the population of Ashford was increasing steadily. The accommodation provided by the school had begun to be inadequate. After an inspection of the school in June, 1906, it was reported :

"The necessity for increased accommodation was very evident. Many of the pupils had to use boxes for seating accommodation. The increased attendance is likely to be permanent as it is the result of fresh agricultural settlement in the vicinity, the tobacco growing industry making headway in lands formerly in pastoral occupation."

Thus in 1906 the building was extended by a length of twelve feet. The southern wall was re-erected and additional windows were supplied. The work was carried out by Mr. A. M. Howell at a cost of £48. The school was closed from 8th to 12th October to allow the work to be carried out, and the extensions were completed by November.

In April, 1907, a new assistant, Miss Ethel Lydon, came to Ashford from Newcastle. Mr. Peberdy himself was relieved temporarily by Mr. Herbert Fetherstone in November, 1907. In 1908 a new probationary assistant, Mr. William J. Perry, was appointed.

The establishment of a School of Arts in Ashford in 1909 reflects credit on the parents of the pupils. A local citizen, Mr. Gideon Langworthy, in applying for a portion of the school grounds for the building, wrote :

"At present we are without means or opportunities of mutual or self improvement except what is being carried on in the Public School Building in the form of a Debating Club and Mutual Improvement Society, held once a week during the cool months of the year."

"We are making an honest endeavour to help ourselves and our children. The men and women of the great tomorrow — but who at present are unable to help themselves."



Pupils of Ashford Public School — 1909. Teacher — Mr. Hayes.

As a result a small portion of one rood of the School reserve was given up for this purpose and it is presumed that School of Arts was erected in about 1909.

An extract from an inspector's report on Ashford in 1910 illustrates the needs of a country school at this time :

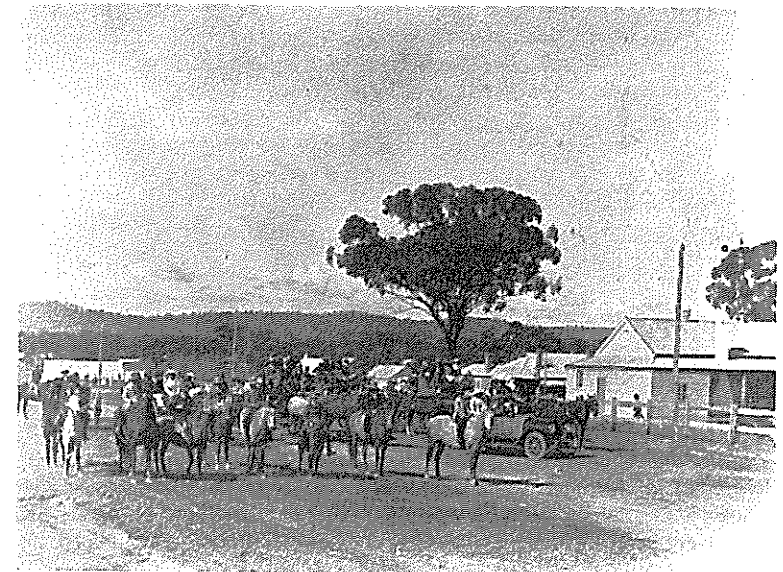
"Ashford is a remotely situated village 35 miles north of Inverell — on the Texas (Queensland) road. A few small Provisional Schools exist in the sparsely populated outlying parts of the locality, but Ashford is the only school of any size in an area of about 1,400 square miles. A vigorous, ambitious and highly self-respecting teacher is needed for this place. One who would inspire all that is best in these isolated children and who would, by fully realising the importance of his work and the dignity of his position, secure the respect and sympathetic assistance of the parents."



Ashford Public School — 1911-1912. The teacher at this period of the school's history was Mr. Hayes.

Mr. E. M. Hayes as head teacher made energetic efforts to improve the grounds of the school. By 1910 an orchard and gardens with peach trees, flowers and vegetables had been planted on the western side of the school ground. In addition, ornamental trees had been planted around the edge of the site.

By November, 1912, a verandah had been erected along the North West side of the school building and in 1913 the school was provided with a Teacher's residence in the grounds. The house, erected by Mr. Bevin and Mr. Brosie, cost £537.10.10 and was completed by December, 1913. Following representations from the Parents and Citizens' Association an area four by two chains was fenced around the house.



Empire Day 1913 — Martyn Street, showing school with hotel and Blacksmith's shop in background. Mr. Clarrie Cox was the owner of the car.

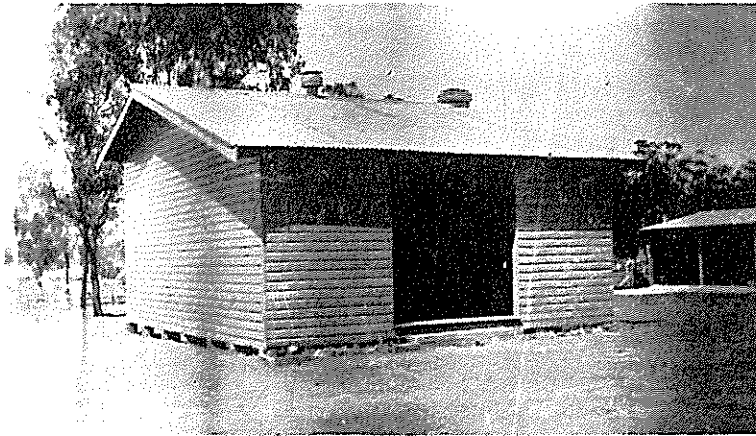
Efforts were made by the local residents to secure the extension of the railways system from Inverell to Ashford in 1917. The Ashford Railway League was formed for this purpose and its Committee and General Meetings were held in the school buildings.

In the same year a Bazaar was held in the school grounds to raise funds to purchase a sewing machine, new library books and a few pictures for the school.

A record drought in 1920, affecting the black soil on which the school was built, necessitated repairs on the school building and the re-inforcing of the brickwork. The painting of the school was carried out at the same time.

In 1921 the Ashford Branch of Oddfellows was formed and permission was given to hold meetings in the school buildings.

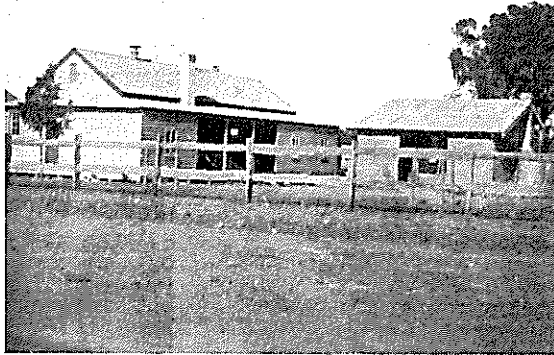
By 1927 the enrolment at Ashford School had increased to 90 pupils and the need for further accommodation was evident. Following representations made by the P. and C. to the Department and to Mr. A. M. McClelland, M.L.A., the building was extended and some new furniture was provided. The work was carried out by Mr. A. S. Fairweather for £409.10.0. Some classes were transferred to the local hall across the street until the alterations were completed in August.



The "Island Room" or "The Library" erected 1929.

By 1929, further accommodation was required and a one-room school building from the closed school at Sinclair was dismantled and re-erected at Ashford, sixteen feet from the other building.

Swimming classes were introduced at Ashford School in 1933. Conducted by the assistant, Mr. J. D'Arcy, who was an ex-student of the school, they were held in Frazer's Creek from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m. every Friday afternoon in the summer months.



Picture of Ashford School taken from Martyn Street in the year 1935. Before the new building was commenced.

By 1935 the head teacher was able to report an enrolment of 140 pupils. He stated :

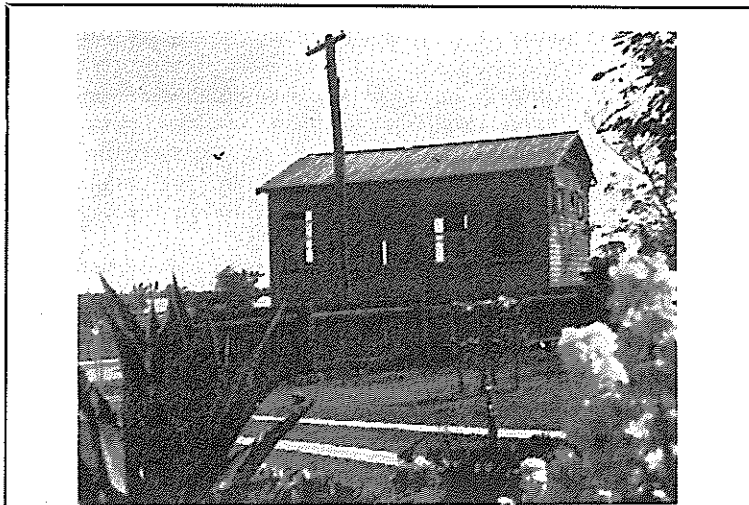
"I don't think there is any doubt that our enrolment will gradually increase rather than diminish. There are signs of a real urge for progress in the town. There are no unemployed in the town and business people are concerned that the future is assured."

Thus in March, 1935, plans for a new building were completed, a tender for £1,672 was accepted from Mr. H. C. Ditzell whose task was to remove the old building as well as build three new classrooms. A hat-room, staff-room, verandah, new weathersheds and out-buildings were also provided. The old building was bought by Mr. Drew to become two houses (one is at present occupied by Mr. Ben Thompson and the other is the caretaker's cottage at the Sawmill).

By May, 1939, extra desks were provided so that the school with its new buildings, was completely equipped with dual desks.



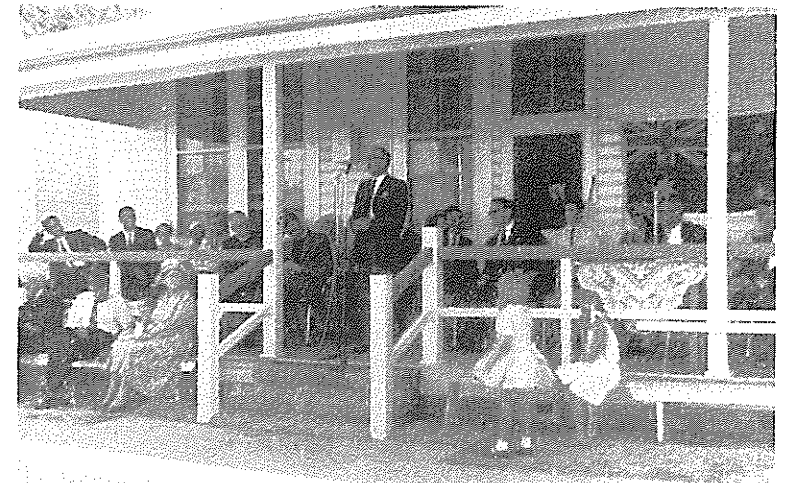
The Ashford School — 1946.



The old school building being moved from Bukkulla in 1966. Now modernised and used as Manual Arts Building.

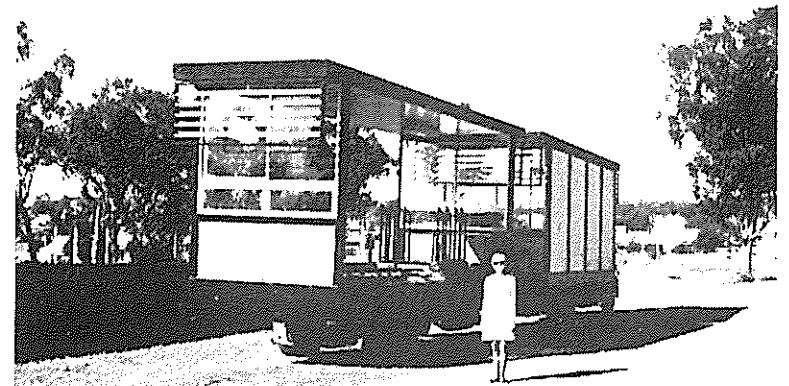


Ashford Central School Choir at the Official Opening of Extensions on 17th November, 1962.

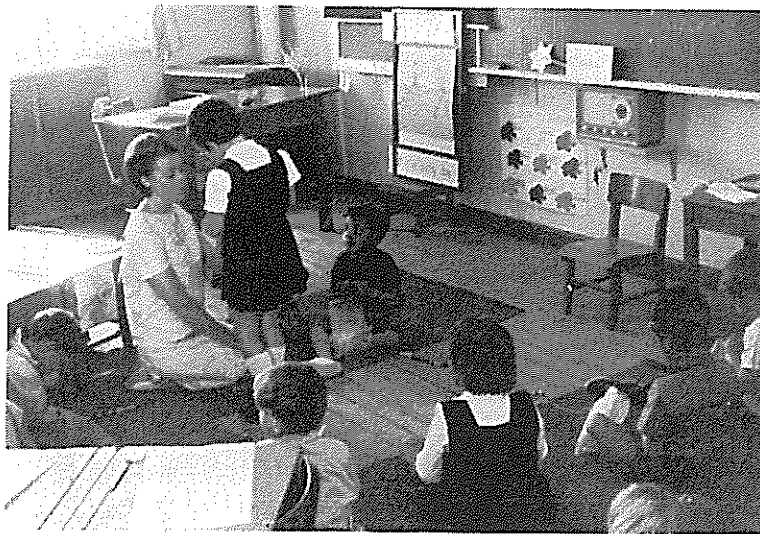


Official opening of extensions of the Ashford School on 17th November, 1962, by Mr. R. G. Jeffrey, Director of Education.

The school has grown steadily and improvements and extensions had been made in 1962 and 1966. The enrolment in 1968 is over 370 pupils, with a staff of fifteen teachers. The changes of the past 100 years have brought many problems but the future of Ashford Central School now seems assured.



1968 — The first of the modern demountable classrooms arrives.



The Kindergarten classroom — 1968. Teacher — Mrs. M. Dennis.

"INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING" PROGRAMME, 1968.

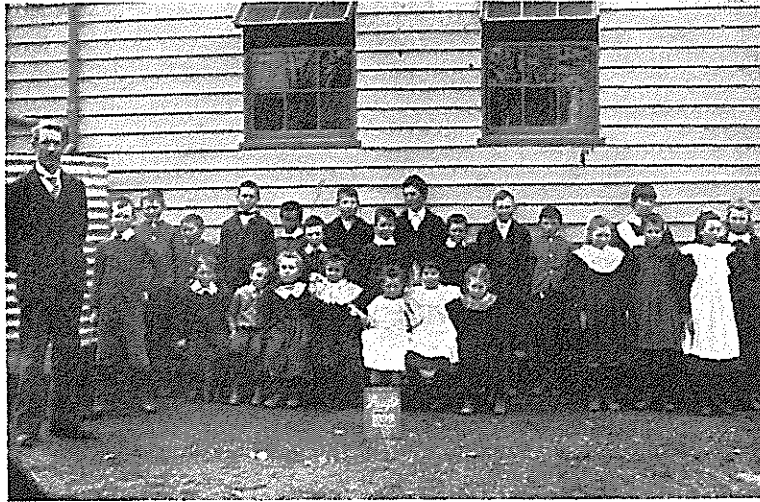
As 1968 marks the end of the first century of education in Ashford and also opens the era of communication with other countries by satellite, we are compelled to look towards a future where communication with other countries will be measured in fractions of a second and travel to other countries will be measured in fractions of a day. As distances shrink, contacts with other nations will increase and the necessity for national dignity, allied with tolerance and understanding towards others, will be greater than ever before. Thus, it was felt that a fitting programme for our Centenary Year would be one which stressed the aim of "Peace Through International Understanding".

Briefly, the programme requires the major study of two countries each month with appropriate classroom and outdoor displays. An International Garden has been constructed in the school grounds and the flags of the countries being studied are flown beside the Australian flag and the United Nations flag. Tape recorded contact has been made with children in other countries and it is felt that the pupils of this school are showing a new awareness of their responsibilities and the role they must play in a future marked by incredibly rapid change.

ASHFORD SCHOOL

List of Teachers

	DATE APPOINTED
W. C. Elliott	1868 ?
William Lees	March 13, 1871
Robert Bevan Jones	November 16, 1871
Thomas McCoy	April 8, 1874
Mrs. Elliott	probably 1875 ?
School closed ?	1877
Teacher unknown	1878-9
Mr. Gillis	November 1880
School closed ?	1882
J. H. Cook	July 22, 1883
Rebekah Elliott	November 8, 1886
J. Begley	August 30, 1887
Marian Fox	June, 1890
Harold Denshire	May, 1893
Robert Peberdy	February, 1901
Edward M. Hayes	January, 1908
Henry Cannon	October, 1911
S. J. Cooud	June, 1913
Sidney Hobson	May, 1917
A. M. Ritchie	April, 1921
Arthur Hearne	January, 1925
Vernon Truskett, (Relieving) ..	November, 1927 - December, 1927
Angus Kearns	December, 1937
James Gamble	January, 1939
Gerald Williams	December, 1943
James Dwyer	February, 1948
Thomas Foster	February, 1950
Fred Clarke	February, 1953
Keith Cameron	January, 1957
William Green	February, 1960
Ronald Prowse	February, 1965



Trelawney Provisional School — 1899.

TRELAWNEY SCHOOL :

A very early school was "Mr. Trelawney's School", begun in about 1896 on the then "Edgerton" Station. Mr. Trelawney, a Welshman, came to the area and offered himself as teacher, so the residents built a slab structure with dirt floor on the river just to the east of the present "Fernlea" homestead. The oldest living pupils are thought to be Mrs. O'Brien of Fraser Street, Ashford, and Mr. H. Voss of "Edgerton". The school was later moved into a new building at Wells' Crossing and the building was eventually moved to South Valley where it was finally closed down. The building was later moved to Rocky Creek for use as a wool shed. This school had its problems, commencing in 1896 when Mr. Henry Voss contracted diphtheria which eventually carried off children from several families. Further troubles followed when the teacher, Mr. Taubman, became ill and died and then a later teacher Mr. Denshire became ill and died while being taken to Glen Innes Hospital by horse and buggy. He was followed as a teacher by his brother, while a third brother was in charge of Ashford School.

ARTHUR'S SEAT :

When Ashford pupils moved into a new building in 1901, Mr. George New's father moved the old building to "Arthur's Seat" station for use as a school. Known ex-pupils were the Beveridges and Mr. Reg. Grove.

TIN TOT SCHOOL :

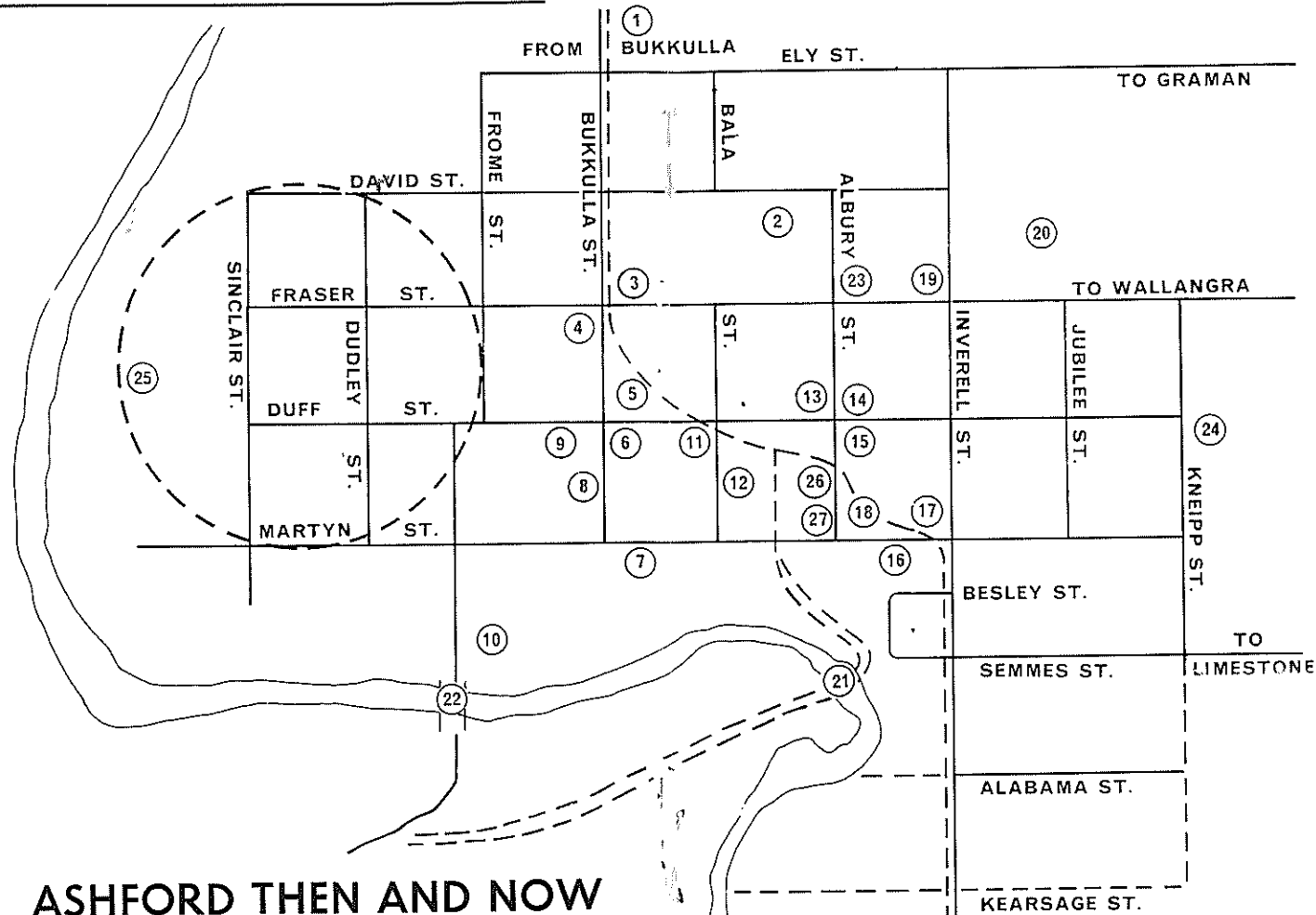
Known teachers were Mr. Fred Bendeich and Miss Marquardt (later Mrs. Andy Henderson) and some ex-pupils were the O'Gormans and the Irwins. It is reported that Mr. Bendeich lived at Ashford and rode his horse to school daily, even in times of flood.

FRAZER'S CREEK SCHOOL, GLEN IDOL SCHOOL, MOORLANDS SCHOOL :

Schools were established in this area quite early and the district is still served by a small school at Frazers Creek.

LIMESTONE SCHOOL :

Built in 1932 by voluntary labour, this school became a Public School in 1938 and eventually closed in 1941. The building was removed to Ashford and now forms part of the house owned by Mr. Edwin Watts at the western end of Fraser Street. The original 13 pupils were Jean, Doug. and Wal Grieves, Gladys, Win. and Margaret Merry, Edwin (Ted) and Keith Smith, May and Ron Hardy Frank and Arthur Maidens, and Ann Harris, with Miss A. Daley as teacher. A number of Ashford residents are ex-pupils of this school.



ASHFORD THEN AND NOW

- 1—OLD BRICK PIT
- 2—OLD BRICK PIT (present Sports Ground)
- 3—EARLY BUTCHER'S SHOP
- 4—ONE OF THE EARLIEST HOTELS OR WINE SHOPS
- 5—FRESH WATER WELL (in park)
- 6—CAROLL'S HOTEL
- 7—ONE OF THE EARLIEST HOTELS
- 8—BLACKSHITH'S SHOP
- 9—SAW PIT
- 10—BILLY MONG'S GARDEN
- 11—FIRST POST OFFICE (Kurrajong Trees still standing on site)
- 12—SITE OF FIRST SCHOOL AND UNION CHURCH.
- 13—SECOND POST OFFICE

- 14—THIRD POST OFFICE
- 15—POST OFFICE TODAY
- 16—COURT HOUSE, POLICE STATION
- 17—BLACKTRACKER'S QUARTERS
- 18—SECOND SCHOOL
- 19—PRESENT SCHOOL BUILDINGS
- 20—ONE OF THE OLDEST HOUSES.
- 21—HOWARD'S SAW PIT
- 22—OLD CROSSING OF FRAZER'S CREEK.
- 23—PRESENT BRIDGE OVER FRAZER'S CREEK.
- 24—HENDERSON'S STORE (now Shire Workshops).
- 25—SITE RESERVED FOR RAILWAY STATION (early), HIGH SCHOOL (now).

- 26—OLD RACE COURSE.
- 27—EARLY HOTEL (present building is extension).

- 28—GEORGE MOORE'S BLACK-SMITH'S SHOP (became site of McRae's Store — now owned by J. P. and D. C. Watts).

BRIEF HISTORY of Ashford district

Although the settlement of Ashford is actually older than Inverell, having been commenced some time before 1830, (Inverell's first settler, Alexander Campbell arrived in 1839) the area's tremendous potential still remains largely undeveloped. Agricultural and mineral potential is very great and is, as yet, virtually untapped.

In early days, before the emergence of Inverell as a major centre, Ashford was the recognised hub of a very large district, being the rendezvous of shearers and shepherds from surrounding stations, and a regular port of call for drovers travelling south from Queensland. Many developments have taken place but lack of cheap transport facilities has always been a problem and the agitation for a rail link which commenced very early, has not yet brought results.

There is some evidence to suggest that one of the earliest settlers was a man named Ashford but there were also a number of early settlers who hailed from Ashford area in Kent, England, so the origin of the town's name is not absolutely clear.

The Township stands on part of the original "Frazer's Creek" Station, which, together with "Edgerton", "Bukkulla", "Wallangra" and "Gunyan" covered vast areas in earlier days. For a time, Ashford was referred to as Ashford, Frazer's Creek but was dedicated as a village in 1860. These stations were later cut up and selectors began more intensive development of many areas and, while the original stations still exist, their size has been greatly reduced. A few brief notes on each may be of interest.

FRAZER'S CREEK :— Said to have been settled originally by a Mr. Fletcher, the property has successively been owned by Edward Ashbee, M. MacHardy, the Bank of N.S.W., the Campbell-Swan families, the Sinclair Brothers and the Moylan family. Mr. Colin Sinclair, later Sir Colin Sinclair, became Minister of Lands in the 1930's.

The property was of 60,000 acres in 1848 and the original homestead was on the western side of the river just north of the present coal mine. A popular misconception seems to be that Fraser Street in Ashford was named after Frazer's Creek Station whereas there is strong evidence to suggest that it was named after Mr. Duncan Fraser of "Cawdor".

BUKKULLA STATION :— In 1839 George Wyndham secured "Bukkulla" and "Nullamanna" which totalled 130,000 acres. "Bukkulla's" boundary came to within three miles of the spot where Ashford village arose. The property was not referred to as Bukkulla Station until the early 1900's when the village of Bukkulla was established.

The property remained in the Wyndham family until 1964 when Brigadier H. L. Wyndham sold it to Mr. Keith Bloomfield. In earlier days it was famous for its fine horses, sheep, cereal crops and wine. The winery was producing 11,000 gallons of excellent wine per annum as far back as 1870 and for many years its products were highly regarded. The winery was sold out of the family and the vines were finally allowed to die in 1950.

GUNYAN STATION :— This property commenced at the northern boundary of Frazers Creek Station and took in the Bonshaw area. It was founded in 1888 and was famous for its Hereford Stud.

WALLANGRA STATION :— "Wallangra" is an aboriginal word meaning "Long water holes" and this station originally stretched almost to the present "Cawdor" station on the western edge of Ashford.

"Wallangra" has the distinction of having produced two Presidents of the Ashford Shire, in councillor J. R. Black and his father, Councillor R. A. Black.

EDGERTON :— Originally an outstation of "Bukkulla", comprising about 70,000 acres, it was sold to the Fitzgerald family. It has been steadily reduced until it now measures 640 acres, owned by Mr. H. F. Voss. Mr. Voss's grandfather, Henry Most, was the main station shepherd and Mr. Edward Naughten is said to have come from Brisbane to be a groom on the property. The original homestead was on the hill to the west of the present "Edgerton" homestead.

When the station was in its heyday as many as 800 aborigines lived on the eastern end of the property where Mr. Bob Sutherland now grows tobacco. One "Edgerton" native, known as "Schoolmaster Jackie" derived his name from his habit of always wearing a schoolmaster's coat. He later became king of the Inverell Tribe and wore a half-moon disc, a gift from the government in 1880, around his neck to show his position. He died on "Pindaroi" station at an age of over 90 years, the last king of the district.

Difficulty has been experienced in discovering the origin of the street names in Ashford but the following information is thought to be accurate:

SINCLAIR STREET — After Mr. Duncan Sinclair of "Frazer's Creek".

FRASER STREET — After Mr. Duncan Fraser of "Cawdor".

BUKKULLA STREET — After "Bukkulla" Station.

DUFF STREET — After an early settler.

BESLEY STREET — After a Shire President.

MARTYN STREET — After an early settler.

KNEIPP STREET — After Councillor D. L. Kneipp.

JUBILEE STREET — After Australia's 150th Anniversary.

FROME STREET — After C. E. Frome, Surveyor-General of South Australia.

ALABAMA STREET, SEMMES STREET and KEARSAGE STREET commemorate an event that caused bitterness and almost a war between Britain and the U.S.A. during the American Civil War. The Confederate cruiser "Alabama", under Captain Semmes, was built in England and destroyed much Northern shipping until it was sunk by the "Kearsage" in 1864.

The first survey of the site of the town in 1860 shows the "Squatters Home" Inn, a store, and an accommodation house. The first sale of land in the town was held in 1860 at Glen Innes, when 15 of the 32 lots offered were sold. A police station was opened in 1864 or 1865 and a school in 1868, thus securing Ashford's identity as a village.

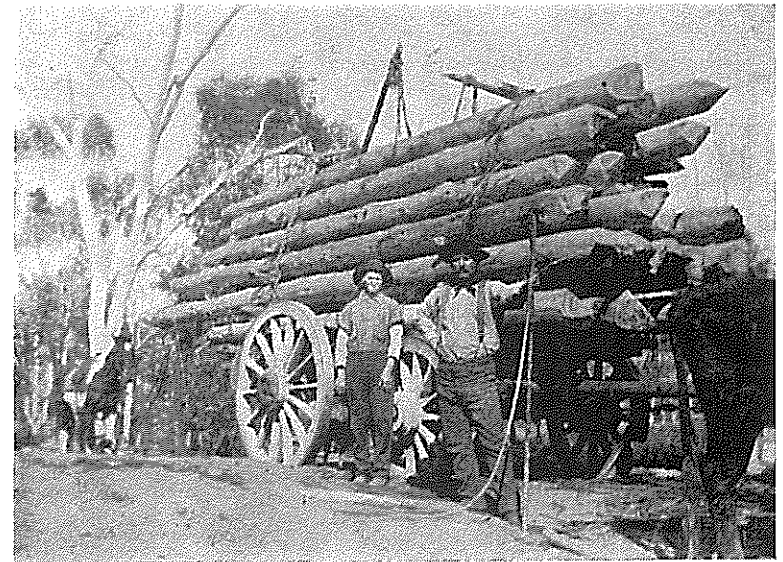
The map on pages 32 and 33 will show the positions of many historic buildings, very few of which are standing today.

Early settlers found that the cost of goods in Ashford was quite high because of the cartage involved from the railhead at Glen Innes and many ran their own teams to Glen Innes every three months or so. The round trip took from two to three weeks and they often sold farm produce, corn, chaff, fowls, eggs, and home-made cheese, butter and bacon at the Emmaville tin mines on the way. Wool and wheat were at first taken to Glen Innes and then, later, to Inverell. Dingoes were a problem and every sheep owner employed shepherds to guard his flock. Largely due to the initiative of Mr. D. Sutherland, a wire-netting fence was erected, enclosing a number of properties, and this, combined with the effects of closer settlement gradually lessened the dingo menace.

Efforts were made to grow cereal crops in the area and results were very pleasing. For example, 3 acres grown by Mr. D. Sutherland in 1917 yielded 30 bushels to the acre, but it cost 3/2 per bag to have wheat hauled to Inverell by team! Other cereals were also

grown successfully but again transport costs made production uneconomic. Tobacco, a very important crop in this area, is dealt with elsewhere.

Fruit of many kinds has thrived in this area, peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots, apples, pears, oranges, lemons, figs and grapes all having given excellent results under cultivation. Mr. H. Bartlett who had a property close to Ashford took 2,200 lb of white sherry grapes from a single vine in one season! Of course, the grape growing potential of the area is well known through the fame of the Bukkulla vineyard, established in 1839 by George Wyhdham who brought grape cuttings by pack-horse from Dalwood, on the Hunter River. This vineyard, of 55 acres in 1917 produced an annual vintage of up to 23,000 gallons.



This photo, taken in 1907, shows a load of Pine logs ready to unload at Howard's Mill, situated in the paddock on the western side of the intersection of Fraser Street and Inverell Street.

Timber getting and sawmilling has also been long associated with the area, one of the earliest known mills being Howard's, opened in 1898 just to the west of the intersection of the present Inverell and Fraser Streets. Quite a lot of timber has been taken from the Mandoie and Apple Tree Flat areas and many well-known names have at one time or another been associated with this work, names such as Nichols, McMullen, FitzPatrick, Cook, Irwin, Moore, Staggs, Rope and Smith being frequently encountered.

The main timber concerned has been cypress pine with some ironbark being worked at different periods. Ted Smith's biggest yield was 1½ million super feet of timber about five years ago.



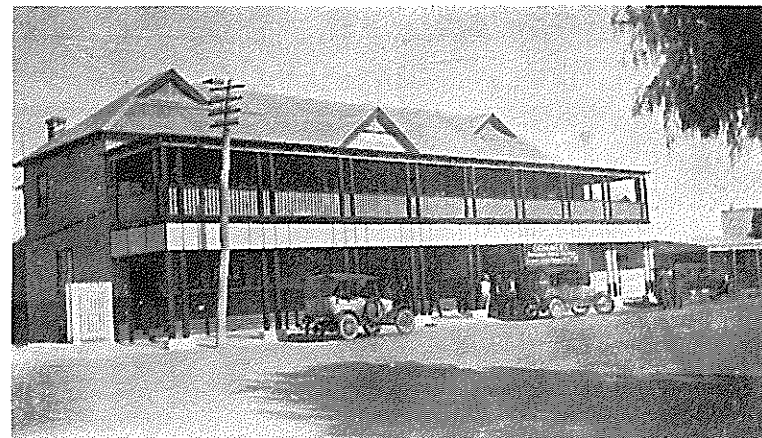
"Merrydale", still standing beside the Bonshaw Road - 1½ miles from Ashford. This was a wine shanty run by Mr. Merry and was the first iron-roofed building in Ashford.



This photograph was taken in 1908, showing the main street of Ashford. The Blacksmith's shop is shown where the horse is tethered in the left of the picture. The picture also shows the Commercial Hotel which was later extended.



The "Commercial Hotel" in earlier days.



The Commercial Hotel — 1936.

Around the turn of the century Ashford had 3 or 4 business houses and a number of slab houses scattered through the trees. Some which are remembered are the three hotels, Merry's Wine Shop, George Moore's Blacksmith's and Undertaker's shop, Kim-morley's store opposite the Sport Ground, the Post Office (where the kurrajong trees stand in the corner of the Swimming Pool

grounds) and Dunman's Saddlery. Mrs. Wells cooked bread for the older people of the town until the first Baker's Shop was established by Vesta Murphy. Mr. Jackson built a store where Arthur Beveridge's transport depot now stands and a Mr. Jack Wilson opened a Butcher's shop, killing when it suited him, rather than when it suited the consumer, according to some of the "old-timers."

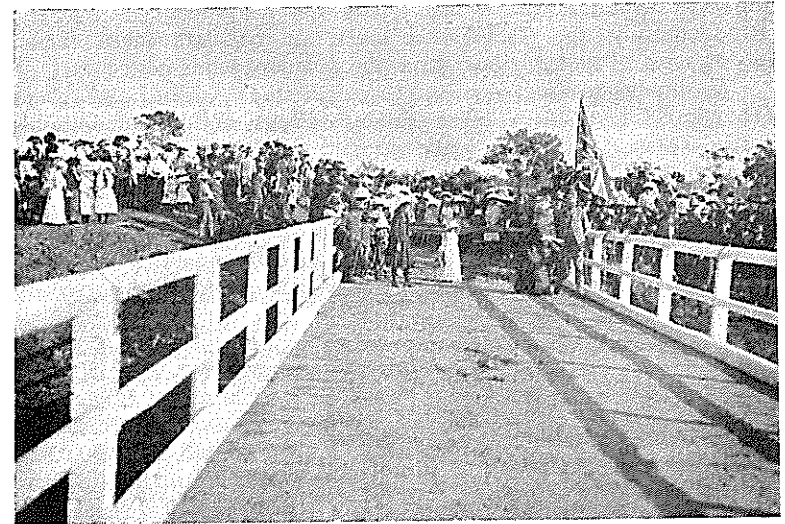


Mr. H. T. Coggan, shown with his mail buses. The service operated daily from Inverell to Texas and return.



Mr. Jack Wells is driver of this load of chaff, being transported in the Inverell district in 1911 for drought relief in the Ashford area.

Early carriers were George New's father, Les Wells' father and, later, Mr. "Nipper" Coggan, who had quite a large business until his retirement a few years ago. Mr. Les Wells recalls that he and his father were hauling 37 bales of wool to Ashford from Mr. Earl's property when the waggon brakes failed and the whole load was tipped into the river. The spot has since been called Wells' Crossing.



Official Opening of Frazer's Creek Bridge — 1903 by Mrs. Higgins, wife of the Shire President.

The bridge across Frazer's Creek was opened in 1908 by Mrs. Higgins, wife of the Shire President, and this proved to be a real boon to the people of the eastern side of the river. Previously, a crossing had been made at a point roughly in line with Albury Street.

Frazer's Creek once abounded with Cod, Jewfish and Platypuses but none of these has been reported for some time now. A bridge was built over the Severn River at New's Crossing in 1912 (Mr. George New's grandfather had his home near the spot in earlier years).

Race courses were established in succession on Frazer's Creek near Sinclair Street, then at "Cawdor" where the aerodrome is, then at the site of the present Golf Course, then at Langworthy's place just across the Frazer's Creek bridge and finally at a site just across the Severn River bridge.

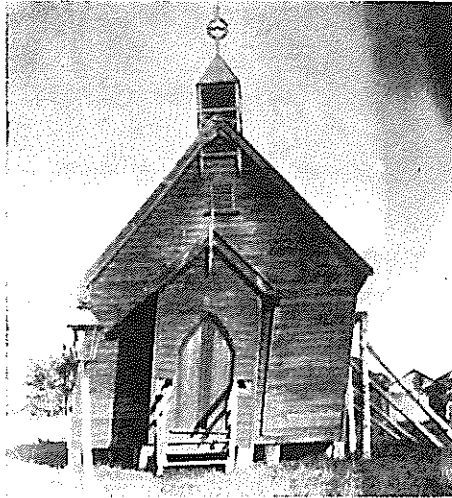
A Bush Nursing Service began about the year 1912 and carried on until the commencement of World War II.

The Memorial Hall was built after World War II on the site where Wells' teams used to be harnessed. The present picture theatre was originally a hall and is quite an historic building.

Prickly Pear never overran the actual township but there was, at one stage, a large patch just near the old Frazer's Creek crossing, (see map). However there were areas near Ashford, particularly along the Severn River from "Moorlands" to "Apple Tree Flat" where the pear was so thick that a man could not walk through it. The introduction of the Cactoblastis beetle in the '30's saved thousand of acres of valuable land from the ravages of this pest.

Bushrangers were not unknown in the Ashford area and "Thunderbolt's Pocket" (near Pindari Dam) and "Thunderbolt's Yards" (near Apple Tree Flat) are said to commemorate visits to the area by Thunderbolt, who was finally killed at Uralla. "Lovely Rielly", another bushranger, is said to have given a buckjumping exhibition outside Ashford's first hotel on the day after it opened.

The Union Church was shared by all denominations for many years and was served by ministers who visited Ashford on horseback three or four times each year.



The old Union Church.

West County Council Power House at the coalmine. Such developments have given the town a stability which has been reflected in a steady flow of home building and a pride in the appearance of properties. A community swimming pool should be completed in 1968 and sewerage is planned for the near future. The school has trebled its size in the last seven years and the completion of the Pindari Dam in 1969 is looked to as the commencement of a new era in Ashford's development.

The Roman Catholic Church was built in 1913, the Church of England in 1923, and the Presbyterian Church in 1950. The Presbyterian Manse was built in 1912 and the Reverend Bates was sent out from Inverell, Mr. Wells' team of 18 bullocks carting the Reverend Bates' furniture. Further details of these churches may be found on other pages.

Of latter years we have seen steady progress in the town with the commencement of enterprises such as the North

REMINISCENCES

It has been really fascinating to listen to the "old timers" and others with deep interest in the district, as they recalled the Ashford of earlier days. Much of their information is incorporated in the items to be found on other pages, but the following are perhaps better suited to a page of "reminiscences". Any list of names must be incomplete, but the help received from the following must be acknowledged: Len Merry, Mr. and Mrs. L's Wells, Mrs. R. O'Brien, George New, Albert Bryant, Harold Johnson, Jack Cox, Mrs. O'Sullivan (nee Frances Stacey), Mr. and Mrs. Henry Voss, Jack FitzPatrick and "Nipper" Coggan.

Len Merry recalls Professor Sir Edgeworth David predicting that "if ever man learns how to split the atom he will release forces which could be tremendously beneficial or tremendously harmful to man, according to how he uses them."

In the early days the school tank often ran dry and each child had to bring a daily supply of his own drinking water.

The 1902 drought is vividly remembered as the worst on record.

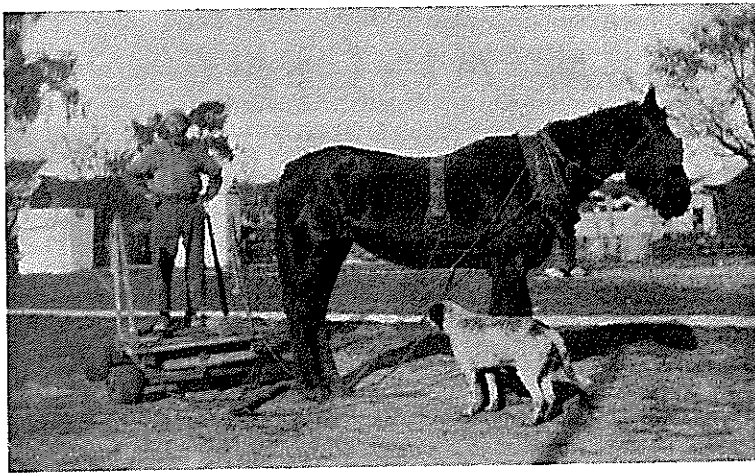
Mr. Duncan Sinclair of Frazer's Creek Station had the first motor car in Ashford.

"Nipper" Coggan recalls the day he carried a policeman named Russell and his prisoner named Moss on his mail run. Moss, who was charged with stealing Opossum skins from Sam Cox's place, escaped, even though the policeman fired several shots at him.

A man named Laverick blew up the hotel in 1920. He shot the proprietor, Fred Redditt, through the shoulder as he ran for the police, and then shot himself. He died on the way to Inverell in George Moore's car. Laverick is buried in the local cemetery. Laverick's brother later committed suicide in the old shop which stands beside the New England Bakery.

The oldest headstone in the cemetery is on the grave of John Ezzy, who died in 1872, after being kicked by a horse outside Carroll's Hotel.

A well known identity around Ashford in earlier days was the Chinese market gardener, Billy Mong. Billy used to hawk his vegetables around the town on a quaint cart which was also used as sanitary cart!



Billy Mong and his vegetable cart.

The first Shire Clerk was Wal Manton and his house was where D'Arcy O'Meara now lives in Fraser Street. The house was burned down about 1909 or 1910 and was later rebuilt.

A "Cat O Nine Tails" was found behind a wall when the old gaol was pulled down and it was sent away to a museum together with some lez irons. A blacktracker named Picalle or Bacalla taught most of the Ashford boys to swim during his time at Ashford.

Mr. Edward Naughten, Postmaster at Ashford for over 30 years, was said to be a "grand old chap when in the mood, which wasn't often". He is, however, reputed to have known a great deal about and to have taken a genuine interest in all local families even though he never left the Post Office. One way to get him into a good humour quickly was to ask him about his horses, of which he was extremely proud.

Mr. Les Wells used to cart water for Ashford residents each Saturday during his schooldays. In dry weather he would do a good trade with his 28 gallon cask on a slide drawn by one of his father's retired horses. He took the water from Frazer's Creek near the site of the bridge and received the handsome sum of 1/- for each 28 gallons.

Mr. Andrew Greig and Miss Frances Stacey conducted Sunday School in the old Union Church.

The Telephone to Ashford came from Inverell through Graman. It was stretched from tree to tree and extended to Frazer's Creek Station. It was quite a long time before Ashford had a direct line to Inverell.

Wild bees were plentiful and most families collected their own bush honey in the early years of this century.

Most school work was done with slates and pencils. Len Merry recalls picking up pieces of slate on the site of the first school.

Most children rode horses to school and these were placed in a horse yard which used to be at the rear of the spot where Watts' Clothing Store now stands.

All Ashford pupils were given a gift on the opening of the Frazers Creek bridge in 1908. Mrs. Henry Voss still has the pencil case she was given on that occasion.

The late Col Nichols of "Moorlands" was a fine horseman, seldom being beaten at the Shows. He was killed while taking a jump on his favourite horse High Jinks at Warialda Show.

Coach trips to Inverell were made regularly and horses were changed at "Dinton Vale" owned by W. Nichols.

The first hall in Ashford was situated between the Shell and Ampol Garages.

"Old-timers" have contrasted and compared the distances travelled to school by past and present pupils. At the turn of the century, Edna Halloran drove a sulky to school from Ben Dingle (now Trevanna), about 16 miles return. In 1968 Rev and Shaunagh Worgan and Dawn Burdett travel 64 miles return each day by bus!

TOBACCO

Ashford's history has, of course, been closely linked with grazing and pastoral pursuits. Much of the area is still devoted to the growing of fine wool and beef cattle but cultivated crops have also made their presence felt. Chief among the latter is the Tobacco grown along the Severn River and Frazer's Creek and the Ashford Shire are ranked as the chief tobacco growing areas of N.S.W. High grade Virginian-type tobacco is grown and acreages are expected to increase as the Pindari Dam ensures a constant water supply.

The Tobacco Stabilisation Plan has done much to secure the future of an industry which can now expect to play a strong part in the future of this area.

The total amount of N.S.W. tobacco sold at auction in Brisbane in 1966-67 was 2,110,299 lbs. and brought \$2,209,439:00. a considerable portion of this tobacco being grown in the Ashford area.



This historic picture was taken in 1903 by Mr. Len Merry and shows air curing of tobacco in the Ashford area.

Tobacco was first grown here in the late nineteenth century and the leaf was air-cured in open sheds. Then in 1905 Mr. Hammond Watts produced flue-cured tobacco at the present "Melrose" property. This leaf took first prize at an exhibition in Mexico in 1905. An American, Mr. Howell, won prizes in the Chicago Exposition of 1914 with tobacco grown and cured at "Beaumont".

Many Chinese were engaged in growing tobacco on a share farming basis around 1910. Then, in 1919, tobacco growing ceased temporarily, until about 1930 when prices rose.

Australians entered the industry in greater numbers now but the disease 'blue mould' caused trouble and the industry did not

become really sound until about 1939, by which time a cure for the disease had been found. Many Italians entered the industry at this time and large numbers are still engaged in this work.

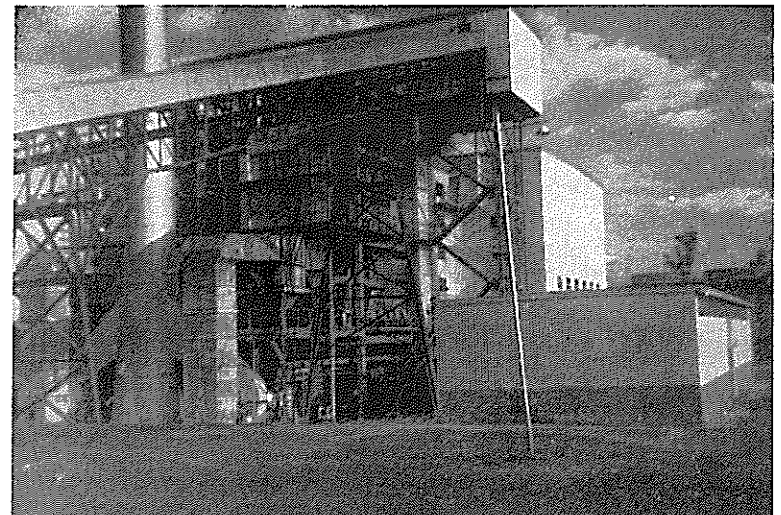
Under present day methods most of the labour is done by hand, no use being made of planting or picking machines. About 1800 acres of tobacco were grown in 1966-67 in the area from Tamworth to the Queensland border. No precise figures for the Ashford area are available.

MINING

The Ashford area can boast a number of mines both past and present and lies close to the rich sapphire fields of the upper reaches of Frazer's Creek.

Antimony, arsenic, coal, limestone, guano, gold and tin have been mined here. Rich bauxite deposits exist about 20 miles to the east of Ashford but have never been mined. Marble is available in the Limestone area but has never been mined.

ANTIMONY, ARSENIC :— Main mines are not far from Mrs. Clarrie Cox's place and on "Arthur's Seat" station.



The North West County Council Powerhouse, near Ashford.

COAL :— An open cut mine is situated 8 miles north of Ashford. The coal is an outcrop of the Greta seam and came as close as 12 ft to the surface. Some high grade coal exists here in seams up to 60 ft. thick and present operations provide for excavation to the depth of 200 ft. A Power Station which has been built beside the mine on the bank on the Severn River, supplies electricity to a large part of northern N.S.W. and southern Queensland.

LIMESTONE AND GUANO :— A very rich deposit of almost pure limestone lies in the Limestone Caves area, a few miles west of Ashford. Some mining has been done but the resources are virtually untapped as yet. Many tons of guano (bat manure) have been taken from the caves for use as a fertilizer but distance from adequate transport facilities has always been a problem.

GOLD :— "Jack's Hope" mine was commenced on the deposit discovered by the late John Irwin on "Encliffe" north of Ashford, in 1911. A battery was installed on the Severn River at "Moorlands" in 1936 to crush and clean the ore but operations were soon abandoned because of the distance involved.

TIN :— Tin is being mined by open-cut methods a few miles east of Ashford to-day by Mr. Harry Julius. Deposits are quite extensive but present prices of tin make further development unlikely in the near future.

BAUXITE :— Deposits to the east of Ashford are rich but will probably remain undeveloped while deposits in the more readily accessible areas are being worked.

MARBLE :— Professor Sir Edgworth David visited the Limestone Caves area in 1929 and carried out some minor testing. He said that the surface marble was quite suitable for building purposes but that very fine marble could be found there at great depth. He saw some similarities with the Carrara fields in Italy from which the great sculptor Michaelangelo obtained some of his finest stone, but stressed that this had been found at a depth of 2000 ft. It therefore seems unlikely that the Ashford deposits will be worked.

ASHFORD SHIRE COUNCIL

Points of interest taken from the Minutes of Shire Council meetings.

JULY, 1922. — An attempt to form a Deepwater - Ashford Railway Line was made.

1922-23. — The Wallangra Bridge was built.

APRIL, 1923. — A Newstate movement was made.

SEPTEMBER, 1927. — A request for a new Post Office in Ashford was made but this was refused although a new room was built onto the one in use at that time.

SEPTEMBER, 1927. — The portion of land on the corner of Duff Street and Bukkulla Street, now known as the park was reserved for a sports ground and so the park was duly established.

MARCH, 1928. — Plans were finally submitted for erection, in Albury Street, of a Post Office.

1928

APRIL. — A smoke social was tendered to the Ashford L. H. Troop.

MAY. — There was an Ashford Light Horse troop which competed in the Prince of Wales Military Cup.

1931

MARCH. — Councils co-operated to abolish dole system.

1937

MARCH. — Council decided to co-operate with Australian 150th Anniversary Celebrations by joining tree planting scheme and planted 25 trees.

DECEMBER. — Information was requested on the cost of extending the electricity services from Inverell to Ashford.

1932

9TH, SEPTEMBER. — A special meeting was held to consider applications for unemployment relief grants owing to the depression.

A reduction in wages was commenced as from 1st September, 1932 based on the cost of living during this time.

1933

14TH. JULY. — Sanitary service proposed.

11TH. AUGUST. — Mr. C. A. Cox was given permission to erect a store and bake house; this is now the New England Bakery.

1934

11TH MAY. — Council supported the Ashford P. and C. Association in its efforts to have a new school erected in Ashford instead of enlarging the existing building.

8TH JUNE. — School authorities were given permission to enclose a park or reserve.

1935

8TH FEBRUARY. — Public Hall and School of Arts proposed, supported by Council however, opposed by ratepayers who said the cost would fall on them.

13TH SEPTEMBER. — Water storage schemes proposed by progress Associations in the area.

JULY, 1937. — A presentation was held at the Ashford Public School for the purpose of presenting to the school, on behalf of the Returned Soldiers League, a painted photograph of H.M. King George VI.

SEPTEMBER, 1937. — The Yetman Bush Nursing Association opened a home at Yetman - this home has just recently been closed down.

DECEMBER, 1937. — A public meeting was held to place the proposal of an electricity supply before the people of Ashford to determine the extent of demand.

JANUARY, 1938. — Inverell Municipal Council's Electrical Engineer gave Council a brief outline of cost of electrical supply for Ashford. Council was very impressed. Inverell Municipal Council took up the proposal to extend the electricity supply to Ashford.

JUNE, 1938. — Consideration was given to the needs of the citizens of Ashford with regard to a Town Water Supply. Electric Lighting, Tree Planting and such other matters considered necessary at that time.

OCTOBER, 1938. — Applications were made to have Ashford declared a "built up" area for the purpose of regulating traffic speed through the town.

DECEMBER, 1938. — Approval was granted and signs erected to declare Ashford a "built-up" area.

FEBRUARY, 1939. — Tenders were called for the supply of Electricity to the Town of Ashford and district.

APRIL, 1939. — The Bonshaw Progress Association requested Council to support the idea of having the village of Bonshaw re-designed or surveyed and vacant crown lands thrown open for purchase by the public. Council supported this request.

FEBRUARY, 1940. — A doctor commenced practice at Ashford but stayed for less than twelve months. The next doctor was not to come until 1952.

1942. — Air Raid Trenches were dug at the school.

1952. — Electricity was connected to Ashford.

1958. — Additions made to Council Chambers.

1959. — Sealed road to Inverell completed.

1959. — Water supply opened by Councillor D. L. Kneipp.

SHIRE PRESIDENTS

1906-7	B. C. Besley (Snr.)
1908-16	R. J. Higgins
1917	H. A. Fraser
1918-20	D. M. Sinclair
1921	H. A. Fraser
1922-3	A. F. Campbell
1924	W. Lennon
1924	H. A. Fraser
1925-6	C. McCosker
1927-8	F. E. Body
1929-47	R. A. Black
1948-50	R. Tighe
1951 —	J. R. Black

PRESENT COUNCILLORS (1968) :— A. Timmins, T. Taylor, R. Myring, F. Kneipp, R. Kneipp, C. Nichols, J. Tighe, B. Admans, J. Black.

Shire Clerk, A. Heywood; Engineer, L. Gratton; Health Inspector, B. Casselden.

ASHFORD POST OFFICE HISTORY

The Ashford Post Office was established under the name of "Frazer's Creek" on 1st January, 1853.

The first postmaster was John Persfement. He received a salary of £10 per annum, and upon appointment named as sureties George Wyndham of Dalwood, Hunter River, and Edward Ashbee of Frazer's Creek.

James Leslie became postmaster on 5th July, 1853. The salary by this time was £15 per annum. Leslie conducted the post office at his store which was owned by John Sullivan, an innkeeper.

Robert Arnott who had been acting postmaster for two years was appointed postmaster on 21st October, 1861, following Leslie's resignation.

The name "Ashford" appeared in a letter from Mr. John Sullivan, in 1862. He wrote from "Ashford, Frazer's Creek." Then the postmaster wrote on 1st June, 1863, suggesting that the name of the office be changed to "Ashford." He mentioned that the village had been proclaimed three years earlier, under that name. The name of the office was changed to "Ashford" in December, 1863.

John Sullivan who was described as an innkeeper and storekeeper became postmaster on 1st January, 1864. His sureties were Michael Sullivan, superintendent of stock, and Richard Stout, storekeeper, both of Ashford. Sullivan resigned, advising that the salary of £15 per annum was too small for the work involved. Three mails were handled weekly, one to Sydney, one to Tenterfield, and one to Seyburn.

Joseph Slack, a storekeeper, succeeded Sullivan on 1st February, 1866. His sureties were William Urquhart, farmer, and Thomas Carroll, an overseer at Bukkulla. Joseph Slack was a lay reader at the Church.

An alteration to the mail timetable caused the mails to arrive at Ashford during the church services. Slack tendered his resignation advising that the regular clergy only visited Ashford four or five times a year and that he refused to allow his duties to interfere with his religious responsibilities and beliefs. The Depart-

ment made a new time timetable to overcome his objections, and Slack withdrew his resignation.

John Callinan bought the store, and was appointed postmaster on 1st December, 1872. His sureties were Joseph Slack, then described as a farmer, and Thomas Carroll, a butcher of Ashford. Callinan resigned and Slack was reappointed postmaster on 1st May, 1874, apparently having again taken over the store.

William Slack, the son of the postmaster, took over the store and became postmaster on 1st December, 1874.

Money Orders

By 1876 Money Order facilities had been extended to Ashford, and the postmaster's salary had been increased to £18 per annum.

Other postmasters appointed were :

John Desmond	1 August, 1876
John T. Carroll	1 August, 1881
Mrs. Catherine Slack	17 March, 1884
G. W. Dean	16 August, 1884
William Slack	2 February, 1885
Mrs. Catherine Slack	13 October, 1885
Mrs. Blanche B. Kimmorley	1 February, 1886

The money order office had been closed on 31st March, 1884. In 1886, it was mentioned that the mail arrived at Ashford twice a week — on Wednesday and Sundays about 8 p.m.; and that J. N. Cooke was teacher at the Public School.

Mrs. S. J. Tubman took over the post office and store on 24th April, 1886 but resigned the following year.

There had been many changes in the position of postmaster, Edward Naughten who was appointed on 21st March, 1887, was to remain in charge for many years.

The revenue in 1891 was only £26 a year, about 90 letters a week being posted. By 1898 the revenue had risen to £88 per annum and 166 letters were being posted weekly. A request for the reintroduction of Money Order facilities was refused, but the sale of Postal Notes was approved.

Signatures on a petition for Money Order facilities in 1899 included those of :

A. Kimmorley, Butcher; P. Halloran, Farmer; John T. Carroll, Publican; J. G. Smith, Grazier; G. H. Moore, Blacksmith; J. McElroy, Constable; James Henderson, Builder; E. New, Carrier; F. Halloran; H. D. Denshire, Teacher; J. Stevens, Storekeeper; Joseph and W. H. Moore, Farmers; W. H. Howard, Sawmill; C. O'Brien, Carrier; A. Watts, Farmer.

Later representations were successful and the Money Order system was reintroduced on 21st May, 1900. At this time the postmaster's Salary was increased by £10, making it £32 per annum.

Post Office Building

In a rare reference to the location of the office, the postmaster said in a letter dated 12th August, 1903 : "I am removing the Post Office from the present old and dilapidated building into those recently erected by Mr. Howard for the purpose."

Telephone

In August, 1904, a telephone was installed at the post office, making it possible to send and receive telegrams.

A public telephone was installed on 15th October, 1907.

The Ashford Telephone Exchange was established on 15th April, 1914.

Semi-Official Status

On 1st June, 1907, the status of the office was raised to that of semi-official post office, and delivery of telegrams within one mile was commenced. Edward Naughten was still in charge.

Ashford was always a difficult office to manage, as the mails were received at most inconvenient times. Hours for mails included 3 a.m., 5.30 a.m., 9.30 p.m. 10.30 p.m., and midnight.

In 1910 a telegraph messenger was employed.

The district was progressive, and postal business was increasing.

In a report made in 1911 it was stated that the population was 343 and that a coal mine had been opened up in the district.

Government Savings Bank

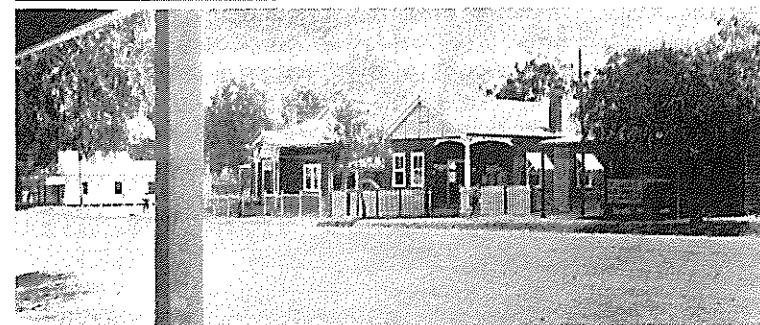
A branch of the Government Savings Bank was opened at the post office on 3rd July, 1911.

Mails

In 1912 the postal inspector reported that the mails were handled as follows :

- ★ Arrived from Inverell 6 days a week at Midnight, and despatched at 3 a.m.
- ★ Arrived from Bonshaw twice at 7 p.m. and once at 1.30 a.m., and returned three days weekly at 3 a.m.
- ★ Hadley's mail arrived 9 a.m. Sunday and returned that day at 7 p.m.
- ★ The Pindari mail arrived twice a week at 6 p.m. and left at 3 a.m.
- ★ The Rocky Creek mail left 7 a.m. and arrived at 6 p.m.

Edward Naughten was still postmaster in 1921 when the Department approved of the raising of the status of the office to that of official post office.

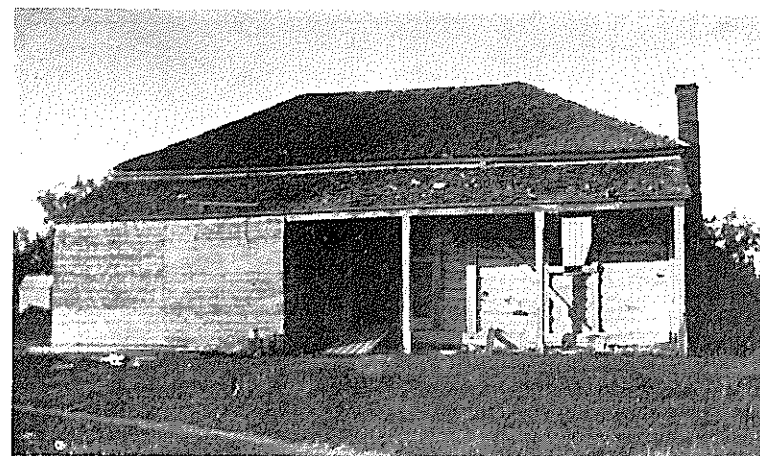


View of the Post Office and Bank of N.S.W. — Early 1930's

Pending the appointment of an official postmaster, Naughten remained in charge of the office. W. A. Gardener, the first official postmaster, was appointed on 12th April, 1921, according to staff records.

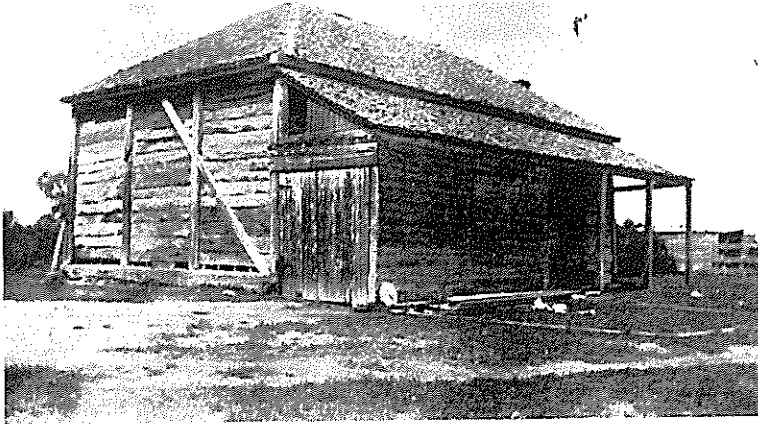
It is widely accepted that Mr. Naughten one day found himself short of the red tape used at that time to identify registered letters, so he used a red pencil line as an alternative. This practice later became universally accepted and Ashford people proudly claim it as a notable "first" in their history.

POLICE STATION



The original goal — situated between the present police station and Rashford's store.

The Police Station at Ashford was opened in either 1864 or 1865 on the same property as the present Police Station. The original Police Station consisted of a four room slab hut with shingle roof. This building was used as tracker's quarters upon the erection of the present Police Station and was finally sold and removed in 1935.



The first police station and gaol.

The exact date of the erection of the present Police Station is not known but it would have been about 1890. The original strength of Ashford was one mounted constable.



Constable Erenshaw who was stationed at Ashford about 1919.

One of the first trackers was Picalla and the last was Paddy Landsborough. Some of the early officers were Constables, McElroy, Langworthy, Sproule, Harrison, Baxter and Erenshaw.

The Police district was very large and the constable was often away for a week at a time, carrying his provisions with him on a pack horse.

THE ARMED SERVICES

Many details have been difficult to authenticate, but the following covers most of the main developments :—



*Off to the War — 1916. Albert Bryant on left.
Percy Carroll of Texas on the right.*

One of the earliest known members of the Services was Duncan Fraser who was in a contingent of the N.S.W. Mounted Rifles which went to England for Queen Victoria's Jubilee in 1897. On his return he selected and named the property "Cawdor" on the Wallangra Road. His brother Robert went to the Boer War and died on active service in the 1914-18 war.

Three groups of four brothers went overseas with the A.I.F. in World War I. There were 4 Bryant Brothers, 4 Wells Brothers, 4 Sutherland Brothers.

Messrs. A. E. and C. Smith of the Bonshaw area, and Mr. Neil Staggs of Ashford, were all Anzacs, while the late Claude Moore received an M.I.D. for service in France.

The following is an extract from the Inverell Argus of 1915,

Fit for the Germans

Ashford Boy's Letter

Gunner J. H. Wells, who is a son of Mrs. J. T. Wells of Rose Cottage, Ashford, and is one of four brothers in khaki, writes from Salisbury Camp : —

"We are leaving here for France on November 21. I believe the Germans have got a notice up saying 'Welcome the 3rd Division'. I suppose we will get an iron foundry or a munition factory shot at us as soon as we land. They are quite prepared for us but we will give them something to do when we meet them, as the 3rd Division is one of the best trained divisions that has ever gone to the front from Australia"

Ashford men also served in the 1939-45 war with distinction and, while no record is available of all servicemen, the Honour Roll in the Memorial Hall represents a lot of work and endless enquiries and should be fairly comprehensive.

The Ashford Light Horse Troop won fame in 1926-7 when it won the Prince of Wales Military Cup which was competed for by every country of the Commonwealth. The Late Col. Nichols, of Moorlands, was the Lieutenant and the Troop was judged once in a display at Moorlands.

The original Charter of the Ashford Bukkulla Sub-branch of the R.S.L. is dated 5th July, 1934. Subsequently, the name became Ashford Sub-Branch and the present Charter dates from 11th November, 1950.

ASHFORD . . . and its Churches



Roman Catholic Church

In early years the Union Church was used, but the present building was opened, as part of the Inverell Parish, in 1913. The Ashford Parish was opened in 1938 with Father Thomas Leahy as Parish Priest.

The first Baptism was that of Grace Noreen FitzPatrick, on 13th July, 1913. The first marriage celebrated in the Ashford Parish was that of Herbert Clarence Gannon to Kathleen Mary O'Brien, on 26th December, 1938. The first baptism was of Beryl Joan Moffitt. The present Parish Priest is Father E. Fahey.

St. Mark's Church of England

Ashford

Bukkulla was the centre of the Parochial District until 1923 when four blocks of ground were purchased in Ashford for cost of £63! Plans were made for a new Church by Mr. O'Connor, Architect of Inverell, and the material from the Vicarage at Bukkulla was to be moved and used for this purpose.

The building contractor was Mr. A. Cannon of Inverell and carting of the timber was carried out by various parishioners with their teams and waggons.

Parochial Council Representatives for Ashford at that time were Messrs. B. H. Baxter, J. J. Thompson, L. R. Merriv. H. A. Bertram.

St. Marks was dedicated on 23rd March, 1924 by the Right Rev. W. F. Wentworth-Shields DD. MA., then Bishop of Armidale. The Rev. G. A. Baker was Vicar and according to the report in April issue of "The Record", one hundred people gathered for the ceremony of Holy Communion. The Bishop was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Baxter. The first Church Wardens were elected in 1925, Mr. N. Clout and Mr. Lucas J. Wilson.

The Altar was given anonymously, but the Lectern was a gift of the parishioners of Ashford in Kent, England in 1923. The first wedding to take place in St. Marks was that of Alexander Sutherland and Lillian Kimmorley on 24th June, 1925. The Memorial Bell

was dedicated on 21st December, 1948 to honour the memory of all from this Parish who served in the 1939-45 War.

The present Minister is the Rev. D. Robinson.

Presbyterian Church

In the early days Frazer's Creek Station appears to have been the Presbyterian Centre where visiting Ministers preached. This was due to the fact that the Swans and the Sinclairs were Presbyterians.

Early services were held in the Union Church and the Ashford Presbyterian Parish became a separate parish in 1908. The Manse was built in 1911 and occupied by the Rev. Albert Bates, who later died on active service in the 1914-18 war. The present church was built in 1950 and is called Sinclair Hall. The present Minister is Mr. G. Fintelman.

BANK OF NEW SOUTH WALES – ASHFORD ... early history

The Bank of New South Wales opened a branch at Ashford on 8th November, 1919. Its premises were leased from the Ashford Shire Council and consisted of a Banking chamber, Council Board room and strongroom. Some of the terms of the lease were that the Council was to keep the premises clean, provide acetylene gaslight and allow the Bank to use the telephone and the Bank was to allow the Council the use of the Board room one day in each month and reasonable access to the strongroom. The rental was £90 (\$180) per annum. The manager at that time commented to the Bank's Head Office "The premises are convenient although the proximity of the Shire Office does not give us quite the privacy we desire".

The Bank built its own premises at the corner of Duff and Albury Streets in 1928, where its business is still conducted to-day. The first manager was William V. Ellis.

(We wish to gratefully acknowledge the Bank of N.S.W.'s generous gift towards the cost of publication of this booklet.
Ed.)