

"THE PROGRESS OF TUMUT & DISTRICT"

(By Shirley Beed)

The following is the winning essay entitled "The Progress of Tumut and District," written by Miss Shirley Beed, 14 years-old student at the Tumut Intermediate High School in the essay competition at the recent Tumut Show. Though it was the wish of the Tumut Ex-Residents' Association who donated the prize money for the competition for the essay to only cover the period in Tumut's history 1900—1942, this stipulation was inadvertently omitted from the Show Schedule and all competitors began with the initial stages of the foundation and progress of the town. Shirley's essay contained a wealth of information concerning recent events in Tumut's progress, hitherto unpublished in history form, and for that reason was awarded first prize.

"In the year 1824 Tumut was discovered as a fertile, limestone valley by the Hume and Hovell exploration party which, at the request of Governor Brisbane, was exploring the area far south of the Sydney district.

"Soon after the return of the party Tumut was made known to ambitious settlers and many people turned south. In 1830 the first white child to be born in the new locality was at Darbalara. The pioneers of these parts of the Colony were marvellous people, who make one proud to think that they were our ancestors. The hardships were bitter and numerous, but the settlers showed an indomitable spirit; so layed the foundation for progress.

"The aborigines were troublesome and savage and were always causing trouble. Bushrangers were prevalent and Ben Hall, the best known of these, was often in the district. He often, with his band, looted houses and hailed up respectable, good-living families.

"After the discovery of gold many prospectors passing through Tumut decided to settle here. Farms were set up and shops soon appeared. These slab shops cannot be compared with the modern shops of the town to-day. Drays and bullock teams brought all supplies from Sydney, the journey taking three months. Hayes, a shepherd at Bombowlee, made a record trip in nine weeks. William Bridle (2nd) amazed the town one day by bringing in the first bullock team to come over Talbingo. Nowadays the trip to Sydney can be made in a comfortable train in twelve hours, or eight hours by car. A good road now runs over Talbingo.

"The railroad to Tumut from Sydney was completed in 1903. Previous

to this, however, after the bullock team period, a coach was run between Tumut and Campbelltown.

"Yarrangobilly Caves, forty-two miles from Tumut, were accidentally discovered by J. Bowman in 1874. Later the caves were opened to the public for inspection. Since then a guest-house has been built in an attractive spot, and one of Nature's hot springs feeds a swimming pool. Rules Point, in the vicinity of Yarrangobilly, is noted for its winter snow sports.

"A surgeon, Dr. Chyton, and a blacksmith, T. Anderson, both very important servicemen for the town, arrived in 1838. In 1847 Mr. Anderson and Mr. Foord built a bridge was built and toll was suspended. Mr. Foord with Mr. Moore built the Gilmore flour mill and until 1890 he was wheelwright and undertaker.

"In 1839 Tumut had two policemen, their headquarters being at Cockatoo, further down the river. In the early 'fifties a lock-up of slab was built where the Court House now stands. Tumut now has its own police force with court-house, lock-up, station and residence. In 1863 Tumut had its first Police Magistrate.

"Also in the year 1839 Timothy O'Mara set up the first public house at Mill Angle. O'Mara later had the Woolpack Hotel built. When the town was moved, however, thirteen hotels were set up. Five of these hotels have been built over and are now very modern with all comforts and conveniences. Liquor making was started here, but has since ceased manufacture.

"Before 1840, when the Reverend P. Fitzgerald (a Presbyterian minister) arrived, Tumut had no established clergymen and was visited by travelling clergymen. Fitzgerald used

lished clergymen and was visited by travelling clergymen. Fitzgerald used Tumut as his centre and travelled as far as Wagga to preach. The Presbyterian Church was then in Russell-street and in 1881 the present church was erected. The Reverend Fox, the first resident Church of England minister, arrived in 1855 and two years later the first Church of England was established. The present church was opened in 1882. In 1862 the first resident priest arrived, Father O'Neill. In 1863 the first Roman Catholic Church was built and now forms part of the Roman Catholic School. In 1878 the present Roman Catholic Church was built and a little after St. Bridgid's School was erected. In 1873 the Methodist Church was built in Russell-street.

"In 1852 the Great Flood occurred which did much damage to the old town and which also washed Gundagai away. It was then decided to move Tumut to its present site. The first building was a slab hut—the post office built on the present site of the Church of England.

"After this Tumut, having such a set-back, went ahead and in 1866 the first Governor visited the town. He was Earl of Belmore. The last Governor to visit Tumut was Lord Wakehurst in 1942.

"In 1856 the Registrar's Office was set up by Government order. In 1858 Elworthy established the *Tumut and Adelong Times*, which is still printed. Tumut was incorporated in 1887 and a Mr. Brown became the first Mayor. During his term of office the School of Arts was founded, the Agricultural and Pastoral Association was established in 1875, and the Turf Club of Tumut started to function. The first race meeting in Tumut was held in the early 'fifties and the grandstand was built in 1909.

"In 1861 the Tumut and District Show was held in a wheat shed on the property of William Bridle at Bon-bowlee. Since then a Showground has been built and trees planted suitably for shade on the grounds. The

first Show on these grounds was held in 1876.

"Mr. F. Vyner was the first returning officer for the Murrumbidgee electorate, Wagga, Tumut, Yass, Wentworth and Balranald. The first members elected were Sir John Hay and Sir George McCleay. For six years from 1866 Mr. Brown, Mayor of Tumut, represented Tumut in the Legislative Assembly.

"Education in Tumut is now up to standard and pupils are taught in modern schools by efficient teachers. In the early days children were taught by travelling teachers until Mrs.

light by travelling teachers until Mrs. Large established "Queen's," a private school. The first denominational school was set up at Comely Bank in Capper-st. with Mr. Finnegan as master. The new school was in Fitzroy-st. and opened in 1869, and in 1875 the residence was built. The school was moved to the present site in 1913. Since then an extra wing, manual room, a portable double room have been added. The sewerage is being connected to the school very soon. The Parents and Citizens' Association was incorporated in 1908 and has been very beneficial for the school.

"In 1871 the Manchester Unity Oddfellows were formed and in 1870 the Oddfellows' Hall was erected. This hall was used as a picture show, showing moving pictures. In 1928 the Montreal was built and in 1930 the first talkie was shown.

"The Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed in 1902 and was not motorised until 1921. Before it was motorised it was difficult for the men to be quick at getting to the scene of the fire.

"The Tumut Municipal and Gadara Shire Councils were amalgamated in June of 1928 and became Tumut Shire Council. Since 1928 the Council's improvements to the town have been marvellous.

"In 1914-'18 the shadow of war fell over the town and many answered their country's call and some never returned. In 1915 Tumut formed a branch of the Red Cross Society. This branch has never ceased functioning and is doing marvellous work in connection with World War No. 2. Tumut again has sent lads and now young girls are joining the various women's services. We are very proud of these young people and I am sure they will have good fortune.

"The town water supply was augmented in 1930, and now that the electric pump has broken down the old steam pump has been put into operation once again. Post-war may bring new installation of another electric pump.

"From 1921-'29 Tumut's electricity supply was run by the Tumut Municipal Council. When the lights were being used heavily on Saturday and Friday nights the dynamos were often overtaxed and lights used often fade out, so in some stores customers were served by the light of hurricane lamps. In 1929-'30 the current from Burrinjuck was extended to Tumut.

"The Council decided to install the sewerage system in 1937. Tenders were called for in 1938 and in 1941, 24th March, the system commenced to function.

"Cattle saleyards were erected by the Council at the site adjacent to the railway. The first sale was held on 17th May, 1932, when thirteen hundred head of cattle were sold. The show-

17th May, 1932, when thirteen hundred head of cattle were yarded. The sheep-yards were added in 1935 and a movement is now being made by the Council to construct modern pig saleyards.

"O'Brien's Hall was founded in 1900 and in 1942 for some time the Waverley Christian Brothers used it as the evacuated section of their college. This school has since returned to Sydney. Also in 1900 O'Brien's freezing works and butter factory was opened. In 1905 O'Brien moved his factory to the site opposite the railway. In 1923 Tumut Co-operative Dairy Company renewed this factory and additions have been made from time to time. In 1942 additions cost £12,000, features of these being a new condenser tower, new boiler and installation of the most modern pasteurising equipment. The output of the factory is 32 tons of butter per week. Some of this is exported and sent to England. Much is sent to Sydney.

"In 1900 Sir John See opened the District Hospital. The hospital has had many additions and alterations. The hospital is in an excellent position, having a commanding view. Extensive remodelling was carried out in 1941. In 1937 the foundation-stone of new, up-to-date nurses' quarters was laid by Governor Lord Wakehurst on the 8th November. As a patient in the District Hospital in 1942 I can only speak highly of the way it is conducted by the present Matron.

"Nurse Lindbeck's private hospital at Adelong has now been taken over by the Board of the District Hospital, as an outpost of the local hospital. (Taken over in 1943).

"The first engineering garage was owned by O'Brien from 1913 to 1917 and is now conducted by Barbour Brothers in Wynyard-st.

"New tennis courts were erected in 1929-30 in the lower Richmond Park. The bowling green was laid out in 1930 and officially opened in 1932. The combined clubhouse for the bowling and tennis clubs was built in 1936 as a result of a Government grant of £300. Both bowling green and tennis courts are lit up for night play.

"The Swimming Pool was taken over by the Council in 1933 and dressing sheds and a diving-tower were erected, the latter since being dismantled. The camping grounds were laid out in 1935 and shelter huts were erected. A

fee had to be paid by campers in this

area after 1938 when the caretaker's cottage was constructed. The picnic grounds at the river provide one with marvellous places to have picnics in pretty surroundings. An amateur swimmers' club has been founded and the school has yearly sent candidates for Royal Life Saving Society's examinations.

"In 1940 the Council laid out the golf course and a club was set up. About 1924 the New South Wales Forestry Commission planted a pine forest near to the golf course site. Not long after a school forest was started and trees were planted each Arbor Day.

"About 1902 the first private telephone was installed in the district and No. 1 'phone was taken by a subscriber in 1911. Many 'phones are now in Tumut, even though they are not automatic.

"Tumut Council has done much in beautifying the town. The poplars were planted at Bombowlee in 1861, but not by the Council. However, the Council had the elms at the Race-course approach planted and trees planted on many of the roadsides and such-like. A loan was raised by the Council in 1938 and a town improvement scheme was put into operation - tarred roads, concrete footpaths and waterables were put down.

"During 1942 the Council started a movement to construct a memorial park in Lower Richmond Park (below the bowling green). Numerous shrubs and trees were planted there which will add to Tumut's supreme beauty in years to come."

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