

# VOLUME 2: TATURA

---

## Contextual History

Prepared by:  
Heritage Concepts

JULY 2010

The following history contains a summary of pertinent historic themes and descriptions of events that have informed the selection of items of cultural heritage significance for the Greater Shepparton Heritage Study Stage IIB 2010.



Memorial Clock

Tatura

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Agricultural Activities, Settlement and Township Building.....</b>	<b>7</b>
2.1	Squatting era, the Winter family and Dhurringile.....	7
2.2	Land Selection and Settlement.....	8
<b>3.0</b>	<b>The Development of Tatura .....</b>	<b>8</b>
3.1	The Whim .....	8
3.2	Tatura 1874 – 1885 .....	9
3.3	Tatura 1886 – 1898 .....	10
3.4	Tatura 1899 – 1913 .....	10
3.5	Tatura 1914 – 1918 .....	10
3.6	Tatura 1919 – 1938 .....	11
3.7	Tatura 1939 – 1945 .....	11
3.8	Tatura 1946 – 1967 .....	12
3.9	Post War Immigration.....	12
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Events.....</b>	<b>13</b>
4.1	The Royal Visit and the Olympic Torch.....	13
4.2	Natural Disasters.....	13
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Memorials .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Law Enforcement.....</b>	<b>13</b>
6.1	Police station.....	13
6.2	Courthouse .....	14
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Churches .....</b>	<b>14</b>
7.1	Catholic Church .....	14
7.2	Anglican Church .....	14
7.3	Presbyterian Church.....	14
7.4	The Methodist Church .....	14
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Schools.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Recreation.....</b>	<b>15</b>
9.1	Tennis.....	15
9.2	Golf .....	15
9.3	Bowls .....	16
9.4	Racing .....	16
9.5	Trotting .....	16

9.6	Coursing.....	16
9.7	Cricket.....	16
9.8	Football.....	16
9.9	Riflemen.....	17
<b>10.0</b>	<b>Health.....</b>	<b>17</b>
10.1	Doctors.....	17
10.2	Hospitals.....	17
10.3	Dentist.....	17
<b>11.0</b>	<b>Individuals.....</b>	<b>18</b>
11.1	James Watson Wilson.....	18
11.2	Charles W Wilson.....	18
11.3	A W Wilson.....	18
11.4	Thomas Hogan.....	18
11.5	Robert Mactier.....	18
11.6	Dr James Park.....	19
<b>12.0</b>	<b>Cemetery.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>13.0</b>	<b>Railway Line.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>14.0</b>	<b>Water.....</b>	<b>19</b>
14.1	Irrigation.....	19
<b>15.0</b>	<b>Dairying.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>16.0</b>	<b>Other Industries.....</b>	<b>20</b>
16.1	Tomato industry.....	20
16.2	Spinning.....	20
16.3	Saleyards.....	20
<b>17.0</b>	<b>Newspapers.....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>18.0</b>	<b>Masonic Lodge.....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>19.0</b>	<b>Public Parks.....</b>	<b>21</b>
19.1	Public Gardens.....	21
19.2	Lake Tatura.....	21
19.3	Tatura Baths.....	21
<b>20.0</b>	<b>Services.....</b>	<b>22</b>
20.1	Electricity.....	22
20.2	Telephone.....	22
20.3	Sewerage.....	22

<b>21.0 Shire of Rodney .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>22.0 Showgrounds .....</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## 1.0 Introduction

Tatura is located in the Goulburn Valley – one of the richest horticultural and intensively farmed areas in Australia. Its rivers and irrigation systems have until recent times offered farmers a security of season that was unknown to its earliest settlers. The Valley is a prosperous and community minded town that has over the last 150 years experienced different phases of development linked to: economic and agricultural change; and social and cultural changes. The different phases of agriculture were in part wrought by: changes of land use, changes in markets and changes in technology. Cultural changes occurred as a natural evolution but were also accelerated by the successes of post war immigration.

Historically, the rural and urban tableau of Tatura tells us much about the nature of the post contact settlement of this region.

For instance:

- Dhurringile mansion - the product of the successful Winter squatting runs and linked to the squatting era of the 1840s;
- patterns of settlement resulting from the *Selection Acts* and *Closer Settlement Acts*;
- the development of irrigation and intensive horticulture and farming;
- the extent and diversity of public buildings and spaces associated with the creation of a township;
- commercial buildings in the township;
- residential developments;
- memorials and war time relics.

The intention of this historical context is to highlight the most pertinent themes associated with the development and history of Tatura. The scope is from settlement and up to around 1970.

Historically the development of Tatura and district can be roughly divided into four phases. The first three are intrinsically linked to agriculture and farming practices. The fourth phase can be identified through social changes and economic growth - the result of post war growth and post war migration.

### **1. Pastoral leases and grazing [1840s – 1860s]**

- The arrival of Europeans to the area and the beginning of the squatting era.
- The claiming of vast tracts of land for sheep stations, through squatting and leasehold arrangements.
- The subsequent disenfranchisement of the indigenous population.

### **2. Changes to the land ownership and the creation of selection blocks [1860s – 1890s]**

- The discovery of gold, the rapid increase in the population and an increased demand for farm land meant that the extensive squatting runs were opened up for settlement. A series of

changes to the land acts meant that land became available as freehold land but the conditions and extent of land ownership were controlled through legislation.

- During this period (1860s – 1890s) the principle crops for the Goulburn Valley were grains – wheat and oats. This was supported by relatively small industries including dairying, piggeries, poultry, sheep and cattle.

### **3. The establishment of irrigation and the development of farming practices that thrived with irrigation [1890s – 1930s]**

- A number of dry years towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the failure of crops and farming ventures meant that there was an increased interest in irrigation. From the 1890s irrigation became increasingly linked to agriculture in the Goulburn Valley.
- During the early 20<sup>th</sup> century the full impact of irrigation and changes to agriculture occurred. The main changes were linked to an intensification of agriculture – such as dairying, horticulture and viticulture.
- A number of industries were established during this period, such as canneries, butter factories – the success of these industries was underpinned by the railways [a cool store was built at the railway station in 1893] and the links to the ports.
- The Closer Settlement policies also had an impact with an increased number of settlers being settled in this region.

### **4. Post World War II Growth – migration and cultural diversification [1940s – 1970s]**

- European migration to the Tatura and Shepparton region had been successful from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was not until after the war that large numbers of migrants from a number of countries settled in the region. The increase in population was accompanied by economic prosperity for Tatura and the region.
- The success of these migrants is notable and in particular their impact on agriculture and horticultural practices.

## **2.0 Agricultural Activities, Settlement and Township Building**

### **2.1 Squatting era, the Winter family and Dhurringile**

Alexander Mollison was the earliest and most successful squatter to choose the region as a place for grazing. He was joined by other squatters and by 1838 all the runs in the region were formed.<sup>1</sup> Squatting leases offered no real surety of land ownership and it wasn't until the 1850s with the granting of the pre-emptive rights<sup>2</sup> that settlers could acquire freehold lands.

From the 1850s John Winter and his family owned or controlled a vast amount of land in the Tatura region. They purchased the pre-emptive rights for the Corop, Coragorag, Colbinabbin, Toolamba and Wanalta pastoral runs and in addition they owned 17,000 acres at Colbinabbin and Burrabot and 20,000 acres near the present town of Stanhope.

---

<sup>1</sup> S H Roberts, *The Squatting Age in Australia*, p 154 - 156

<sup>2</sup> Pre-Emptive Right – This allowed the squatter to purchase a block of land for a homestead. This was generally the Imperial square mile – 640 acres [262 ha]

The extensive pastoral empire allowed the Winter family to accumulate a large fortune that was in part based on the supply of food to adjacent gold fields and a ready market of hungry miners. Dhurringile Mansion was built by the Winter family during their most successful years and is a testament to the early land ownership and leasing practices that favoured the squatting hierarchy over the small land holder.

## 2.2 Land Selection and Settlement

By 1860 the position of landless gold seekers and immigrants was recognised as acute and there was an increasing pressure on the Victorian Parliament to pass an act to regulate the sale of Crown Lands. A series of acts passed during the 1860s aimed at land selection proved to be less than satisfactory in getting selectors on the land and farming in a sustainable manner. It was not until the 1870s that the *Land Selection Acts* provided an adequate framework for selection and settlement. The districts around Tatura (and in the Goulburn Valley) were relatively more successful in terms of selection and settlement. This can be attributed to a combination of factors: a series of good seasons, relatively fertile soil and a river system and the calibre of the selectors. There is surviving built fabric from the selection era and many of the descendents of the selectors are still farming in the region.<sup>3</sup>

The Shepparton district from 1873 possessed an enterprising surveyor of lands who 'induced men of means to settle in the district...and in an incredibly short space of time the large and fertile sheep walks of the Goulburn Valley were settled by an industrious and well-to-do yeomanry.'<sup>4</sup>

The success of settlement associated with land selection saw the establishment of townships that serviced the new farming areas with goods and services and markets. There were three pro-claimed in the Shire of Waranga in 1874: Mooroopna, Toolamba and Tatura.

Up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Tatura (and district) depended on wheat crops. However, with the development of irrigation systems cropping gave way to more intensive industries such as dairying, horticulture and livestock. Prior to the construction of the railway line to Tatura the harvest was carted to the Avenel rail station.

## 3.0 The Development of Tatura

### 3.1 The Whim

Up to the early 1870s, the small settlement located near the fresh water well was known as The Whim. The Whim was established by the Winter family as a water supply for sheep and other stock. A water reserve was established around The Whim and it was the source of water for Tatura during its initial growth (c1880). The village of Tatura was proclaimed on 16 March 1874<sup>5</sup> and within five years Tatura had become a commercial centre for local farmers. The name Tatura is reported to be derived from aboriginal sources. In 1938 A S Kenyon stated in the *Guardian*:<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> See Heritage Overlay 146 – Schedule to the Heritage Overlay Greater City of Shepparton Planning Scheme

<sup>4</sup> C W Martin, *Irrigation and Closer Settlement*, p 16

<sup>5</sup> Tatura had a proclaimed area of 640 acres

<sup>6</sup> *The Guardian*, 1 July 1938

‘Tatura was the original name of a small swamp or lagoon nearby, the name meaning rushy. It is in the parish of Tooolamba West, Toolamba also meaning a swamp, but with paper-bark or other ti-tree around it.’<sup>7</sup>

The surrounding country was lightly timbered and was not regarded as first class land for grazing but it proved to be suitable for wheat, orchards and vineyards. During the decade that followed the passing of the Selection Acts of the 1870s a number of towns became established: Nagambie, Murchison, Mooroopna Shepparton, Tatura and Nathalia. The area became well known for its wheat and fruit. It was described by H G Turner in *A History of the Colony of Victoria* as:

‘The district most favoured by the selectors of this period ... the lower valley of the Goulburn, extending from Seymour down to the Murray, embracing a large part of the counties of Dalhousie, Moira, Rodney and Bendigo’<sup>8</sup>

The development of the region as a consequence of land selection was described in a contemporary account in *Victoria and its Metropolis of 1888*:

In the forest, the selector reared his bark hut or perhaps a more substantial building of logs and pug, as did his squatting predecessor only thirty years before. He split, and felled and burned till a few acres were cleared; he fenced and dug out stumps and then put in a little crop. He had a struggle at first, but when times were hard he took the nearest employment he could get, and when he had got over the first two years he found the local bank ready to make a small advance. By degrees he brought his acres under crop, and changed from a struggling adventurer into a substantial farmer. Now was repeated, on a scale of thirty-fold magnitude, the process that the squatting days had seen. The hut gave way to the weatherboard cottage, neat and comfortable, and often enough surround by its tidy garden; but there was this difference that now the frequent schoolhouse dotted the land and churches arose, and a hundred little townships grew busy with supplying the wants of populous districts.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.2 Tatura 1874 – 1885

The first land sales were held on 26 January 1875. Lots from the following streets in the north western corner of the township were included in the release: Ross; Casey; Kerford; Service; Fraser and Francis Streets.

The township survey had the main thoroughfare as Casey Street with Hogan Street forming the northern boundary of the township reserve.

By 1879 there were hotels, a butcher, baker, saddlers and other similar commercial buildings, thirty houses but no public buildings.

Many of the streets were named after politicians of the day:

- Casey Street - J J Casey Minister of Justice 1869;
- Service Street - J Service Premier of Victoria 1880 – 86;
- Kerferd Street - G B Kerferd Premier of Victoria 1874 – 75.

Others were named after local identities:

---

<sup>7</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 13

<sup>8</sup> H G Turner *A History of the Colony of Victoria*, p 49

<sup>9</sup> A Sutherland *Victoria and its Metropolis*, pp 51 - 52

- Ross Street was named after the storekeeper of that name;
- Hogan Street was first known as Goulburn Street but from 1890 was named after Thomas Hogan a local farmer.

### 3.3 Tatura 1886 – 1898

One of the most significant changes that occurred during this period was the introduction of irrigation to some parts of the district. On the 28 June 1889 the Tatura Waterworks Trust was gazetted. Irrigation, a growing township and successful selectors ensured that Tatura continued to prosper and the community thrived. On 18 November 1890, Tatura was proclaimed an urban district with an area of 570 acres and a population of 2500.

Improvements during this period include:

- In 1889 the metalling of the streets of Tatura commenced;
- In 1887 the first two banks were opened – the Victoria and the Commercial;
- The Royal Tatura Lodge of the Independent Order of Odd fellows inaugurated in 1891;
- The Tatura Debating Society commenced in 1894;
- The Fire brigade commenced in 1894;
- During the 1890s various musical bands formed.

### 3.4 Tatura 1899 – 1913

This was a period of general expansion and Tatura grew rapidly. New subdivisions continued to attract buyers – for instance a subdivision with lots facing onto Casey and Kerferd Streets and the Crown Reserve adjacent to the public gardens and racecourse was sold. Moreover, Hogan Street was developing into an important thoroughfare.<sup>10</sup> The water tower was opened on 24 April 1912 and it was the first of its type constructed in Australia.

As part of the success of irrigation dairying became an increasingly important industry gradually taking over from cropping and grazing.

### 3.5 Tatura 1914 – 1918

Many local volunteers went to World War I and this was fostered by the recruiting trains that came to Tatura. Horses from the area were sent to the war. There was a drought and revenue from the Butter Factory dropped. Despite this, the community was behind the war effort with first aid classes running from 1914 and in January 1915. The Red Cross Branch was formed with a Mens Red Cross Group in August 1915. Local soldiers distinguished themselves and in particular Robert Mactier who was a Victoria Cross recipient.

By the end of the war Hogan Street had become the commercial centre of the Tatura. After World War 1 – the State Rivers and Water Supply commission agreed to a request of the Tatura Progress Association that portion of the Tatura experimental farm should be made available under the *Discharged Soldiers Settlement Act of 1917*. From 1918 to 1921 the Commission settled about 1000

---

<sup>10</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 163

men on irrigation farms in various parts of Victoria. In June 1919 a branch of the Sailors and Soldiers Fathers Association was formed at Tatura.

### 3.6 Tatura 1919 – 1938

The time between the wars was one of progress. A cannery was established in 1919. Thirty people were employed. The factory was completed in three weeks and additions and extensions were made every year for the next four years – much of this fruit was shipped to London.<sup>11</sup> During the 1920 – 21 season the cannery was leased by the Australian Jam Company which installed a 100 hp boiler and the latest American technology. Output and employment increased and in October 1921 the luncheon shed at the showgrounds was borrowed as a dormitory for female workers at the cannery for the forthcoming season.<sup>12</sup> However, in the 1920s, the cannery and building eventually moved to Mooroopna because of complaints about the odour.

By this time there were:

- two banks on opposite corners – the Commercial (1916) and the State Savings Bank (1914);
- two new churches;
- the slaughter yards at the eastern approach to the town were relocated;
- two motor garages;
- three afternoon tea and ice cream rooms.

However, not everything had improved; the footpaths were still dusty, the drains and gutters ineffectual and the lake had dried up. As late as 1927 the streets were considered unsanitary as refuse collected in the gutters and drains and was not collected.

Tatura was not insulated from the Great Depression and unemployment was a problem.

### 3.7 Tatura 1939 – 1945

Tatura played a major role during World War II. A Patriotic Committee was formed at Tatura in May 1940. By 1940, eighty-eight volunteers from the Tatura district had enlisted for military service and this included two nursing sisters. Internment camps for enemy aliens were established near Tatura and Rushworth early in the war. Tatura was the railhead to which all materials and goods for the construction of the internment camps would be sent. The camp was garrisoned by about 250 soldiers who became part of the social structure of the district by means of fortnightly dances, concerts and a camp band. Social contact was established between the soldiers at the camps and the town with local choirs performing at the camp, cricket played at the camp and other activities. Some of the prisoners managed to escape but little of what went on in the camps was known to the community.

A thanksgiving service for Victory in Europe was held in the Victory Hall on 9 May 1945 and on 15 August when the war against Japan ended.

The World War I Memorial in the R Mactier VC Memorial Park was added to after World War II and this was unveiled on Anzac Day in 1952.

---

<sup>11</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 201  
<sup>12</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 202

After the war the first foreign war cemetery in Australia was inaugurated in Tatura. It is a permanent memorial to the thousands of German nationals who spent time at the camps and for those who died. When the German War Cemetery was established remains were brought from all over Australia for re-burial. Most of the re-internments of the World War I dead were carried out in March 1961.

The cemetery was excised from the Presbyterian section at the north end of the Tatura Cemetery and fenced by the War Graves Commission.<sup>13</sup> The graves are marked with iron crosses. The World War II section was officially inaugurated on 16 November 1958 by the West German Ambassador, Dr Hans Mahlenfeld.

### 3.8 Tatura 1946 – 1967

Post war growth consolidated the district as one of the premier agricultural areas in Victoria. New crops and new varieties were introduced such as varieties of tomatoes and new varieties of stone fruit.

The Tatura tomato was developed at the Tatura Research Station (agricultural research centre since 1937) and this variety was crucial to the canning industry. A new block at the station was opened on 30 April 1958 with 6 new laboratories.

From 1940 the station had worked at developing strains of tomato adapted to local conditions and to the requirements of marketers and canneries.

Farms were rejuvenated and many large brick homes were built on farms and these replaced the old homes of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Irrigation was crucial to this prosperity and in 1956 Edgar Street was formed for the construction of eleven Water Commission homes.

Established industries expanded – such as the dairy and fruit industries. Two new industries were introduced to Tatura – Rosella and Cleckheaton.

More banks opened such as the Commonwealth Bank (1965) and in 1964 the State Savings Bank constructed new premises. By the 1960s, there were five banks in town to support the continued economic growth. Service Clubs of the post war era had a considerable impact on public developments and improvements and these included the:

- The Tatura Apex Club 1959;
- The Tatura and District Development League;
- The Country Women's Association (formed in 1930);

In 1953 the Rodney Council protested against the move to introduce television on the grounds that money involved could be more appropriately directed to other areas. In 1957 – there were two television sets in Tatura both owned by the electrician in Hogan Street.

### 3.9 Post War Immigration

The increasing prosperity of the district was underpinned by migration to the area. In 1948, 200 Balts arrived to assist with the fruit picking. In May 1949 an immigration camp was constructed on the site of No 3 Internment Camp and women and children arrived at the camp in June. The camp continued

---

<sup>13</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 165

to function until June 1953. Italian migrants were the most populous ethnic group in the first years of migration.

The principal shrine for the Italian community is the Ossario at Murchison. The illuminated crypt was added by the Italian architect R G Stella and dedicated in November 1966.

## **4.0 Events**

### **4.1 The Royal Visit and the Olympic Torch**

Two events had a huge impact on the local community and these were the Royal visit (1954) and the Olympic torch relay (1956).

The royal tour was the first visit by a reigning monarch. Vast numbers of local residents lined the roadside to see the Queen. They brought folding chairs, thermos flasks and picnic hampers to watch. Some drove from Tatura to Rochester to get a second glimpse of her. A boulder from the Dookie hills was set up in the Memorial Park with the inscription ‘Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and H R H the Duke of Edinburgh passed here on Friday 5 March 1954.’

Tatura was included in 1956 torch relay and children threw rose petals onto the road.

### **4.2 Natural Disasters**

210 mm of rain fell from 11 – 14 February 1955 and the Sacred Heart School was shut for a week. Water skiers skied on the Midland Highway and the Tatura Research station was flooded and several new varieties of peach that had been bred over nearly 20 years were lost.

## **5.0 Memorials**

A Tatura township memorial was unveiled on 24 April 1921 – the monument was an obelisk of Harcourt granite rising 3.5 m from a rough granite base resting on three bluestone steps.

Other memorials in the township include a German machine gun (No 7687) captured on the Western Front by the 7<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF.

There are a number of church memorials – at St Andrew’s Church there is a memorial window for Robert Mactier and his parents.

A memorial clock was erected in Walshe Street in memory of Dr Park.

A War Memorial is located in the R Mactier VC Memorial Park.

## **6.0 Law Enforcement**

### **6.1 Police station**

In February 1878, a site for police purposes at Tatura was gazetted. In 1885, a Police station was built on this site and a lock up in 1910. In 1913 a new police station was planned but renovations were undertaken instead. This was replaced in 1914 with a new brick police station. In 1955 a new police station was constructed between the 1914 station and the courthouse.

## 6.2 Courthouse

The earliest Court of Petty Sessions were convened in the Mechanics' Institute and a courthouse was constructed in 1891.

## 7.0 Churches

There were a number of religious organisations in Tatura during the 19th century and many of these have survived into the 21st century. These include the Catholic, Anglican and the Uniting Church (former Presbyterian & Methodist).

### 7.1 Catholic Church

The Catholic Church has maintained a strong presence in the township. In 1922, at a carnival to raise money for the church was attended by Dr Mannix, the Archbishop of Melbourne. His guard of honour consisted of 30 horsemen on grey horses, 40 cars, 100 gigs and buggies and many were decorated with the Archbishop's purple and gold.

### 7.2 Anglican Church

The earliest reference to the Anglican Church occurred on 6 August 1876 when a service was conducted in Tatura. In 1948 Burton Hall (8 km from Tatura) was presented to Church of England Boys Society for use as a training farm. Boys were brought from war distressed families in England and were instructed by the benefactor (A E Maskell) in ploughing, cultivating millet and crops, irrigating shearing and marketing lambs.

### 7.3 Presbyterian Church

In 1882 a Presbyterian Church and manse at Tatura were opened. C T Grover designed and supervised construction. In 1908 the church was renovated and reopened. In 1912 a new church and Sunday School hall were built. A kitchen was added to the Sunday School in 1920 and in 1921 more land was purchased at the rear of the property. In 1914 the church was called St Andrews.

A new manse was built in 1930. In June 1940, a new kindergarten room was built and dedicated to the memory of Dr James Park and pioneer teachers. A store shed was added in 1951 and in 1954 the Sunday School was enlarged with the purchase of an army hut.

### 7.4 The Methodist Church

The first meeting was held in the bark school house and then in the Mechanics' Institute. In 1898 a tender accepted for the erection of the 'the Free Methodist Church at Tatura.' It was a brick building on a block of land in Kerferd Street near the Anglican Church. Electric light and a vestry were added in 1911. In May 1955 the congregation began to plan a new brick church. The foundation stone of the new church was laid in the memory of those who served in both wars.

However some religious movements had a relatively short life and these include:

- Lay preaching - this existed in the region but it never became popular in Tatura;
- The Salvation Army had a short life in Tatura;

- The Baptist church held services in Tatura from 1894 and ceased in 1908.

During the 1920s a large number of church clubs were formed.

## 8.0 Schools

In 1874 a building 10m x 5m was erected by voluntary subscription to serve as a temporary school house. It appears that it was located on the Murchison road 3km south of Ross's Store. Another school 3km north Ross's Store was constructed. Eventually these two schools were closed and a new one was built in 1885 in the township.

The Catholic Church has provided education since 1879.

In 1904 two schools commenced their classes in rooms at the Mechanics' Institute - Tatura Grammar School for boys and the Church of England Deaconess High School (music and singing a speciality) for girls.

In 1908 a new building was constructed on land east of the Tatura Butter Factory<sup>14</sup> but it closed soon after.

## 9.0 Recreation

### 9.1 Tennis

The Tatura Tennis Club was established in 1889.

'lawn Tennis has become all the rage here [Tatura], and a second court was opened on Saturday last when great interest was evinced by members of the club, who issues invitations to a large number of visitors.'<sup>15</sup>

In 1936, a site for lawn tennis courts was chosen in Ross Street. Interest waned until 1946 when another site was selected in the area controlled by the Public Gardens Committee. The Lawn Courts were officially opened in November 1948 and the first tournament was held over the three days of the Australia Day weekend in 1949.

### 9.2 Golf

April 1909 it was reported that '...the golf craze has 'struck' Tatura and an endeavour is being made to form a club here. Some of the fair sex have taken the game up and may be seen tramping round the outskirts of the town with their bundle of sticks.'<sup>16</sup>

Soon after a 4 hole golf course was laid out on the vacant ground at the rear of the public gardens. Cr Thomas Hogan gave permission for a course to be laid out on his land adjoining the railway line.<sup>17</sup> On 7 May 1913 a new course was opened on the lake reserve and racecourse. Play was abandoned during the war.

---

<sup>14</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 247

<sup>15</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 258

<sup>16</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 260

<sup>17</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 260

In 1925, nine holes were put down on the eastern portion of the racecourse. A new golf club – Hill Top Golf and Country club and seven rink bowling green was built in February 1965. The golf course was opened 10 April 1965. To assist in the funding 18 building blocks on part of the golf estate were sold. The auction was the biggest since the subdivision of the Hogan Estate in 1928.

### 9.3 Bowls

In 1904, financial support was sought for the establishment of bowling greens. Cr J W Wilson opened a green on 9 November 1904. Tatura was a member of the Goulburn Valley Bowling Association in 1907.

In 1937 the Bowling and Croquet Club cooperated in securing the pavilion of the defunct Tennis Club. Extra rinks were provided in 1948 and in 1955 another green was added for the clubs Jubilee celebrations.

### 9.4 Racing

Racing appears to be the first organised sport in Tatura. From the earliest days of settlement St Patrick's Day was a holiday and races were held on that day from 1875 – 1887. The first races were held at The Whim.

In 1881 'a site for a racecourse and other purposes of public recreation at Tatura' was gazetted.<sup>18</sup> By 1960 Tatura had both a Turf Club and a Picnic Race Club.

### 9.5 Trotting

A Trotting Club was formed in 1931 – but it was short lived.

### 9.6 Coursing

Coursing was almost as popular as racing and in 1886 the first meeting was held. In 1967 coursing was declared illegal.

### 9.7 Cricket

Cricket established by 1880 but 'the cricket and general recreation ground was completely destroyed by the new railway going across it.'<sup>19</sup> The Club went into recess until 1889. Ladies cricket was also played.<sup>20</sup>

### 9.8 Football

There was a football team from 1885. In 1894, Tatura was member of the Goulburn District Football Association, but in May Tatura withdrew because of costs.

The club colours have remained the same since 1908 – red white blue with white 'knickers'.

---

<sup>18</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 250

<sup>19</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 252

<sup>20</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 252

In 1946 the name of the association was changed to Goulburn Valley Football League with ten member clubs (included the No 13 POW Camp).

## 9.9 Riflemen

The Rifle Club was formed at Tatura in April 1885; this was in response to a fear that Britain and Russia would go to war.

## 10.0 Health

### 10.1 Doctors

Dr J Davidson commenced practice at Tatura July 1884 and is thought to have been the first resident doctor in the town.

Dr Park arrived in 1896 - he was the first of two brothers to commence practice in Tatura. Dr Park did his own dispensing until 1908.

### 10.2 Hospitals

There were a number of small private hospitals in Tatura, these tended to be run by either a nurse or in conjunction with a doctor and they were small enough to be run from a house.

For example:

- In 1911, a Mrs V J Bolger opened a private hospital in Casey Street, but by September 1912 she became ill and left town.
- In 1914, a Nurse Valentine's hospital was functioning in Tatura.
- In January 1915, Sister Acheson opened a hospital in Hogan Street 'a modernly equipped and up to date medical and surgical private hospital.' In 1916 she relocated to Casey Street next to the Shire Office and then to the corner of Kerferd and Fraser Streets.<sup>21</sup>
- In 1916 Mrs Leckie ran a private hospital in the residence of Dr Brunskill and Dr J Park.
- The last private hospital was functioning from 1930 to 1932 - this was St Leonard's and it was run by Sister Stevens.

By 1908 the Bush Nursing movement had started in Victoria and by October 1932 funds were raised in the community for a Bush Nursing hospital. The building was opened on 19 November 1933 by Sir James Barrett the President of the Bush Nursing Hospital. On 1 October 1946 the hospital was made an Annexe of the Mooroopna District Base Hospital.

### 10.3 Dentist

The first known dentist was a G H Fetherstone who began a dentistry practice in 1904.

---

<sup>21</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 238

## 11.0 Individuals

### 11.1 James Watson Wilson

James Wilson was born at Reedy Creek, and came to Tatura in 1880 as a selector. Wilson was the Councillor for the Tatura Riding and he retired in 1921.

He was also a Justice of the Peace, Trustee of the Mechanics' Institute and the State School tree plantation and was associated with the Public Gardens Committee, Progress Association and the Tatura Advancement Association, and Chairman of the Directors at the Butter Factory.

### 11.2 Charles W Wilson

Charles W Wilson was the brother of J W Wilson and he was a community builder. After his death a fountain was constructed in the Tatura Public Gardens as a memorial.

### 11.3 A W Wilson

A W Wilson was a footballer and athlete. He dined with the Prime Minister in acknowledgment of his athletic abilities. He was the President of the Dorset Horn Society and Society of Breeders of British Sheep. His advancement of the Dorset breed has led to most prime lambs having some Dorset blood.

### 11.4 Thomas Hogan

Thomas Hogan was a selector and land owner. He was a leading Catholic layman of his time. It is believed that he was the first Catholic in the Goulburn Valley to be appointed a Knight of the church.

Hogan was born at Limerick in Ireland and he came to Australia with his family at 13 years old.

Hogan's achievements include:

- he farmed for fifty years – sheep, cattle and horses
- he purchased the Commercial Hotel and ran the business until 1908
- he was a member of the Rodney Irrigation Trust and Rodney Council for 24 years
- he was a Commissioner of the Tatura Waterworks Trust
- he was a Trustee of the Mechanics' Institute
- he was a member of the Turf Club
- he was a foundation member of the Cemetery Trust and Chairman for 25 years
- he was one of the first directors of the Tatura Butter Factory Company

Thomas Hogan died at 87 in 1926.

### 11.5 Robert Mactier

Robert Mactier was a Victoria Cross Winner. He dismantled two machine gun posts that were holding up the Battalion's advance upon a village – Mont St Quentin in 1918. He was killed during the last advance.

William Mactier's family came from Scotland in 1872 and they selected a holding called Reitcam. Mactier married Christina Innes Ross the daughter of Angus Ross the pioneer storekeeper.

## 11.6 Dr James Park

Dr Park had a surgery in Walshe Street from c1922 until his death in 1938. There is a brick clock tower in Walshe Street dedicated to his memory. Dr Park was known for his kindness and charity. His interest in the welfare of children encouraged the building of the kindergarten room at the Presbyterian Sunday School. On his death, flags were flown at half mast on all public and other buildings in town.<sup>22</sup>

## 12.0 Cemetery

The rules and regulations for the management of the Toolamba West General cemetery (Tatura) were gazetted in June 1877.

## 13.0 Railway Line

The railway line to Tatura was opened on 13 January 1880 and the railway reserve took in the Whim and sand hills. The trains brought water to the town pre irrigation.

## 14.0 Water

The Whim supplied most of the township wants until September 1885 when the domestic supply was supplied by irrigation channels.<sup>23</sup> Hotel keepers tended to sink wells for water and a number of these wells still exist today.

### 14.1 Irrigation

In April 1889 the Rodney Irrigation Trust was gazetted. The United Echuca and Waranga Water Trust was constituted on 11 October 1882 to supply water for stock and domestic purposes in the Rodney district and any small surplus could be used for irrigation. In 1893 an 'irrigation' colony known as Eshcol was established on the Wilson channel west of Ardmona.

Ardmona was not sponsored by the government but by a group of settlers from the district. John West was commissioned by the Government to visit California, a syndicate was formed in 1886 and they purchased 280 ha and cut up the area into small holdings of from 4 – 22 ha.

The drought of 1902 showed how vital a consistent supply of water was and how productive irrigation areas could be. The Government put money into increasing water storages for irrigation. As a consequence of the success of irrigation the population of Rodney doubled between 1892 and 1923.<sup>24</sup>

The early irrigation trusts were superseded by State Rivers and Water Supply commission c 1906. In 1908 the State Rivers and Water Supply commission established an experimental farm at Tatura to show how the land should be prepared for irrigation. In 1911 it was sold as it was considered that it had done its job.

---

<sup>22</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 240

<sup>23</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 26

<sup>24</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 112

## 15.0 Dairying

The introduction of irrigation saw an increase in dairying. The development of dairying can be said to date from the Great Exhibition held at Melbourne in 1887 and 1888 when a model dairy was one of the attractions and from the sale of the first consignment of butter from Victorian co-operative factories in London in December 1889.<sup>25</sup> The *Dairy Produce Act 1919* set out to ensure that the treatment of cream in the home dairy maintained quality established in the co-operative factory. Irrigation was critical to the development of the dairying industry in Tatura.

As technologies improved and in particular refrigeration and cold storage the dairying acreage in Rodney continued to increase.

In response to the increased importance of dairying the Tatura Butter Factory and Farmer's Produce Company limited was founded in June 1907. A factory was built in Hogan Street.

## 16.0 Other Industries

### 16.1 Tomato industry

The tomato industry was assisted by the development of new tomato strains at the Research Station.

In 1946 the Rosella preserving and Manufacturing Co Ltd built a factory in Tatura.

### 16.2 Spinning

In 1958 Cleckheaton (Yorkshire) Pty Ltd dismantled a mill near Bradford England and transported it to Australia. This was one of the earliest attempts to decentralise industry. It was the largest shipment of British equipment ever received in Australia.

### 16.3 Saleyards

In April 1937, the Council established a municipal sale-yard in Tatura.

## 17.0 Newspapers

There were a number of newspapers published in Tatura during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century:

- *Tatura Guardian* – the first office of the *Guardian* was in Casey Street in 1895.
- *Tatura Herald* – commenced operations in a bark hut at the rear of Thomas Hogan's house<sup>26</sup>.
- *Tatura Independent*.
- *Tatura Free Press*.

---

<sup>25</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 161

<sup>26</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 28

## 18.0 Masonic Lodge

The first meeting of the Rodney Masonic Lodge No 219 took place on 31 May 1912 – it was held at the Mechanics' Institute. On 28 April 1924, a new Masonic Temple was dedicated and opened.

## 19.0 Public Parks

### 19.1 Public Gardens

In 1894 the public gardens were established and the founder was Charles Wilson. A memorial was erected in these gardens after his death. The gardens were the site of former town's rubbish tip but the grounds were cleared and a picket fence was erected around the perimeter. The first concert was held in 1894.

### 19.2 Lake Tatura

In 1894 the Shire dam at the foot of Francis Street was mentioned as a good place for recreation and bathing. Lake Tatura, which was near the public gardens, was officially opened by a water sports meeting on 2 March 1904.<sup>27</sup> It was also known initially as the 'Stink pot' because it is a receptacle for decaying vegetable and animal matter.

By 15 January 1904 the Lake was described as:

'the most popular resort in the town. Every evening quite a crowd assemble on the banks and seem to heartily enjoy a stroll round the edge. The committee has erected a bathing shed and also a picket fence for bathers, and this is being extensively used and enjoyed for a clear swim of about forty yards is available... It is felt that the ladies should have an opportunity of a swim in the lake, and to that end mixed bathing has been suggested; but the committee will have none of it... the ladies must frolic in the water by themselves at certain specified hours... some ladies have already had a good time when no men monsters were about... many... are... worrying over the latest thing in bathing costumes... a springboard was erected by a number of volunteers... the Urban Trust... consented to supply the water gratis... [*Free Press* 15 January 1904]<sup>28</sup>

By 1912, Lake Tatura was seen by many as 'being utilised as a manure depot or rubbish tip.'<sup>29</sup>

In April 1934, a committee formed for the beautification of Lake Tatura and the CWA made a gift of 100 flowering gums.

### 19.3 Tatura Baths

The Tatura Baths (swimming) were located at Lake Tatura and were developed during World War 1. In January 1915, Frank Beaurepaire looked at the plans for the baths and soon after a successful inaugural swimming carnival was held.

---

<sup>27</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 155

<sup>28</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 156

<sup>29</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 158

## 20.0 Services

### 20.1 Electricity

Electric light came to Tatura in September 1911.<sup>30</sup> The Butter Factory was the source of the town's supply of electricity. The factory continued to generate electricity until 1926 when the SEC took over.

### 20.2 Telephone

By 1908 telephone lines were established between the offices of the Water Commission in Tatura and district. By 1911 there were six other Tatura subscribers these included: *The Guardian* offices; Morrison and Sawers Solicitors; J McNamara and Co auctioneers; the Shire Hall; Victoria Hotel and J Bartlett the cordial manufacturer.<sup>31</sup>

### 20.3 Sewerage

Sewerage was provided for the township in 1947.

## 21.0 Shire of Rodney

The Shire of Rodney was proclaimed on 19 March 1886 and included the Parishes of Undera, Coomboona, Kyabram East, Mooroopna West, Mooroopna, Girgarre East, Toolamba West, Toolamba and North Murchison.

The first Council meeting was held in the Tatura Mechanics' Institute 15 June 1886.

## 22.0 Showgrounds

In 1880 the Tatura Show was held in Tatura (in combination with Murchison). On 20 September 1880 the society was granted a 2 ha site at Tatura by the Local Land Board at Rushworth.

In 1889 the society was named the Tatura and Goulburn Valley Agricultural Pastoral and Horticultural Association – to avoid confusion with Murchison.

---

<sup>30</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 160

<sup>31</sup> W H Bossence, *Tatura, And the Shire of Rodney*, p 169

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Bossence, W.H., *Tatura and the Shire of Rodney*, Melbourne, 1969

Chappel, K.L., *Surveying for Land Settlement in Victoria, 1836 – 1960*, Melbourne 1996

Martin, C.S., *Irrigation and Closer Settlement in the Shepparton District 1836 – 1906*, Melbourne  
1955

Roberts, S.H., *The Squatting Age in Australia 1835 – 1847*, Melbourne, 1964

Sillcock, K., *Three Life times of Dairying in Victoria*, Melbourne, 1972

Sullivan, G, *A History of Sacred Heart Parish of Tatura 1889- 1989*, Sacred Heart Parish, 1989

Winter, B., *Stalag Australia German Prisoners of War in Australia*, Melbourne 1986