

HERITAGE ROUTES AROUND MINGOOLA
WELCOME TO MINGOOLA, A PASTORAL BORDER REGION SITUATED ON THE WESTERN SLOPES AT THE BASE OF THE GREAT DIVIDING RANGE, HALFWAY BETWEEN TENTERFIELD, NSW AND TEXAS QLD.

Our community is inclusive. It has welcomed people from many different places

The Mole and Severn Rivers, Pike's Creek, Tenterfield Creek and the Dumaresq have been the life blood of the area for tens of thousands of years to the present day.

Droughts, floods and bushfires have punctuated our history, developing resilience and a sense of community along the way

Happy Travelling!

WHEN TRAVELLING, CHECK FOR ROAD CLOSURES, AND CURRENT CLOSURES WITHIN NATIONAL/STATE PARKS

TAKE CARE: SOME ROUTES INCLUDE GRAVEL ROADS, AND GATES



DRIVE SLOWLY! THERE IS A LOT TO BE SEEN

PACK A PICNIC

STOP FOR A WHILE AND ENJOY THE ENVIRONMENT

TRAVELLING STOCK ROUTES, TSR

You may enter on foot between sunrise and sunset

Enter only through unlocked gates

There are walking tracks in Torrington State Conservation Area and Sundown National Park

THINGS TO REMEMBER WHEN STOPPING

Don't park in front of gates or block tracks

If you stop on the road, make sure you have pulled off safely

Don't park on long grass (fire danger)

Leave gates open or closed as you find them

Exercise caution around stock.

Drive slowly to avoid collisions with wildlife!



Mail was delivered twice a week from Tenterfield



Mustering on horseback



Find Us!
Facebook Mingoola Community

First Nations Peoples have lived in the Mingoola district for tens of thousands of years. Tenterfield Shire Council acknowledges the traditional custodians of this land and pays respect to Elders past, present and emerging.

The Council proudly protects and supports the cultural, built and natural heritage values of the Mingoola district.

Acknowledgments to Heritage NSW for the grant funding to celebrate the heritage of the Mingoola Area in this project; to Julia Harpham, Janet White, Deborah Wray Clarence Heritage for historical research, the preparation of interpretive signage and brochures, and innumerable generous people for their time and help with research.

Photos: Martin l'ons, Annabelle Hickson, Nik Saccon, Elizabeth Bennett, Julia Harpham.

Cover: Dumaresq Valley looking west – grazing country, crops, vineyard and Lime Mine at Riverton.

Design: Kerry Hardy **W:** baabaa.net



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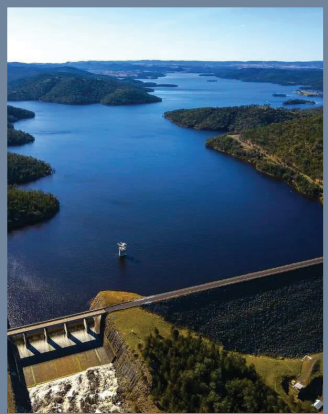
MINGOOLA HERITAGE TRAIL

OUR AGRICULTURAL AND INDUSTRIAL HERITAGE – MAKING A LIVING



Click the QR code for the online version

WATER



Glenlyon Dam full



Glenlyon Dam 2019 drought

The 'boom and bust' of industries and agriculture related to markets, the Great Depression, droughts, floods, prickly pear, dingoes, rabbits and kangaroos has punctuated our history; droughts, dry river beds, and floods being the most damaging. Early warning systems and real time water data for floods are not adequate for our needs at this point.

The climate, suitable for many different crops, is dependent on water, supplied from streams, wells, small dams and since 1984, bores. Irrigation was limited to 400 acres, but this changed to megalitre licences after 1976 when the Glenlyon Dam wall was completed. The Glenlyon Dam lies just across the Queensland border. This mostly reliable water supply has greatly changed agricultural practices in the valley. Windmills were initially used, and then diesel engines, and tractors with a belt, to pump water from the river. Flood channels, then hand shift and end tow mechanisms were used to water crops, but since 1978 centre pivots connected to mains power have become common. The Glenlyon Dam has made a significant difference to our community, not only for agricultural purposes, but is popular for tourists, camping, water sports and fishing

Major Droughts were the **Federation Drought**, 1898-1903, 1914-15, 1922-23, 1937-45, 1965-68, 1994, **Millenium Drought** 1997- 2009, and 2018-20.

Major Floods occurred in 1890, 1921, 1956, 1976, 1996, 2011, 2021 and 2022.



ROADS, POWER AND COMMUNICATIONS



Cobb and Co coach ran from Tenterfield to Bonshaw and Ashford

Bruxner Way was developed by joining up lengths of different roads into the present route. Maidenhead and Mingoola Stations were linked by a track which joined the Bonshaw-Ashford track. The current road was unsealed until the 1970s, triggered by the building of the Glenlyon Dam.

In the late 1800s a Cobb and Co coach ran from Tenterfield to Bonshaw and Ashford, changing horses at the Pig & Whistle, Mole Vale, Riverton and Moorabinda. It was still running in the early 1900s.

Until the **bridges** were built, (Mole River Bridge -1932, Hynes Bridge at Riverton - 1941, and Beardy River Bridge -1935), there was an alternative route through Reedy Creek and Torrington to Tenterfield. Mail was delivered twice a week from Tenterfield, which has not changed!

The era of kerosene lamps and fridges, Gloria and carbide gas lights, early Delco home lighting plants, drip and charcoal safes, steam engines and cranky, hard to start oil engines, was completely revolutionised by **rural power**, which changed country living and work practices forever. In 1945 the North West County Council was gazetted, and in 1958 the Ashford Power station opened. In the 60s Mole River properties were supplied with poles and wires from Tenterfield to the Riverton Lime Mine, at a cost of £998. The Dumaresq Valley was powered by NWCC during the 1960s also, for £1500 a supply. In the early 1970s NWCC built a line to Glenlyon Dam, which linked onto the Tenterfield line near Sovereignton. These days solar panels on rooves are common, and some farms are powered off the grid.

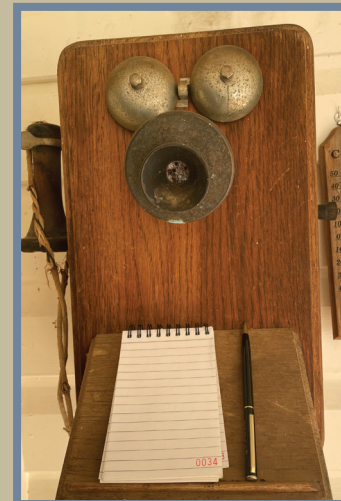
MOLE RIVER BRIDGE OPENED
TENTERFIELD, Thursday.
 The new bridge across the Mole River, 2 1/2 miles from Tenterfield, was officially opened by the president of the Shire Council (Mr. H. Smith). The bridge is a low level structure, and consists of two spans of 32 feet and two spans of 35 feet. During excavations nearly 5,000,000 gallons of water were pumped out of the coffer dams, 11,000 and 33 tons of cement were used in construction, reinforcements were used in piers and approaches. The cost of the bridge was £1770, £590 of which was obtained from the Government, £354/10/ was found by the Shire Council, and local residents contributed the balance of £625/10/.



Hynes Bridge on Dumaresq River, during flood



Lighting before electricity



Party lines

The **phone lines** from the interwar period were party lines erected and maintained by farmers, with a telephonist employed to manually connect callers. There were three party lines out of Waropurra and several from Bonshaw. Later the Barwick exchange was established at Mingoola. Automatic exchanges, UHF, mobile phone coverage, radios and the internet have meant locals are now able to conduct their businesses from home.

GRAZING

Horses were intrinsic to everyday life in the early days, and used for work and for travel. Some escaped from mines and stations, and descendants can still be found in the bush country.

Merino sheep were reared on many properties, the climate being suitable for fine wool. Properties within the area frequently topped the wool market. The wool sales were the high point of the year, with farmers anxiously awaiting the results of their year's work. Originally wool was taken to Ashford, and on to Sydney, but with better roads it then went to Brisbane. Dingoes, foxes and wild dogs still make grazing sheep difficult, but prickly pear is not the problem it once was.

Cattle, and **merino** and **crossbred sheep**, have remained the most prevalent farming products. In the 1950s and 60s the area was quite prosperous with the price of wool and cattle and the growing of tobacco. Before good roads, cattle were walked to the railhead at Wallangarra or the sale yards at Tenterfield.

Goats, **pigs**, and **deer** have been farmed as well. Unfortunately, some have escaped and become feral, and cause serious environmental damage. Recreational hunting is a popular pastime, offered on some properties by arrangement. A large kangaroo population grazes grass as well, and has little regard for traffic on the roads.

Rabbits were introduced to Australia for hunting, but from the 1920s their numbers reached plague proportions. However, a vibrant local economy based on trapping, processing and selling rabbit meat and rabbit skins provided a lucrative business for meat and fur. Rabbit fur is still used in the production of Akubra Hats. During the Depression and until the 1980s many people depended on the rabbit industry for an income. The release of the Myxomatosis virus (1950s) and Calicivirus (1995) have decimated the rabbit population.

The Texas Rabbit Works was the last operating rabbit factory and is the last remaining building of its kind in Australia. It operated until 1992 and is now a 'must-see' museum.

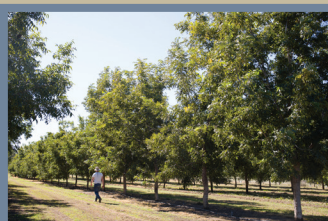


Rabbits reached plague proportions



Merino wether

CROPS



Pecan Faru



Charcoal Burners



Native Plant Nursery



Centre Pivot

The climate and soils are suitable for many different **crops**. The first growers of **tobacco** were Chinese in 1881. By 1901 others were growing it. During the Depression more was grown, mainly by Chinese and southern European immigrants, and some locals. After 1945, many people from Spain, Malta, Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, Germany and Holland moved to the district to share-farm the tobacco. Tobacco was widely grown on the Mole and the Dumaresq Rivers. Riverton Station at one time had the largest tobacco growing area with 24 growers. Growers grew, picked, and then dried the leaves in the many barns scattered around the landscape. It was a valuable crop and many growers became wealthy from their hard work.

The construction of the Glenlyon Dam boosted crop production. Lucerne hay, all manner of vegetables, cotton, cereal crops, grapes, pecans and fruit trees are grown. Driving along the Dumaresq Valley you might notice some 30,000 **pecan trees**. Fed by drip irrigation, the alluvial river loam suits pecans, and in Australia diseases and insects are not a problem. They are grown without the use of insecticides.

Other businesses include a native plant nursery, piggery, farm stays, camping and B&Bs, a worm farm, flower farm and a local produce store. Two local wineries, Reedy Creek Wines and Bruxner's Run (formerly Dumaresq Valley Vineyard) are popular tourist destinations.

Carbon credits and Biodiversity offsets are a possible future source of income for landowners in this area.

MINING & INDUSTRY

Arsenic was discovered by Dick Patching and Archie Nelmes about 1920 on Mole Station. The **Arsenic Mine** ore at Mole Station contained 25 to 30 % Arsenic. It was the largest producer in NSW and the only one mined solely for arsenic. Arsenic was mainly used for the control of prickly pear in QLD and NSW. The demand for arsenic pentoxide for pear control diminished with the introduction of the Cactoblastis moth. Mining ceased in 1935. It was a very prosperous mine, with a large settlement of tin huts and canvas tents. A school and a post office were established there.

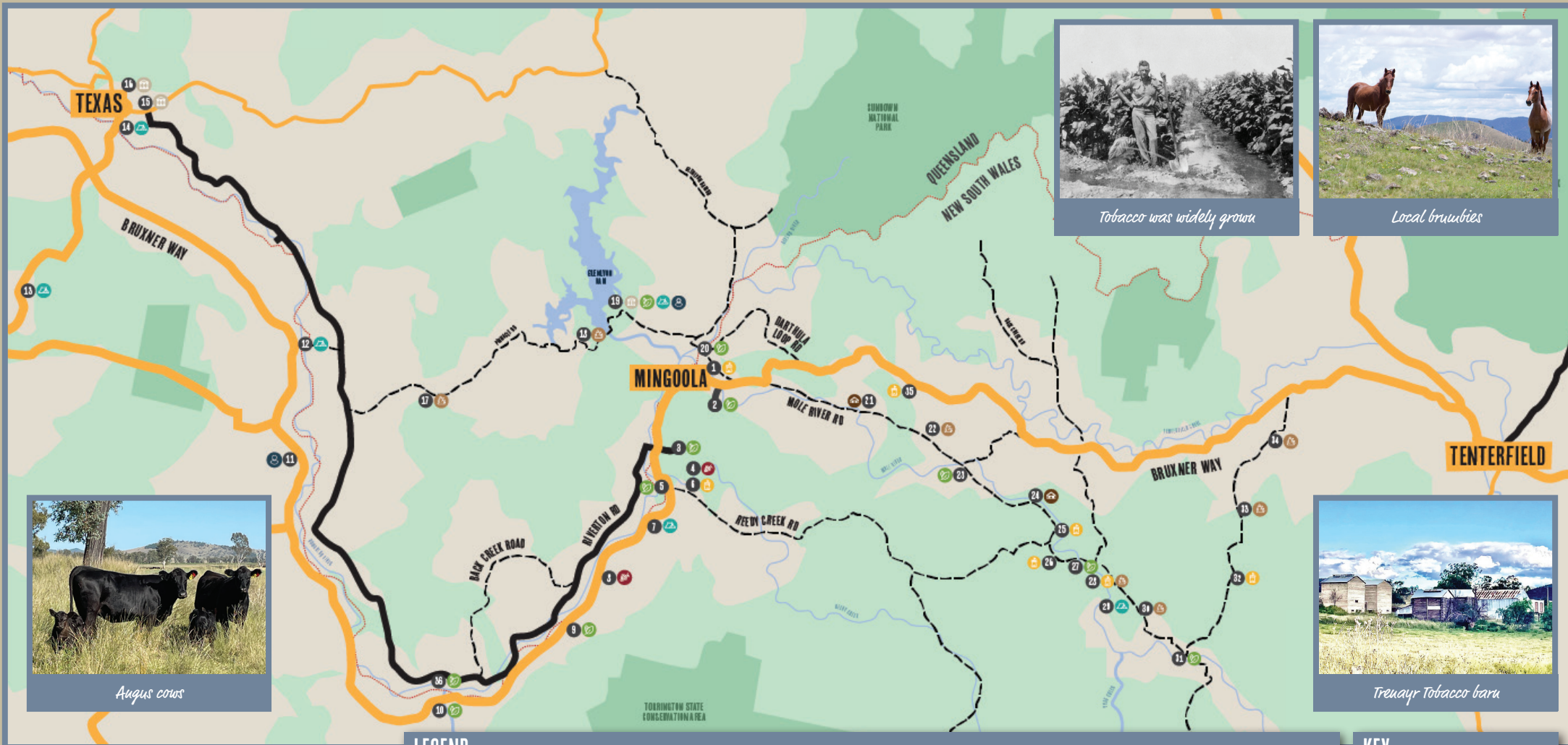
The opencut **Limestone Mine at Riverton** was established in 1960. Still operating, it is a significant local employer. Limestone is drilled and blasted, then carted to one of three crusher mills – a Cage Mill, Jacques Mill and Van Gelder Mill. The product is mostly used for fertilizer, in liquid stock feeds, ordinary stock feed, as well as glass lime, particularly for production of beer bottles. The Riverton Limestone deposit is almost pure calcium carbonate CaCO_3 , with virtually no silica or contaminants. There is probably still enough deposit to mine for another 100 years.

A few small **gold** mines existed in the early days. Panning may, if you are lucky, find a few tiny specks of gold! Tin mining was more prevalent and successful towards Torrington.

During World War 2, a group of workmen cut dead ironbark trees from paddocks on the property now known as Wandinong, and burned them in squat brick kilns, to make charcoal for use in producer-gas units on vehicles. These were fitted to most council vehicles, and many tonnes of charcoal were produced. It was a poor substitute for petrol, but kept the trucks on the road. A relic of ingenuity to find a suitable substitute for scarce petrol, the **charcoal burners** can be seen from Bruxner Way. They cannot be accessed, and there is no safe parking, but if you drive slowly, you can see them from the road!

Timber Milling was a profitable industry up until the 1960s with two timber mills, one at Riverton owned by Rex Weight, and another at Monkstadt by Harry Smith. Local housing and sheds were built using local timber, milled locally.

Quartz in the area may indicate the presence of gold, and a few small gold mines existed in the early days.



Tobacco was widely grown



Local brumbies



Angus cows



Trenayr Tobacco barn



1927 Arsenic Mine Mole Station

LEGEND

- 1: Mingoala
- 2: Mole River Bridge, Mingoala
- 3: Hynes Bridge, Riverton
- 4: Reedy Creek Wines
- 5: Travelling Stock Reserve
- 6: Moorabinda Woolshed
- 7: Roseneath Station
- 8: Bruxner's Run Winery
- 9: Pecan farm
- 10: Travelling Stock Reserve
- 11: Bonshaw Store
- 12: Bonshaw Weir Camping
- 13: Goat Rock Camping Ground
- 14: Texas free Camp
- 15: Texas Rabbit Works
- 16: Texas Heritage Centre and Tobacco Museum
- 17: The Pinnacle
- 18: Glenlyon Dam Lookout
- 19: Glenlyon Dam
- 20: Dumaresq River Bridge, Mingoala Station Road
- 21: Trenayr Tobacco Barns and Woolshed
- 22: View to Rock of Gibraltar
- 23: Watts Crossing on Mole River
- 24: Cypress Tobacco Barn and Hayshed
- 25: Mole River Schoolhouse
- 26: Harold's Hut
- 27: Mole River Bridge, Mole River
- 28: Arsenic Mine
- 29: Ringtree Cabins
- 30: View to Ararat and Razorback
- 31: Mole Rive Bridge, Woodside Road
- 32: McAllister Grave
- 33: View of Red Rock Peak
- 34: Granite Boulders
- 35: Charcoal Burners
- 36: Maidenhead Crossing Dumaresq River

KEY

- Nature
- Geology
- History
- Camping
- Museum
- Winery
- Tobacco barns
- General Store Food/Fuel/Toilets
- QUEENSLAND/NSW BORDER
- MAIN ROAD
- UNSEALED ROAD
- MINOR ROAD