



## Mathoura's Pubs

From time to time a story surfaces that Mathoura at one time had up to a dozen pubs. The truth is that, although over time there may have been about a dozen hotel names in the district, the town itself has never had more than five licensed hotels operating at the same time.

The first pub was an apparently unlicensed establishment called Ward's Inn which is shown on an 1848 map of the region. It was at that time, according to one account, the only watering hole between the Wanderer Inn at Deniliquin and Maiden's Junction Hotel at Moama and initially catered for the overlanders who had begun bringing stock through the area.

Around 1853 Ward's Inn became the Redbank Inn, its licence held by William Carter who had been farming on part of Peter Stuckey's Mathoura Station, between the Edward and Murray rivers, since about 1846.

Carter set about improving the inn and soon had a vineyard, orchard and market garden established. He also erected a new brick hotel.

At that time a correspondent to the Melbourne Argus claimed that the Redbank Inn was one of the best accommodation houses between Wagga and Melbourne. When the coaches began running from Deniliquin to Melbourne around 1858 the Redbank Inn was an important stop. Horses were changed and meals or refreshments taken. The coaches also gave rise to other wayside inns being built at Hill Plain

(between Mathoura and Deniliquin), Moira and the Yellow Waterhole (near the present Barmah turn-off). All of them died when the coaches stopped running in 1876.

Carter continued to extend the Redbank and to irrigate his orchard but he overextended his financial resources and by 1865 had become insolvent.

The inn was purchased by Henry Burton whose circus had become an institution throughout the eastern colonies. The inn continued to operate but now also became the winter headquarters for the circus.

Burton continued refining the hotel. He built what was called by the Pastoral Times a "bush bar" to which he banished the town rowdies so that his more refined clientele might better enjoy the comforts of the main building.

Burton was declared bankrupt while attending an international exhibition in Sydney in 1880. He leased out the bush bar to Daniel O'Sullivan and used the main hotel building as his residence until 1883.

By 1868 the Redbank had competition. The Mathoura Hotel was established by Duncan Campbell on the corner of Jones Street (Picnic Point Road) and Carter Street. He held the license until 1871. Subsequent licensees were: Edward Cooper, 1871-73; John Finnessy, 1873-77; George Bowtell, 1877-78 and William Warden, 1878-82.

For the convenience of travellers, the Mathoura Hotel had a blacksmith shop next door.



*The former Redbank Inn, built by William Carter in the 1850s, photographed before it was destroyed in 1970. It was located on the Cobb Highway opposite the end of Frome Street and replaced an earlier shanty known as Ward's Inn. From 1865 to 1880 it was headquarters of the famous Burtons Circus.*

*The Pastoral Hotel about 1910. It began life as a London Tavern and was then known as the Railway Hotel until about 1900. Around 1915 the weatherboard building was replaced by the present brick structure (insert)*



A third hotel opened about 1873. The Kangaroo Hotel was built on what is now the Cobb highway by Mrs Mary Ann Ryan and was located a little south of and opposite the Redbank Inn. Mrs Ryan had previously operated the Railway Terminus Hotel in Moama.

When Mrs Ryan died in 1898 her daughter Matilda took over. Although there was a succession of licensees, Matilda still owned the building when she was killed in a buggy accident in 1913. The licensees were: 1899-1901: William Bowtell, 1901-06: Matthew Lyons (Matilda's husband), 1906-09(?): James T Martin, 1911-1912(?): Francis Sparrow, 1912: Keiran A Cummings. Most were connected to the Ryan family.

By 1913 it was known as Tattersalls Club Hotel. When it burned down in 1914 it was rebuilt on the corner of Lawrence and Livingstone Streets where it continues to trade.

The Ryan family association continued until 1918 when the licence was transferred from William Bowtell to Thomas Fleming. A popular host, Fleming held the licence until 1941.

In 1877 a fourth hotel began trading in Mathoura. It was the Railway Station Hotel and, as the name suggests, was actually part of the new railway station — which had been built the previous year — but also had a frontage to Livingstone Street. The first licensee was Henri Menere who seems to have been Henry Burton's manager. He held the licence until 1880.

Subsequent licensees were: Helen O'Sullivan, the widow of Daniel O'Sullivan — who was also the postmistress and lessee of the Redbank Inn — 1880; Catherine Phillips, 1881; John Boothman, 1882-5; Thomas Cowley 1886-7; and Dennis Ryan, 1888-1916.

Dennis Ryan was the son of Mary Ann Ryan of Kangaroo Hotel fame and had probably learned the trade in his mother's hotels.

Dennis Ryan died suddenly in 1916. The hotel continued trading until 1925 when its final licensee, John Charleston, built a new hotel across the road and transferred the license there.

Delicensed following a fire, it has become a B&B, trading as Charleston House.

The coming of the railway had a profound influence on Mathoura. The railway station was built near what had been known as "Burton's paddock", owned by the circus man, and was some distance from the township which at that time surrounded the Redbank, the Mathoura and the Kangaroo.

A gentleman named James Willoughby seems to have realised that the town was about to relocate. An native of Surrey, England, he opened the London Tavern in Livingstone Street in 1877. When his wife died in 1880 he moved to Deniliquin and it appears his pub was then renamed the Railway Hotel, even though the Railway Station Hotel was just up the street. The Railway's first licensee was a Mr Wyatt who also conducted a general store on the premises. He held the licence from 1881 to 1883 and was followed by William Warden, 1883-84; Henry Watts, 1884-89; Charles Penglase, 1890-93 and William L Kerr 1893-99.

Around the turn of the 20th century the Railway was renamed the Pastoral Hotel. Originally a weatherboard building, it was rebuilt in brick soon after the relocation of the Tattersall's Club Hotel.

Early in the 20th century part of the Pastoral served as a temporary council chamber and office for the fledgling Murray Shire, pending the erection of the Shire Hall in 1910.

The Pastoral has the distinction of the longest history of trading on the one site but the honours for the longest continuous licence appear to belong to the Tattersall's Club (formerly the Kangaroo).

*Researched and written by David Joss*

*Sources: Pastoral Times newspaper, Deniliquin: Hotels of Western New South Wales unpublished manuscript compiled by Peter Mill and Bill Mulham, located in Deniliquin Library, Saltbush Country by John Bushby, Melbourne Argus newspaper*

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