

Towns Within Our Shire

"The Wollondilly region covers 2,560 square kilometres across the idyllic south-western outskirts of Sydney. Nestled in the foothills of the Southern Highlands and the Blue Mountains World Heritage Area.

With natural beauty at every turn, the Dilly as it is affectionately referred to by the locals, stretches from Warragamba in the north, Appin to the east, Bargo to the south and Yerranderie and the Burragorang Valley to the west." For information on attractions in the area head to [Visit Wollondilly](#).

Here is a small snippet of history relating to 26 towns in the Shire. You will find a selection of resources held in the Library collection as well as links to collocated Historical Societies and Museums. For the record of all Library resources relating to each town, search in the [Library's Catalogue](#).

Appin

Governor Macquarie named Appin in 1811, after a small coastal village in Scotland where his wife was born

Next year Macquarie gave 100 acres to Andrew Hume, who had sailed to NSW in 1789 as an agriculture instructor.

Hume settled at Appin with his children, including his sons Hamilton and John, both anxious to explore. In 1814, 17-year-old Hamilton made his first exploratory trip south. With John and an Aboriginal boy, he crossed the Razor Back Range and explored the area known as Berrima, Picton, Mittagong, Bowral and Bong Bong. After another trip in 1816 down to the Goulburn Plains, Hamilton Hume was granted 300 acres at Appin.

The upper reaches of the Georges River was once known by its Aboriginal name of Toggerai or Tuggerah Creek. Conflict between white settlers and the Tharawal-speaking tribe that lived at Appin resulted in an expedition by the military in which fourteen Aboriginal people were killed and five captured.

In 1824, explorers, Hume and Hovell commenced their expedition to Port Phillip from this district and a monument stands on the road from Campbelltown commemorating the commencement of that journey.

Library Resources

[Appin : the story of a Macquarie town / Anne-Maree Whitaker](#)
[Chronicles of Appin, NSW / by Syd Percival](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[Appin Historical Society Inc](#)

Bargo

In this district white settlers first recorded sightings of the koala, lyrebird and wombat.

Ex-convict John Wilson noted the three animals in his diary describing the lyrebird as a pheasant, hence the name Pheasants Nest, and recorded the koala as being known to the Aboriginal people as Cullawine.

The area boasts two sanctuaries. Australian Wildlife Sanctuary formerly known as Wirrimbirra, a local Aboriginal word meaning sanctuary, is preserved as a remnant of the original Bargo Bush, once the haunt of bushrangers. The unique Dingo Sanctuary is located in a natural setting for Australia's native dog.

Library Resources

[The History of Bargo / Edward Brodie](#)
[Pictorial history of Bargo Public School: 1869-1988/ compiled by Lyn Bright, Del Britten, Carolyn Cross](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[Picton & District Historical & Family History Society](#)

Belimbla Park

The name Belimbla Park goes back to the 1940s.

At that time an area between The Oaks and Oakdale was selected for a plantation of a particular type of eucalyptus, native to the Belimbla Creek near Tumut.

Library Resources

[Belimbla Park, eucalyptus oil production plant \[picture\]](#)

Brownlow Hill

Near the Sydney University Farms Complex is Brownlow Hill Loop Road.

A detour along this short gravel road provides some lovely scenery surrounding Brownlow Hill Homestead.

Library Resources

There are currently no specific titles for this location. Resources on this location may be available within other [Local Studies resources](#).

Buxton

Buxton, one of our pleasant village communities, is named after a town in Derbyshire, England.

Library Resources

[Buxton Primary School : a brief history of the first hundred years 1894-1994](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[Picton & District Historical & Family History Society](#)

Camden Park

John Macarthur's property, Camden Park Estate, gives its name to this area.

The original Macarthur family homes, Camden Park House and Belgenny Farm, are also contained in the property (open to the public at special times and by arrangement).

Library Resources

[Camden Park Estate 1795-1965, Australia's oldest pastoral property / Camden Park Estate Pty. Ltd](#)

Cawdor

The district of Cawdor has very close links with earliest white settlement of Australia and several examples of early architecture.

Library Resources

[A glimpse of Cawdor / John Burge](#)
[Snap shots of early Cawdor pioneers /](#)
[Daphne Koob & Suzanne Voytas](#)

Couridjah

One can only speculate on the origin of Couridjah's Aboriginal name meaning "Home of the white ants".

Located on the Old Loop Line Railway, Couridjah once served as the major railhead for local produce from as far afield as Bargo. The historic railway station is famous for its appearance in television advertising and film.

Make sure you don't miss seeing the historic Pumphouse at Thirlmere Lakes National Park.

Library Resources

[A Brief History of Couridjah in the Wollondilly Shire of New South Wales /](#)
[Karyn Chalk](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[Picton & District Historical & Family History Society](#)

Douglas Park

The village of Douglas Park is named after Dr HG Douglas, an eminent man in his time who served as clerk of the Legislative Council and later as an elected member.

You can explore Douglas Park causeway and discover relics of the original water crossing, and other historic sites include St Mary Towers, now a Monastery.

Library Resources

[Centenary of public education, Douglas Park 1883-1983 / Douglas Park Public School. Centenary Committee](#)

Glenmore

Glenmore, first settled in 1840, was the home of ex-convict Edward Moore who purchased 2000 acres.

His descendants still live in the area.

Library Resources

[Glenmore Uniting Church \(formally Methodist\) graveyard: transcript, burial record and obituaries / compiled by Marlane Joan Fairfax](#)
[The House and Garden at Glenmore: landscape, memory, seasons, home / Mickey Robertson; photography Daniel Shipp](#)

Menangle

The village of Menangle grew to service the operations of Camden Park Estate.

The opening of the railway in 1863 enabled overnight milk deliveries to the Sydney market, beating the summer heat in the days before refrigeration. The local store was built about 1904.

The railway bridge over the Nepean River is the oldest in use today.

Library Resources

[A History of the St. James Church of England, Menangle 1876-1976 / researched and recorded by Vera Hawkey](#)
[Along the Menangle Road: a concise history of the land grants on Menangle Road between Menangle Bridge and the junction with Picton Road / Ken Williams](#)

Mount Hunter

The original inhabitants of Mount Hunter were the Tharawal and Gundungurra peoples. Another tribe in the area was called Cubbitch-barta, the name coming from words for the white pipe clay. The township is named after Governor Hunter, who visited the region in 1796.

Library Resources

[Mount Hunter Public School: 125 years of education, 1859-1984](#)

Mowbray Park

The property known today as Mowbray Park was purchased in 1876 by William Barker who successfully claimed the title Baron Mowbray. The homestead was built in 1884.

Historic buildings can be viewed by enjoying a visit to Mowbray Park Farmstay.

Library Resources

[With the best of intentions: Stories from Dr Barnardo's farm school at Mowbray Park, near The Oaks, NSW / Doreen Lyon](#)

Nattai & the Burragorang Valley

Exploration of the Burragorang Valley commenced in 1802 and the first bridle track followed the explorer's trail. A zig zag road up the mountain started as a track for horses and bullocks but was later made a wagon road, even though it was very steep. The valley became a popular tourist destination and featured many guesthouses. Completion of Warragamba Dam flooded the valley and residents were moved into the neighbouring towns.

From Nattai township, the road leads to the Burragorang Lookout. The history of the valley is displayed at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre in The Oaks.

Library Resources

[A valley lost \[sound recording\] : leaving the Burragorang / ABC Radio National](#)
[Valley of Wealth: A Burragorang coal story / Ian Frederick Welsh](#)
[Shack country and the old Burragorang / Jim Barrett](#)
[The History of the Burragorang from the Records / Sonja den Hertog; produced by The Oaks Historical Society.](#)
[Life in the Burragorang / Jim Barrett.](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[The Oaks Historical Society](#)

Web Resources

[Burragorang State Conservation Area](#)

Oakdale

Oakdale is part of the traditional lands of the Tharawal peoples, later inhabited by the Gundungurra people from Burragorang Valley when their numbers declined after wars with the early European settlers. Today, Oakdale is a strong fruit growing region.

Library Resources

[Oakdale and a Century of Apple Growing / researched and compiled by Colin Sproule for The Oaks Historical Society.](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[The Oaks Historical Society](#)

Picton

The first land grant in the Picton area was to Major Henry Colden Antill, the town at the time was known as Stonequarry. The name Picton is believed to have been chosen to honour Sir Thomas Picton, an old soldier friend of Governor Brisbane.

Picton displays its colonial past with many historic buildings in the town and surrounding areas. Its railway heritage is particularly significant and is symbolised by a unique and splendid railway viaduct. The Viaduct was built in the early 1860s to take the railway line over Stonequarry Creek and on to Mittagong. It was the first viaduct built on the NSW railway system and is still in use today on the main southern railway system.

The 1860s was a busy period in Picton's infrastructure history. In 1863 the railway system made Picton a major changeover station for rail staff, who became residents of Picton. This created a general building explosion.

Head to the [Visit Wollondilly Website](#) and discover attractions in and around Picton village, including the mushroom tunnel, St Mark's Church and the Pioneer cemetery.

Library Resources

[The forgotten village of Picton: introducing Upper Picton / Liz Vincent](#)
[Early Days of Picton / Rev Jas Steele](#)
[A Brief History of Picton / Liz Vincent](#)
[A History of Lodge Picton / David Squirrel](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[Picton & District Historical & Family History Society](#)

Pheasants Nest

In this district white settlers first recorded sightings of the koala, lyrebird and wombat.

Ex-convict John Wilson noted the three animals in his diary describing the lyrebird as a pheasant, hence the name Pheasants Nest, and recorded the koala as being known to the Aboriginal people as Cullawine.

Library Resources

Resources on this location may be available within the Library's [Local Studies Collection](#)

Razorback

The first road over Razorback Range was cleared in 1825.

A more direct route, which the road follows today, was marked in 1830. Road maintenance work was carried out by convict gangs and later by government gangs.

The range was named after a wild pig species called Razorback because of their serrated bristles.

The panoramic views to Sydney are well worth a stop at the Lookout.

Library Resources

[The Old Razorback Schoolhouse 1882-1898 / Elizabeth Villy.](#)
[The Old Razorback Road: life on the Great South Road between Camden and Picton, 1830-1930 / Elizabeth Villy](#)

Silverdale

Silverdale is the gateway to Sydney's water supply and a quiet retreat nestled by the side of Warragamba Dam.

Library Resources

[A History of the Silverdale - Warragamba, Werombi - Wallacia, Greendale Districts of New South Wales / James McClelland](#)

Tahmoor

Over the years, present day Tahmoor has had many names.

These have included Myrtle Creek, Bargo, Bargo West, Cordeaux, Bronzewing Park and finally Tahmoor, a local Aboriginal word for "Bronzewinged Pigeon".

Although it is a modern town, there are intriguing pockets of history and general interest. It boasts the oldest house in the Shire - the Travellers Inn, now privately owned.

Library Resources

[River Road, Tahmoor: record of existing builddings in proposed subdivisions / Black Mountain Projects Pty Ltd \[for\] Wollondilly Shire Council.](#)
[A Short History of Tahmoor / F. B. Knox](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[Picton & District Historical & Family History Society](#)

Theresa Park

Theresa Park is a picturesque rural residential district with some lovely modern homes in a perfect country setting.

Library Resources

There are currently no specific resources for this location. Resources on this location may be available within the Library's [Local Studies Collection](#).

The Oaks

A growing town that melds heritage with new urban development, The Oaks offers a welcome rest point along a scenic drive through the Shire.

Originally called "The Private Village of Vanderville" by the owner, Emmeline Ann Susannah Wild, the property was given the name "The Oaks" in 1810 by George Caley, Government Botanist, after dominant She Oaks and River Oaks in the forests.

Library Resources

[We deliver: a brief history of the early days of mail delivery and The Oaks Post Office, 1858-2008 / Louisa Singleman](#)
[We had a ball: twenty-five debutante balls in The Oaks, 1973-1999 / The Oaks Historical Society](#)
[The history of The Oaks from the records / Sonja den Hertog](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[The Oaks Historical Society](#)

Thirlmere

Thirlmere was named after a lake in Cumberland, England. Today it is known for its Railway Museum and the nearby Thirlmere Lakes National Park. These lakes are among the last undisturbed freshwater lakes in the Sydney region and have a unique marine life.

Library Resources

[Thirlmere Public School 1888 - 1988 / Thirlmere Public School Committee](#)
[Thirlmere Estonian Community Pioneers / Elizabeth Villy](#)
[From Estonia to Thirlmere: Stories From A Unique Community / edited by Doreen Lyon](#)
[Locomotive Guide: Thirlmere Railway Museum / Gifford H. Eardley](#)

Historical Societies & Museums

[The Oaks Historical Society](#)
[Picton & District Historical & Family History Society](#)

Web Resources

[Thirlmere Lakes National Park](#)
[NSW Rail Museum - Thirlmere](#)

Warragamba

The gateway to Sydney's water supply, the village of Warragamba is a quiet retreat nestled by the side of Warragamba Dam.

A visit to the village will reveal some quaint shops, houses and narrow streets giving visitors insight into life during the construction of the dam.

Library Resources

[A photographic History of Warragamba / article put together by George Morgan for Warragamba Public School ; photos from private collection plus old Sydney Water Journals & Sydney Catchment Authority archives.](#)
[Warragamba Dam: 50th Anniversary 1960-2010 / Sydney Catchment Authority](#)
[A flood of memories: Warragamba Public School 50 years Celebration 1948-1998 / Warragamba Public School P & C Committee](#)
[Warragamba Dam: Thank God there were no Greenies / Red Morgan](#)

Web Resources

[Water NSW - Warragamba Dam](#)

Wilton

Town lots in the settlement of Wilton were first sold in 1844 and the Church of England received two acres for a church, school and parsonage in 1866.

With the introduction of coal mining in the district, miner's homes were built in the village and more recent growth has been experienced with young families moving into the town.

The NSW Department of Planning and Environment has rezoned the Wilton South East Precinct. This is the first stage of the Wilton New Town planning proposal which could eventually see over 50,000 people calling Wilton home.

Library Resources

[Wilton Park, Wilton: local environment study / prepared for Wollondilly Shire Council by Steven Layman Consulting Pty Ltd, architect & town planners](#)
Other resources may be found in the Library's [Local Studies Collection](#).

Yanderra

Yanderra is a small rural town with orchards nearby. It takes its name from the Aboriginal word for the turpentine tree.

Library Resources

There are currently no Library resources specifically for this location. Resources on this location may be available within the Library's [Local Studies Collection](#).

Yerranderie

Silver was discovered at Yerranderie in 1871 with silver mines opening in 1898.

For 20 years the teams hauled machinery and silver until the vast yield gave out. Guesthouses and camping resorts opened and revitalised the town as a tourist resort until 1960 when Warragamba Dam was completed and the valley flooded. Today, visitors can still enjoy the peace and serenity of the valley and explore the heritage of days gone by.

Library Resources

[Yerranderie is my Dreaming / Sonja den Hertog](#)

Web Resources

[Yerranderie Private Town](#)