



Dinga Dingi Homestead



The Dinga Dingi homestead is the oldest, remaining, intact, structure within the shire. It is important for its historical association with the social and sporting life of the early Stockinbingal district community, when the building operated as a hotel. It is a fine example of a mid-Georgian style inn and homestead and demonstrates the characteristics of such buildings.

The bricks for the Dinga Dingi homestead were made just 300m away on the creek, most of them bearing the maker's thumb prints. The walls are 35cm thick and all the nails were handmade. The timber used was all pit-sawn from local cypress pine. The roof was covered with wooden shingles, which were handmade. These are in fact still in place and can be seen below the iron which now covers the roof.

Originally built as a homestead, the building contains nine rooms, three large rooms across the front and six small across the back. The verandah shades three sides of the homestead. Pairs of shuttered, cedar French doors open from the two main rooms to the front verandah. Twelve-paned sash windows, on the rear or Western wall, were originally protected by shutters. The bar has long since been removed, but the huge cellar, accessible from inside and out, remains. The wooden step of the bar entrance is worn hollow by the passage of countless feet.

The huge original kitchen, which was big enough to dance in, was built 5-6m from the rear of the house. This was a normal practice because if there was a fire in the kitchen it would not burn the rest of the house down.

Dinga Dingi was situated on a big stock route that started in Queensland and ended at Wodonga. Many drovers would have called in at the Shamrock Inn to quench their thirst, as did some early bushrangers. The bushrangers hid their horses in the nearby Bland Creek while they were up at the hotel. One would stay behind to watch for the troopers. In these early days one of the inside doors had a bullet shot through it. The hole in the door is remembered by Mr Robert Gentle who later grew up in the homestead.

Dinga Dingi was a stop over for coaches and mail services through the area. Cobb & Co used the Hotel along their North-South route between Sydney and Port Phillip. Parts of the old tracks are still visible in the surrounding paddocks. As well as a welcome resting place for weary drovers and travellers over the years, Dinga Dingi hosted weddings, church services, picnics, athletics meetings, shooting parties, dances and horse races followed by balls.

1844—Daniel Dacey is recorded at Cunningham Creek, near Murrumburrah

4 January 1846—Daniel Dacey is residing at Grogan Creek run (later known as Dinga Dingi) with an area of 5 miles by 5 miles (8km x 8km), in slab huts and three residents. The property was running 150 cattle and 3 horses.
13 January 1848—Daniel Dacey is at Grogan Creek, an area of 30,080 acres (12,172ha), in slab huts and five residents. Stock numbers have increased and they are now running 360 cattle and 11 horses. They are also producing cheese, 2 1/2 tonnes being recorded, which they would have sold.

17 July 1848—Six months later the number of residents had doubled to 10. They have one acre in cultivation and now have 3 1/2 tonnes of cheese. It could be assumed that this is around the time that the homestead building was commenced, given the significant increase of residents living at the property.

4 April, 1857— Daniel Dacey died from lung disease and was buried at Galong. He died without a Will, but the Supreme Court awarded Catherine the entire assets, as sole claimant on the estate.

22 June, 1859—Catherine Dacey purchased under Pre-Emptive Right 320 acres at Yeo Yeo Creek, now known as the Bland Creek, for £320. We know the homestead was standing at this time because the measurements for the block were taken from the Eastern most point of the station dwelling.

1865— The first references so far found of the homestead operating with a publican's licence in Catherine Dacey's name, known as the Shamrock Inn. It is believed that the hotel had been running as an unlicensed premises prior to this date.

1867-8—Publicans License listed for William Dacey, at Grogan under the name Shamrock Inn.

1868—Jewnee Hotel (now Old Junee) is licensed to Catherine Dacey.

1869—Catherine Dacey leases the Jewnee Hotel to Mrs Palmer at Bethungra.

6 October, 1872—Catherine Dacey (nee Connor) died and was buried alongside her husband at Galong. Daniel and Catherine had 10 children born between 1834 and 1856.

1873—The Publican's License continued under William Dacey until 1873.

1874-5—Michael Dacey held the license. While the family also ran a Hotel at Old Junee.

1875-6—Francis Hy Wye was licensee

1877-8—Williams Francis Scott was licensee. In October, 1877 advertising in the Cootamundra Herald for the Dingy Dingy Hotel tells us the house "has recently been thoroughly renewed and provides excellent accommodation." The paper also advertised the Dingy Dingy Spring Races for the 9 November. It was a six race meeting followed by a Ball and Supper at the hotel.

1879—James Troy reopened as the Dingy Dingy Hotel to take advantage of the Scrubyards Gold Rush, just five miles away. It was advertised as "The best accommodation for both man and horse. The house is large and commodious and there is ample paddock and stable accommodation for the horses." Cobb & Co coaches ran from Cootamundra to the Scrubyards via Dingy. A five (5) horse coach service left from the Albion Hotel, Cootamundra on Tuesday, Thursdays and Saturday, returning Wednesday, Friday and Sunday.

1880—The license continued to be held by James Troy.

1881— Donald McDonald managed the hotel

1883—Mr Simon Gentle took over the property and hotel, with the bar and fittings in place. He closed the Hotel, removed the bar and turned it back into a homestead. Mr and Mrs Gentle died in 1921. The two daughters, Francis and Margaret held the property until Francis died in 1931.

1934—Margaret Delisle Gentle then sold the property to Mr Thomas and Janet Hope of Wallendbeen. Mr Hope managed a property at Wallendbeen and the house lay vacant for approximately 14 years. During this period all the interior cedar doors were stolen, only the front and back doors remained.

1948—The property was transferred to their daughter Janet and her husband Rex Wheeler.

1963—Brian Smith purchased the homestead and 700 acres. Brian's parents resided at Dinga Dingi until their deaths, Reuben Smith in 1975 and Frances Smith in 1986.

1994—Brian Smith along with daughter Belinda and husband Matt Holt, undertook extensive renovations on the homestead. Belinda and Matt now live in the house with their family.

1994—Dinga Dingi Homestead was listed with the National Trust.

Panel researched by Brian Smith and erected by Combaning/Springdale Heritage Committee April 2014