

Conargo Region

Pretty Pine, Wanganella, Booororban, Conargo, Blighty & Mayrung

The Conargo Region is the smallest Local Government Area (by population) in NSW and is made up of a number of small villages. Three of the villages, Pretty Pine, Wanganella and Booororban are located on The Long Paddock Cobb Highway Touring Route. The Conargo region is home to the famous Headless Horseman sculpture (located at the Black Swamp between Booororban and Wanganella). This is a must see photo stop for all visitors.



Conargo at a glance

Towns and Villages: Pretty Pine, Wanganella, Booororban, Conargo, Blighty, Mayrung

Population: 1,800

Main Industries: Sheep, Cattle, Cereal Crops, Rice and Vitaculture

Rivers: The Billabong Creek and The Edward River

Did you know?

Conargo is the only Local Government Region in Australia that does not have any poker machines.

Events

May - Conargo Billabong Mothers Day Market

September - Pretty Pine Father Day Market

Must See and Dos

- ✓ Make a farm visit to 'East Tolans' to learn more about local agriculture and be amazed at their sculptural garden.
- ✓ Check out the original Cobb & Co stables at The Royal Mail Hotel in Booororban.
- ✓ Discover the legend of The Headless Horseman at The Black Swamp and check out the sculptural installation.
- ✓ Visit some of the best bird watching areas in Australia, home to the rare Plains Wanderer.
- ✓ Taste wine at Clancy's of Conargo and take a winery tour.



Conargo Shire

End Street, Deniliquin NSW 2710

Phone: 03 5880 1200

Website: www.conargo.nsw.gov.au

Pretty Pine

Pretty Pine was one of the last changing stations for the famous Cobb & Co coaches on the Hay - Deniliquin run. Today a hotel remains which continues to serve refreshments and meals to passing travellers.

History

There were no set distance between Cobb & Co's coach changing stations and the stops depended largely on the availability of water. The Deniliquin-Moama run had four changes: Hill Plain, Mathoura, Moira and the Yellow Water Hole (between Moama and Moira).

On the Hay run of 78 miles, horses were changed at intervals varying between 12 and 17 miles. Changing stations were at 12 mile Stables (Pretty Pine), Wanganella, Black Swamp, Booroorban and the 16 Mile Gums (view the interpretive panels at each of these locations).

Most of the inns have disappeared, though in their places there are now townships, which had their beginnings as resting places for coaches and their passengers.

Back in the 19th century this was frontier country and your life was not safe even in sleepy little spots like Pretty Pine. In 1883 an itinerant hawker, George Myzon, was bashed to death and robbed while he slept, just across the road from the Carriers' Arms Hotel. His alleged killer, Joseph Cordene, was arrested at Mathoura several days later. Found guilty, he was the last man hanged at Deniliquin.

Attractions

Today the Pretty Pine Hotel is a great example of country hospitality. Take a few minutes to visit the Pretty Pine Recreation Hall the site for the famous Father's Day markets.

Wanganella

Wanganella's claim to fame is the introduction to the world of the famous Australian Peppin Merino, which was developed on neighbouring land by the Peppin family in the 19th century.

History

Situated on the banks of Billabong Creek, said to be the longest 'creek' in Australia, the village of Wanganella once boasted two hotels, two blacksmiths, two stores, a school, a church, a bootmaker, a resident police officer and a small lock-up (which is now located at the Peppin Heritage Centre in Deniliquin). A number of houses, mostly the homes of workers on Wanganella and other local stations, lined the streets. Sport was catered for with tennis courts, a cricket ground and race track.

The last surviving licensed hotel was destroyed by fire in 1957 and today the village consists of a general store, a community hall with adjoining playground, and a few houses and other buildings. It remains however, an interesting reminder of a bygone era.

George Hall Peppin and his two sons were experienced English sheep breeders who bought part of Wanganella Run (now Wanganella Station) in 1858. Dissatisfied with the yield and quality of wool from the sheep then available, they channelled their efforts into breeding a strain that was better adapted to Australian conditions, larger of frame and able to yield a greatly improved quality and quantity of wool.



Their successes constitute the foundation of Australia's reputation as a quality wool exporter. The Peppin strain of merino sheep now predominates in Australian wool producing flocks and has been exported to other parts of the world.

In recognition of the contribution made by the Peppin merino to Australia, a bronze statue of a ram has been mounted on a stone base near the entrance to Wanganella Station, just south of the village.

In 1878 the Peppin lands and stock were bought by F.S. Falkiner & Sons. This famous firm continued to acquire land and became one of the major landholders in the Riverina. At one stage the properties were owned by media magnate Rupert Murdoch. With its base at 'Boonoke', on the Deniliquin-Conargo road, the collective group of properties is now owned by the Bell Group.

The concrete bridge over the Billabong Creek at the edge of the village was constructed in 1970, replacing a timber structure situated a short distance upstream.

Attractions

The Wanganella General Store welcomes visitors to the area and provides an ideal location for a break. Throw a line in the Billabong Creek or rest for a while in the park beside the community hall and check out the adjacent Long Paddock interpretive panel.

Booroorban

Situated in the middle of the Old Man Plain beneath some well-established peppercorn trees, the remarkable Royal Mail Hotel constitutes the historical, social, physical and even genealogical centre of the small community of Booroorban.

The Royal Mail Hotel was built by Samuel Porter in 1868 and remained in the Porter family until 1910. The hotel was extensively refurbished in the 1980 and 1990's but the character and charm of the building has been retained.

Even in the early days of The Long Paddock they had the equivalent of drive-through dining – although it was a little more hard work then than it is today. Sam Porter from the Royal Mail Hotel at Booroorban used to ride his horse out to the Black Swamp to meet the north-bound coach, take orders for meals, baths, beds etc and then race back to the hotel to ensure everything was in readiness for the passengers' arrival. Sam always had the brick floor watered and swept and made sure the passengers were made welcome.

The Royal Mail Hotel remains the hub of social life on the Old Man Plain although there was some concern by the local community when the licence was sold off prior the Sydney Olympics and a lengthy struggle took place before another licence could be obtained.

History

Originally known as Pine Ridge, Booroorban's origins are tied to the Royal Mail Hotel, which was a staging post on the Cobb & Co run between Hay and Deniliquin. It is the last remaining coaching inn on that route. Passengers disembarked to refresh themselves while the horses were exchanged for a fresh team kept in the stables, still intact, at the rear of the hotel.

The village of Booroorban was proclaimed in 1885. In its hey-day it consisted of two hotels, a wine house, school, post office, hall, general store, 20 houses and a population of 200.

The hotel's Headless Horseman Bar, with its painting of the subject, is named after a legend associated with the area. Drovers around the Black Swamp in the middle of the 19th century told of a horseman who appeared suddenly at a campsite, mounted on a trotting cob, a cloak about his shoulders but with no head, spooking the animals and causing stampedes. It was said to be the ghost of a drover who died at the swamp. Today the legend is forever captured in the sculpture of the Headless Horseman located at the Black Swamp rest area.

Attractions

The area surrounding the hotel comprises two tennis courts and check out a grassed barbeque area overlooking a small lake and a playground. A caravan park is situated at the rear of the hotel. Nearby is a cemetery and a cricket ground and community hall.

The Conargo region is also home to the villages of Conargo, Blighty and Mayrung. These villages are rich in history and friendly country service. Stop in at the famous Conargo Hotel (1853) and wayside gardens with its picnic and barbecue facilities. It is one of several friendly country pubs in the area.



Accommodation

Wanganella Creek Camp Park

Come & stay on the Billabong creek at Wanganella enjoy the natural scenery & bird life or maybe catch a fish, we have modern amenities and camp kitchen also powered sites.

Contact: Lex & Annette Gardam
Phone: 03 5882 3509

Address: Cobb Highway, Wanganella
Mobile: 0419 502 594
Email: lex.annie.wccp@hotmail.com



Shops / Services

Wanganella Store

Enjoy the friendly atmosphere of the Wanganella Store, meals, pizza and takeaways available 7 days a week. Post Office, Fuel, Groceries, gifts, drinks and ice creams, ice and fishing licenses also available.

Contact: Sonja Lefebure

Address: Cobb Highway, Wanganella
Phone: 03 5884 7540
Fax: 03 5884 7540



Accommodation

Royal Mail Hotel - Booroorban

Friendly country hospitality, cold beer, meals, take away, ice creams, ice, truck parking, motor home and caravan facilities, groups most welcome.

Hosts: Mandy and Roger Trist
UHF: 19

Address: Cobb Highway, Booroorban
Phone / Fax: 02 6993 0694
Email: mandytrist@y7mail.com



Shops / Services

Conargo Junction Store

We have take away food, cappuccino, petrol, swap & go gas, ice, groceries, post office, souvenirs and also truck parking. Open 7 Days.

Contact: Faye & Kim Usher

Address: Jerilderie Road, Conargo, NSW 2710
Phone / Fax: 03 5884 6605
Email: usherk@bordnet.com.au



Accommodation

Elmsleigh Farm Stay & Eco-Tours

A photographer's, bird enthusiast's and nature lover's paradise adjacent the Long Paddock. Come and see the famous Plains Wanderer

Phone / Fax: 02 6993 0661
Email: elmsley@tpg.com.au

Contact: Mary-Anne Butcher
Mobile: 0429 930 661
Website: www.users.tpg.com.au/elmsley/page5

