

COROWA: CAMPFIRES TO CHOCOLATE



Ethan Hanrahan, Campbell Cull, Taj Smith,
Ariya Roy and Hayden Barber

Corowa Public School



Creative Catchment Kids

Creative Catchment Kids is an initiative of Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. It aims to improve engagement between our funding partners and school students by providing opportunities for positive and authentic ventures that encourage students to develop creative solutions to agriculture and natural resource management issues.

www.wirraminna.org/creative-catchment-kids/

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre

The Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre is located in Burrumbuttock, north of Albury in southern NSW. Since 1995, the centre, which is adjacent to Burrumbuttock Public School, has provided opportunities for discovery and learning about the natural environment, the ecology of the local woodlands and the beauty of native plants.

www.wirraminna.org

Enviro-Stories

Enviro-Stories is an innovative literacy education program that inspires learning about natural resource and catchment management issues. Developed by PeeKdesigns, this program provides students with an opportunity to publish their own stories that have been written for other kids to support learning about their local area.

www.envirostories.com.au

Hume Bank

At Hume Bank, community is something we know a lot about, we're a bank for locals and believe money should be kept locally. That's why we are proud to support Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre. By working together, we are able to give back to the community and help build a stronger future for generations to come.

www.humebank.com.au

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School: Corowa Public School

Our Community

In 2016, students involved in the Creative Catchment Kids program researched and wrote stories about their local community and how local individuals, couples, businesses or industries have made a difference. The program was generously funded by Murray Local Land Services, the Australian government's National Landcare Programme and Hume Bank.

Creative Catchment Kids - Our Community is part of Enviro-Stories, a Peekdesigns education program.





The first inhabitants of Corowa were the Bangerang people who lived by the river. The men hunted possums for meat and collected their skins to make warm coats. The women left the camp an hour or two after sunrise to collect roots, vegetables, yabbies and seeds for the day's meals. The seeds were ground into flour between two large, flat grinding stones.



Charles Sturt, an explorer who was walking along the Murray River, was the first European to set foot on the future site of Corowa.

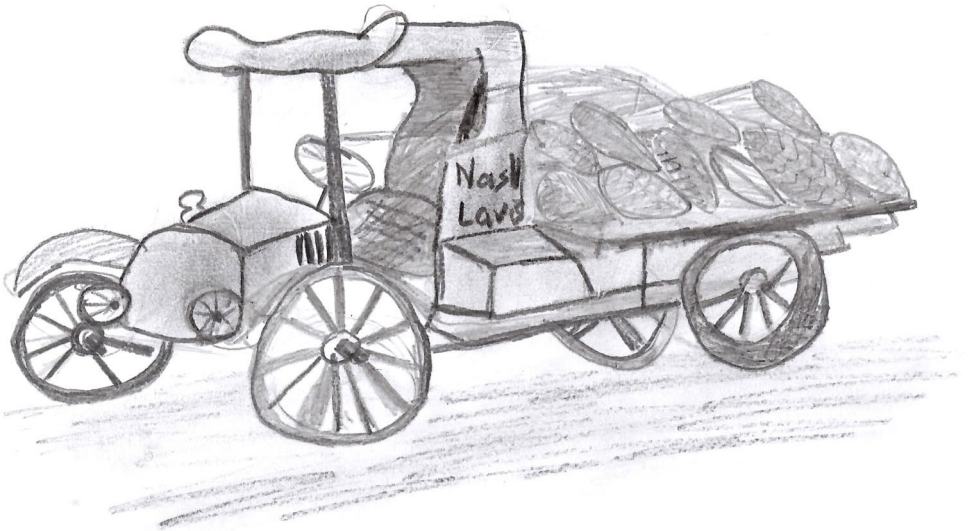
In 1839, Charles Cropper bought a huge amount of land to use as a sheep and wheat farm. He called it Brocklesby Station. John Foord purchased part of that station in 1859 and the town we now know as Corowa began to grow.

The Bangerang people relied on the river for food and used it for swimming on hot days.



As the town grew it needed food. In 1887 the Roller Flour Mill opened and it provided the town bakery with flour for 33 years before it burnt down in 1920.

Grain was transported from local farms by horse and cart or bullock dray, and in later years, by train or truck.



A farmer might have used a truck to take their flour to the mill.



In 1923 the Corowa Flour Mill, which was built by bricklayer Arthur Armour, opened in its current location. At the time, 415 shares in the company were sold for 10 pounds each (about \$775 today).

By the end of 1923 the mill, which used giant grinding stones, was milling wheat into 2.3 tonnes of flour an hour and had three shifts of workers every day.

The mill exported their flour to Singapore, Malaysia, Borneo and the United Kingdom. They also sold barley to a Scottish company to use in whiskey making.

The prosperity of the mill slowly declined when countries decided that they wanted to import grain and not flour. The mill was abandoned in 1970



An original flour bag used for export.

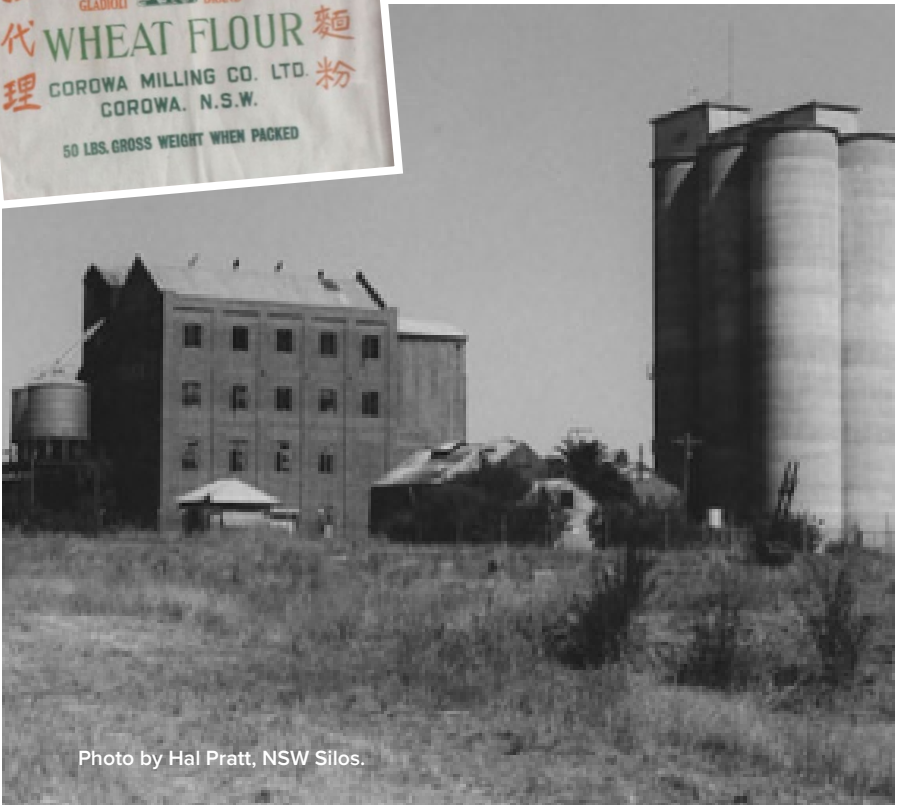
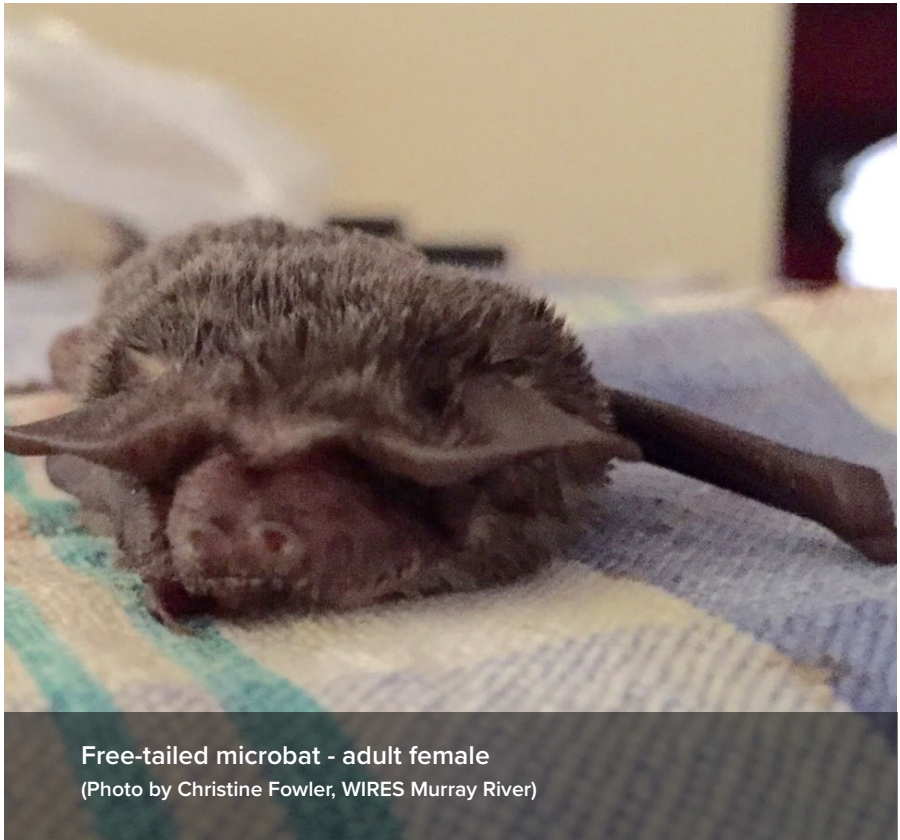


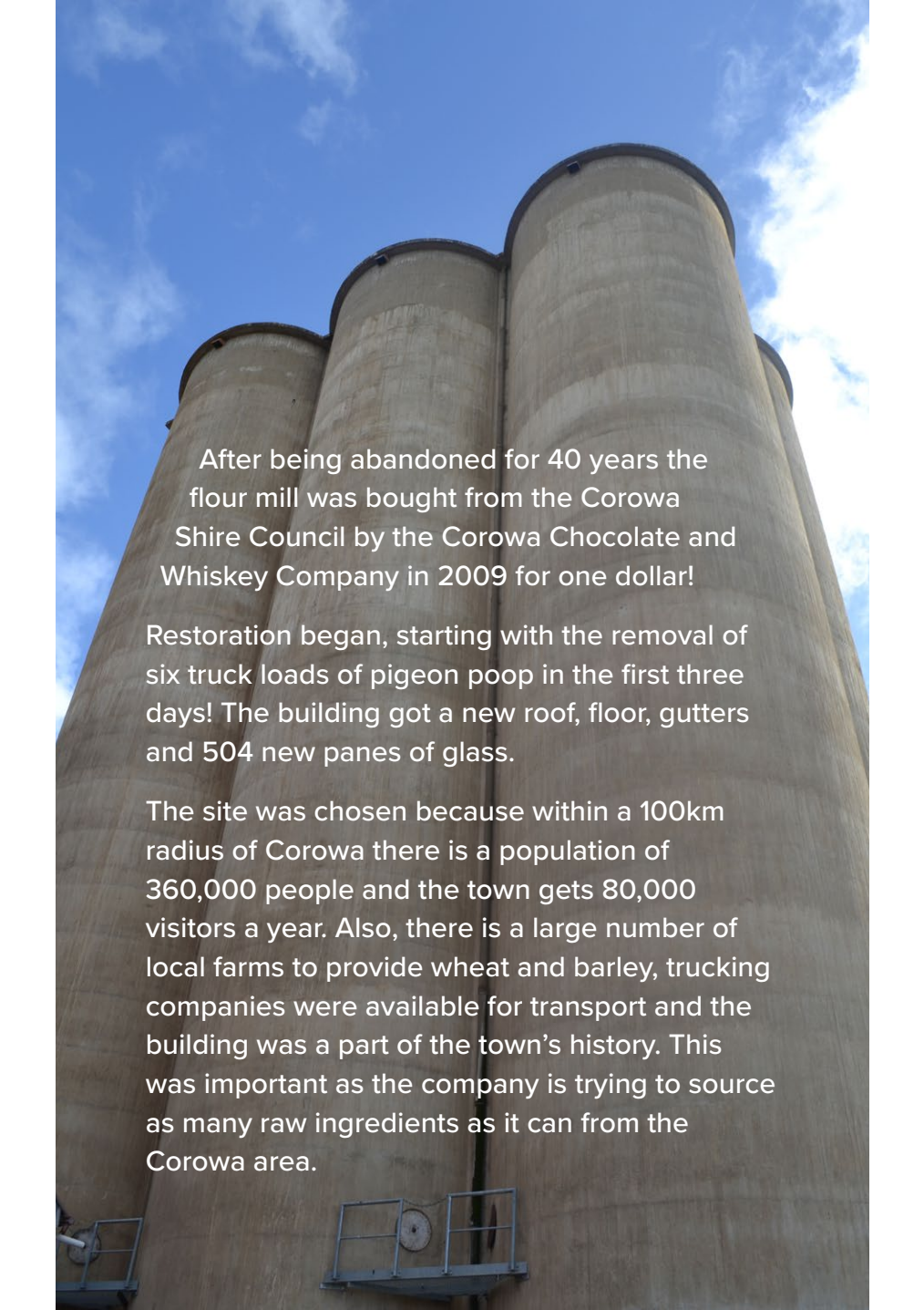
Photo by Hal Pratt, NSW Silos.



Free-tailed microbat - adult female
(Photo by Christine Fowler, WIRES Murray River)

For as long as people can remember the flour mill has had an Eastern free-tailed bat colony living in the rafters.

These tiny little microbats have a wingspan of 15cm and only weigh about 12 grams as an adult. Covered in soft grey-brown fur, they are nocturnal, flying around at night making squeaking noises while they catch and eat insects. Mosquitoes are their favourite! They eat as much as 40% of their body weight in a single night (that's several hundred insects) and they drink a lot of water.



After being abandoned for 40 years the flour mill was bought from the Corowa Shire Council by the Corowa Chocolate and Whiskey Company in 2009 for one dollar!

Restoration began, starting with the removal of six truck loads of pigeon poop in the first three days! The building got a new roof, floor, gutters and 504 new panes of glass.

The site was chosen because within a 100km radius of Corowa there is a population of 360,000 people and the town gets 80,000 visitors a year. Also, there is a large number of local farms to provide wheat and barley, trucking companies were available for transport and the building was a part of the town's history. This was important as the company is trying to source as many raw ingredients as it can from the Corowa area.



Local builder Dean Skinner hard at work on the renovations.

(Photo by Sue Davis Photography)



Dean Druce and his builders have a look at the progress.

(Photo by Sue Davis Photography)



The renovated function room today.

Their Belgian chocolate is used to coat licorice (which interestingly, is 46% flour), nuts and fruit as well as in the making of rocky road and freckles of all sizes. The bagged products from the Corowa factory are sold in Woolworths, Coles and, of course, in the factory shop. Some is even exported overseas.



Children and tourists love having the opportunity to make their own giant Freckle.

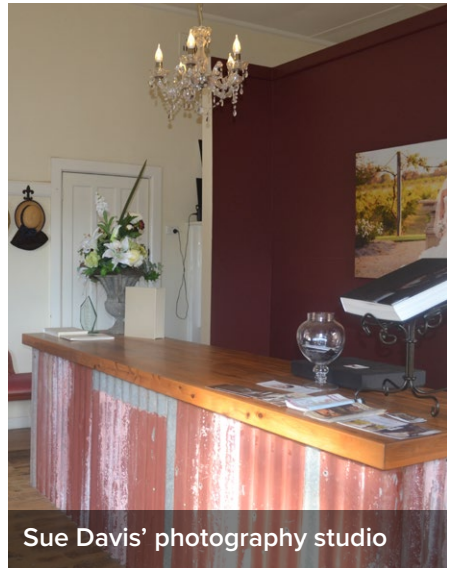


A selection of the delicious products you can buy at the Chocolate Factory

The restored mill isn't just for creating chocolate products. It has a café where you can get a delicious breakfast, lunch or snack. They have started to produce whiskey and there is a function centre which is very popular for weddings and functions. The old flour mill is also home to the Mill & Goat Gift Shop and Sue Davis Photography.



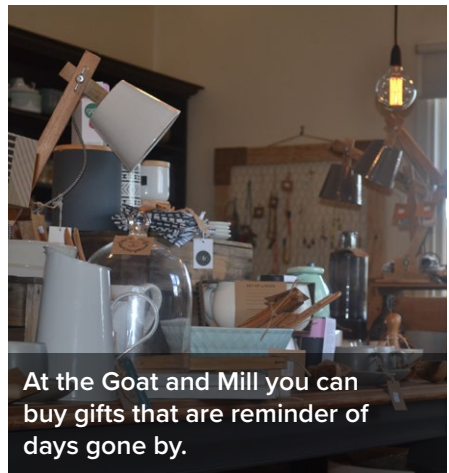
The new whiskey stills. It takes 2 years from the start of production until the whiskey is ready for bottling and sale.



Sue Davis' photography studio



The Goat & Mill Gift Shop



At the Goat and Mill you can buy gifts that are reminder of days gone by.

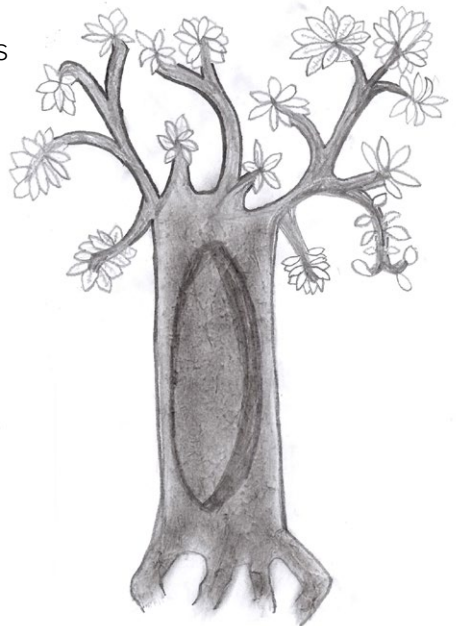
The Corowa flour mill has been part of the town for a very long time, providing employment for the mill workers and giving the local farmers a market for their crops.

In 2016, the restored mill, now the Corowa Chocolate and Whiskey Factory, is not only employing 30 people and buying produce from local retailers it is also giving the people of Corowa and visiting tourists a great place to gather to celebrate or share a meal.



DID YOU KNOW...

- Bangerang tribe member Tommy McCrae made pen and ink sketches that featured tribal activities and illustrated their contact with white man.
- Corowa grew rapidly in population after gold was discovered in Beechworth in 1852.
- In 1889 the famous Tom Roberts painting 'The Shearing of the Rams' was done using sketches from the shearing shed on Brocklesby Station.
- The steel and wood John Foord bridge was built in 1892.
- Paddlesteamers were a regular sight in the river in the 1800s.
- In 1893 a meeting was held in the Globe Hotel to discuss and prepare for Federation.
- One of the first places that the myxomatosis virus was released to control rabbits was in Corowa in 1950.
- The film 'Crackerjack' had some scenes filmed at the Corowa Bowls Club.
- The town holds the National Billycart Championships every Easter.
- Actor John Howard was born in Corowa.
- The current population in the town is 5,822.





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2016 Year 5, Corowa Public School

We would like to thank Nash Lavis for his illustrations.

Congratulations!

Wirraminna Environmental Education Centre and
the Creative Catchment Kids Program won the
National 2016 Yates Junior Landcare Team Award.



Local Land
Services
Murray



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