



# The Mill

Celebrating  
150 years

Built in 1861  
by The Walsh Bros  
Owned and operated by  
The Francis Family  
until 1901

---

---

## ADVERTISEMENTS.

---

**W**ANTED TO RENT, A GOOD FARM, of from  
to to 100 Acres CHEAP - Apply  
Mr. PATON, Club House Hotel.

---

### Wanted,

**S**HEARERS at Campbell's River. Commencing  
on MONDAY, 18th November.

---

**W**ANTED a WOMAN as General Servant  
Good Character indispensable  
Mrs ROBINSON, George-St.  
Bathurst.

---

### Wanted,

**A** MEDICAL OFFICER, for the Lyal Kincora  
Lodge of Old Fellows. Full Particular may be  
obtained from MR. HALL at Mr. STUDDEN'S.  
Tailor, Howick street. Application to be made by  
letter not later than 5 o'clock pm. on MONDAY  
next, the 11th instant. Address N. G. Hall, Mr.  
Studden's, Howick street. Bathurst.

G. M'KENZIE, Secreatry.

---

**W**HEAT WANTED,  
PEEL STEAM MILLS  
G. FRANCIS.

---

## COWRA STEAM MILLS

**W**ANTED TO PURCHASE 5000 Busels of  
WHEAT, for which Bathurst price will be  
given.

T. WALSH.

Cowra, 2nd September, 1861

---

Mill-Town Weigh Bridge,  
AT MR. CRILLY'S MILL.

---

### Notice.

**F**ROM AND AFTER MONDAY NEXT, 11th  
November, instant, the charge for weighing at  
the above Bridge will be ONE SHILLING per  
LOAD.

---

### Church of England School, Bathurst

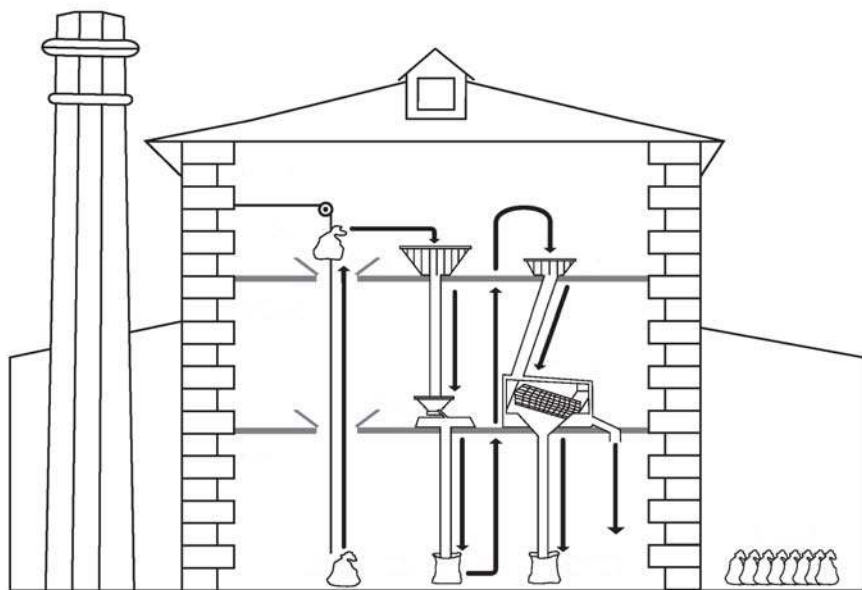
**T**HE Committee for managing the Bazar to be held  
in aid of the funds for the above, meet every  
WEDNESDAY evening, in the School Room at half-  
past seven p.m. Friends are required to attend.

G. POWNALL,  
Hon. Secreatry.

---

---

# W I N D O W R I E



# W I N D O W R I E

This booklet commemorates the  
sesquicentenary of  
The Cowra Flour Mill.

It has been produced by the  
O'Dea family with the help of the  
Frank Murray & the Cowra Historical Society.

Published by Billimari Free Press 2011

Proudly printed by Comprinting



# The Opening

---

*Mrs Neville then struck the laying shaft with the bottle,  
naming at the same time her stalwart child  
"The Cowra Steam Mill",  
round went the cogs, crash went the two pair of stones,  
steam is up and the Engine on her speed.*

*Then cheer upon cheer arose,  
some joyial gentleman singing out  
"oh, merry maid be that marries the miller,  
For fine and fair day he is aye bringing till her."*

---

Cowra Correspondent  
Bathurst Free Press – February, 1861

So much has happened in 150 years...

In October 1859, twenty eight years after Cowra was settled, construction commenced in the centre of the Cowra township. The Walsh Brothers were building a Flour Mill which was to be powered by steam.

The three storey Flour Mill was built of local granite and sandstone by approximately sixty men. There was great interest in this new enterprise with the construction regularly reported on in "The Bathurst Free Press" and the "Sydney Gazette" which was later to be known as the Sydney Morning Herald.



Opening in February of 1861, the town celebrated by holding the Town Ball at the Mill. The Flour Mill's function was to supply the local bakeries in Cowra, Bathurst, Carcoar, Woodstock and as far south as Goulburn with its super fine flour.

Due to economic hard times the Flour Mill closed its doors in 1901, the year of Australian Federation.

The Mill opened its doors for a short period in 1941 during World War II. Cowra was the training base for 80,000 military personnel during this time.

For a short period, the Mill building operated as a soap manufacturing facility, supplying the ANZACS with much needed soap for their ration packs. By 1942 the doors of the Mill were once again closed.

#### 1952 FLOOD

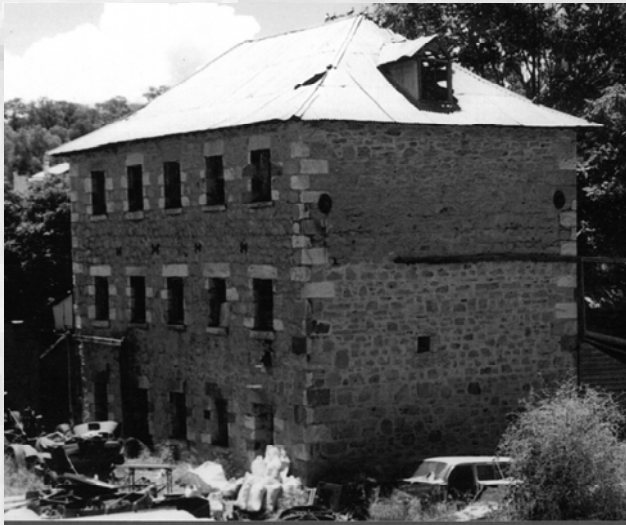


In “the great flood” of 1952 the Mill was swallowed up by the Lachlan River, leaving only the third floor above the water line.

This caused substantial destruction of the interior timber flooring and structure and washed away entirely the external grain and flour storage areas that previously had surrounded the building.

The vacant Flour Mill was purchased by the O'Dea family of Windowrie Wines in 1995, after more than 90 years of abandonment.

The eldest son, Stephen O'Dea, with a group of local builders, welders and stone masons began the reconstruction and refurbishment of The Mill. After removing twenty six wool bales of pigeon droppings, each of the rotten beams and all of the flooring, The Mill was lovingly restored using 90% recycled materials.



Above: As the building stood in 1995—the year it was purchased by the O'Dea Family

The new beams were sourced from an condemned railway bridge in Victoria; the doors, staircases, bathroom vanities and tables were constructed from old sheds and cattle yards from the Windowrie property, whisked away under cover of evening whilst David O'Dea was away for the weekend.

The ceilings in the bathrooms are old four gallon kerosene tins from the 1920's. The lights were made from four inch water pipe pulled from the bore at Windowrie.

# The Ball

---

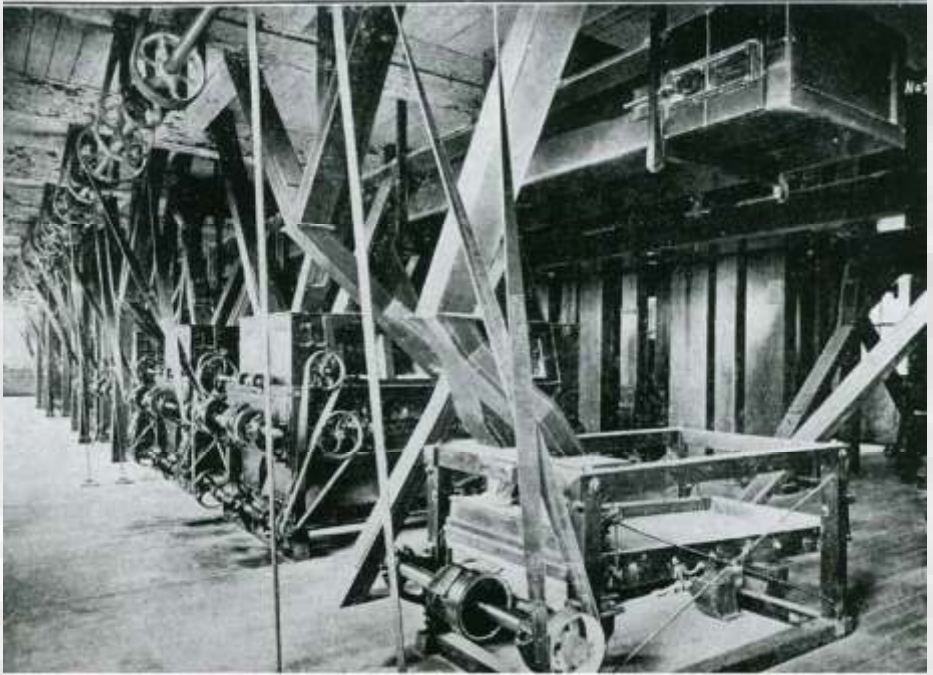
*This brilliant affair came off on the third floor of the Mill,  
which was tastefully decorated with flowers and evergreens...*

*At nine o'clock, the company began to assemble,  
and having received a highly flattering invitation  
from the host and hostess,  
we donned our kits and proceeded to the ballroom.*

*A little before ten o'clock the dancing commenced;  
the music struck up, and at it we went with will...*

*and what with the strains of the music,  
the rush of nimble feet, the rustle of the splendid dresses,  
the bows and the wreathed smiles of our merry partners,  
we enjoyed more than I can describe.*

---



## Interesting Facts

The 1861 census recorded the population of the village as 117 males, 76 females and a police force of seven.

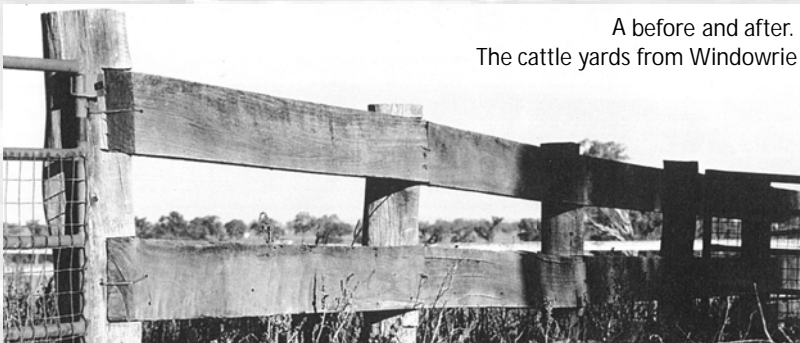
The land on which the Mill was built was purchased from Richard Duggan in 1858 for £110.

Patrick Walsh (1817 -1892) was a grazier and his brother Thomas (1820-1899), a publican.



The extensive verandah that surrounds The Mill is made with recycled timber and the ceiling is lined with the same hessian that was used to bag the flour that made the Mill famous all those years ago.

Other materials used in the reconstruction include bulldozer blades, rail carriage brake cables and pylon casings used from the seawall of the third runway at Botany Bay in Sydney.



A before and after.  
The cattle yards from Windowrie



The final touch was the transplantation of the original vines from Windowrie Estate.

Surrounding the driveway and the ground floor verandah are twenty three year old Chardonnay and Cabernet vines transplanted from the original vineyard at Windowrie.

For 150 years this building has stood proudly in Cowra in the NSW Central West.

It has survived floods and famine, the development of agriculture and farming practices, the evolution of motor transport and technology. Today it operates as part of the local community, providing facilities to tourist and locals alike.

What is to become of The Mill in the next 150 years?

To celebrate this momentous occasion Windowrie and the O'Dea Family will be holding the following events:

Easter Weekend, Vine to wine

Learn about the production of wine from the vineyard to the bottle

School Holiday Programs

Art, music, sculpture and theatre for kids (and adults too if they like)

Photography Exhibition of Cowra's Past.

Talks from members of the local community about Cowra and it's development over the last century.

150 year Party as part of the Windowrie Weekend, celebrated on the last weekend in October

Historical Talks to be held throughout the year.



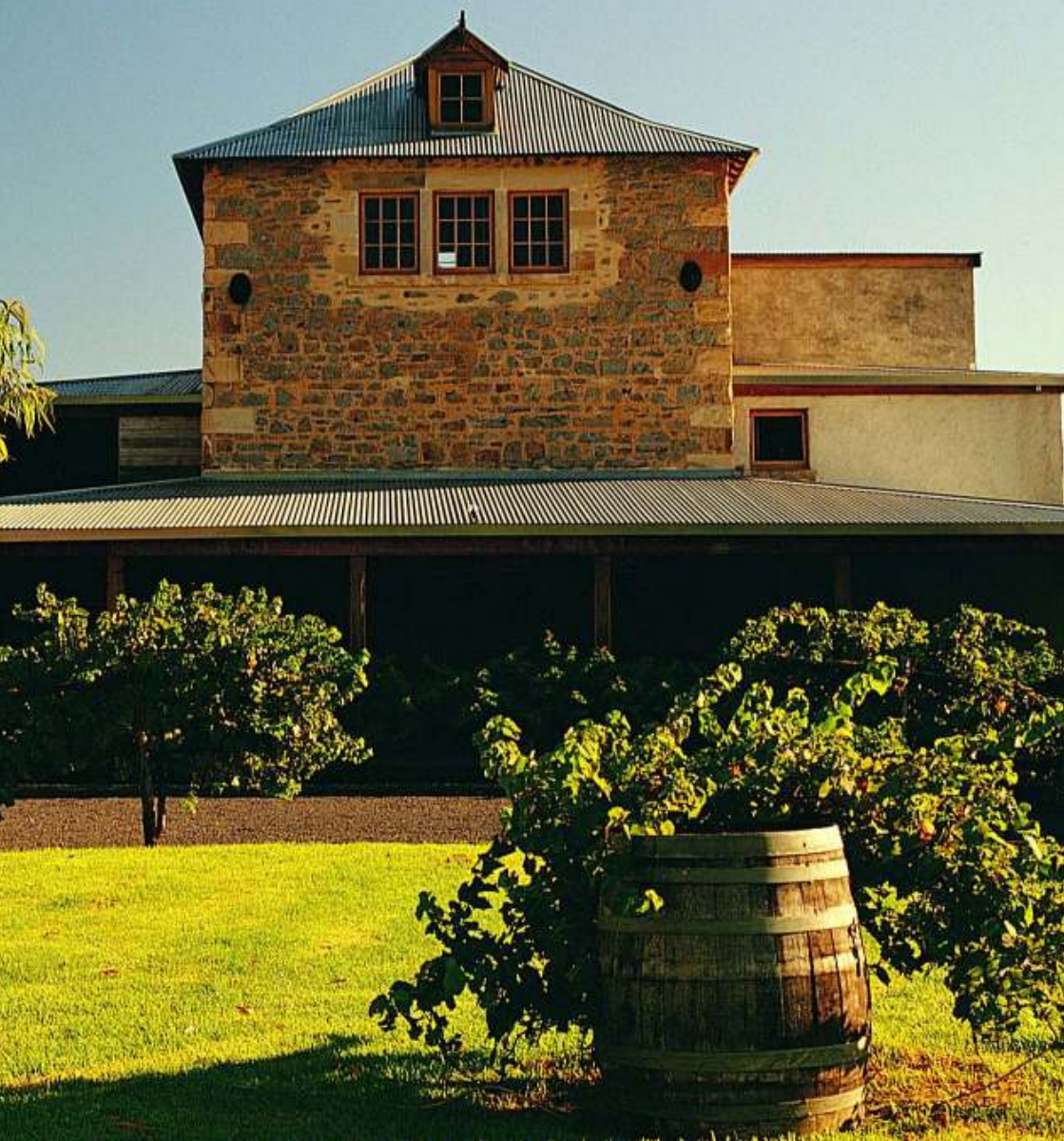




Notes:

*Share our Wine*

The O'Dea Family



The Mill, 1861—2011  
[windowrie.com.au](http://windowrie.com.au)