



Growing up in the Central West of New South Wales in Australia has given me a love of history, and I have spent a lot of time over the years visiting and learning about towns and villages in the area.

One of the easiest ways of doing this was visiting my Mother's family, who have lived around the area for a number of generations.

My grandparents lived at Carcoar for a number of years until the 1970s. After my grandfather passed away, my grandmother moved to Blayney, a larger town in the area.

Their old house, a former inn, is still standing!

Above left: The bushranger (outlaw) Ben Hall

Carcoar was once a major administrative and banking center, and was one of the earliest settlements in NSW.

As it was the first major center beyond Bathurst, Australia's oldest inland city, it was expected that it would one day become a major regional center, but that didn't eventuate, largely because the town was bypassed by the railway when the main western line was built.

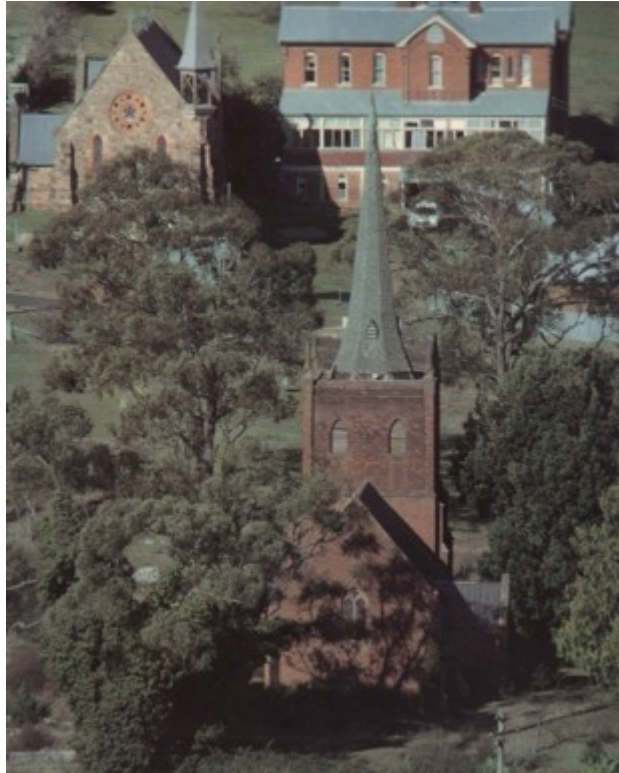


A picture of Carcoar's main street.

By the time the railway did arrive in 1888, it was only a branch line, and Carcoar had already been overtaken by the neighboring towns of Blayney and Orange.

The area was mainly agricultural, but as time went on, iron ore and copper were mined in the area. Gold was also discovered nearby during the 1850's.

Carcoar provided an overnight stop for Cobb and Co Coaches, a stage coach firm that serviced much of eastern Australia until the early 1920's.



A view of the village today.

The wealth of the region attracted bushrangers (outlaws), and the town was the scene of Australia's first daylight bank hold up in 1863.

Two members of Ben Hall's gang, Johnny Gilbert and John O'Meally, attempted to hold the Commercial bank up, but fled empty handed when the teller produced a pistol and took a shot at them.

Hall himself held up the Rev. James Adam, but decided against robbing him because he was such a 'nice bloke'.

A couple of Hall's accomplices were killed during their activities in the area, and Hall himself was killed in 1865 near the town of Forbes after a shootout with police.

Frank Gardiner, another early bushranger, was active in the area as well. He was involved in cattle 'duffing' (rustling).

Situated just off the Mid Western Highway, Carcoar is a small village located 258 km (about 160 miles) west of Sydney, and 52 km (about 32 miles) south-west of Bathurst in NSW.

Today, the village is a virtual snapshot of the 19th century, with many of the original buildings still standing.

As a matter of fact, walking down the main street of the place with my daughter a few weeks back, I felt just like 'Marty' in the 'Back To The Future' movies.



A later picture of Carcoar's main street.

The general store is still just as it was when built back in the 1800's, with the original counter and shelving still in place.

Australia Day (January 26) is a great day to visit the area, with stage coach rides, period dress and the reenactment of historical events.

Sources and Links:

[Cobb & Co](#)

[Carcoar - A brief History](#)

SMH - Carcoar

Bushrangers' Site - Ben Hall