The Captain’s Lady: Mary Ann Bugg

by

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Abstract

Bushrangers have a powerful grip on the Australian psyche. Ned Kelly is celebrated as Australia’s most popular folk hero. Bushranger Captain Thunderbolt has been immortalised in his home state of New South Wales, with a major highway named in his honour. For the town of Uralla in the New England District, the Thunderbolt legend looms large. He is a major tourist draw card for the region. The legend of Thunderbolt embodies a larger telling of a collective struggle against a system of injustice and oppression.

A closer examination of events reveals that Thunderbolt’s Aboriginal wife, Mary Ann, was crucial to his survival. Yet she has been erased from the legend. Many of our folk heroes could not have survived without the support of Aboriginal Australians. However the mateship ethos continues to exclude both Aboriginal people and women.

In documenting the life of Worimi woman Mary Ann and her partnership with Thunderbolt, the rhetoric of mateship is challenged. Reciprocal relationships that developed between Aboriginal and settler Australians will be investigated. It is important to consider the range of relationships that emerged on the frontier and the bearing that geography played in such encounters. By adopting a place-centred approach one is able to closely examine the complexity of race relations that existed in colonial times.

The violent encounters that occurred on the frontier between Aboriginal and settler Australians are well documented. However not all relationships were based on exploitation and violence. The union between Mary Ann’s Aboriginal mother and English convict father is celebrated by the Worimi today. Mixed
marriage continues to be recognised as a central part of contemporary Worimi culture.
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Introduction

One evening at mealtime I announced to our family, ‘today we learnt about bushrangers’! It was 1984 and I was in Fourth Grade. After dinner Dad called me downstairs and selected *Bushrangers Bold*, a small paperback from the bookshelf. He turned to the chapter on Fred Ward alias Captain Thunderbolt and said to me in an encouraging whisper ‘that’s your Great Great Grand Uncle’. It was as if Dad had just shared an intimate family secret with me.

At this stage I was not sure whether to feel proud about this association or to distance myself from our newly “proclaimed” relation. Dad stressed that Thunderbolt was a Robin Hood like figure. He assured me that he had never shot anyone, but was instead noted for his outstanding horsemanship. Modern scholarship would locate Thunderbolt as an iconic ‘Social Bandit’, a champion of the people. ¹ To this day he remains a much celebrated hero and tourist draw card for the town of Uralla, in the New England District of New South Wales. It is here that Thunderbolt supposedly met his match in Constable Alexander Binning Walker. Details of the final show-down continue to be contested amongst locals today. The legend of Thunderbolt embodies a larger telling of a collective struggle against a system of injustice and oppression.

Some believe that Ward’s reluctance to use firearms was greatly influenced by the beliefs of his Aboriginal wife Mary Ann, who had witnessed the violent atrocities committed against many of her people on the frontier.

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¹ Hobsbawn has referred to rebels who received support and admiration as social bandits. Bandit-heroes are believed to fulfill the community’s need for a protector or champion of social justice. The bandit’s social status is determined by the community itself (see Hobsbawn, E.J. 1974, Primitive Rebels; Hobsbawn, E.J. 1972, Bandits).
Thunderbolt himself was recognised as kin by Aboriginal clans from distinct and distant nations across New South Wales, such as the Worimi and Kamilaroi people. Today he remains a prominent figure in Aboriginal folklore.

Many events in Fred and Mary Ann Ward’s life continue to attract controversy today. However the only thing we can be certain of is that Thunderbolt never killed or injured anyone. Ward instead relied on his expert horsemanship to avoid confrontation and capture. Survival for the couple also depended on maintaining the alliances that they had with Aboriginal clans. Captain Thunderbolt is remembered for having the longest bushranging career in New South Wales, surviving for almost seven years, without being captured. When Thunderbolt was killed and buried in Uralla in 1870, this signified the end of bushranging as it had been known in New South Wales.

My interest in the Thunderbolt legend has prompted me to investigate reciprocal relationships that developed between Aboriginal and settler Australians. Although there is a great amount of literature available documenting the violent encounters that occurred on the frontier, stories of inter racial mateship, solidarity, love and loyalty have not been given the attention they deserve.

Hobsbawn (1972, 18-20) has described ‘Social Banditry’ as a universal phenomenon which occurs at the site where ‘kinship organisation’ and capitalism clash. In Australia the British push for pastoral expansion dispossessed Aboriginal clans of their country. The presence of a class of oppressed landless convict labourers created a level of social agitation which gave rise to bushranging. The injustice experienced by Aborigines, convicts and the landless

2 Historian Stephan Williams maintained this view (see Williams, 1987, 11).
poor, meant that they identified strongly with the social bandit.

For the local population the social bandit came to represent a collective protest against oppression, poverty and injustice. A great deal of sympathy was given to the bushranger who lived up to the Robin-Hood ideal of the noble-robber. Once the bushranger became idealised in this way, the relationship with the oppressed group would develop into one ‘... of total solidarity and identity’ (Hobsbawn 1972, 42). It was therefore in the outlaw’s interest to conform to the Robin Hood stereotype, in order to maintain a wide network of protection.

Bushrangers continue to have a powerful grip on the Australian psyche. ³ Russel Ward in his ground-breaking thesis on Australian identity (first published 1958) charted the origins of Australian nationalism. He described bushrangers as the first genus of “Aussie Bushman”. They came to embody virtues such as independence, adaptability, resourcefulness and resilience (Ward 1988, 146). The mythology of bushranging in the Australian context came to represent a shared struggle against the Colonial Government which gained the reputation of a self-serving authority. When discussing the emergence of bushrangers as folk heroes, Ward (1988, 147) observed:

... in particular the pastoral proletariat of the interior, tended to look upon the bushrangers as heroic symbols of resistance ... to look upon them, in short, as themselves writ large.

³ The most public display of the bushranger in modern day Australia was transmitted to a global audience during the opening ceremony of the 2000 Olympic Games in Sydney. Here an army of Ned Kellys performed in a segment titled Tin Symphony, which celebrated the bushranger as an “Aussie Battler” and champion of the republican movement. A potent symbol of Australian identity was transmitted at a time when the community was hotly engaged in the republican debate (See Holland & Williamson 2003, 30-1). Deborah Bird Rose (1994, 182-84) believed that the reason Ned Kelly has remained relevant to the Australian community is because the symbolism he represents fills a space where a bridge of accommodation can be built. Here the interests of Aboriginal and settler Australians can converge.
“The Australian Legend”, made popular through the creation of bush ballads, failed to recognise that it was Aboriginal knowledge of country that enabled the white bushman/bushranger to survive in an unfamiliar land. Ward (1988, 201) argued that it was Aboriginal Australians who were the ‘master and mentor’ of the bushman/bushranger. He wrote of the indebtedness that settlers felt towards Aboriginal people (1988, 200-01). As Reynolds (2000, 10) asserted:

> It is the pastoral industry which owes the greatest debt to the Aborigines. Indigenous people were part of the industry from the beginning. They often guided the exploring parties, both public and private, into the bush and helped find suitable land; they led bullock drays and flocks and herds outward to take up chosen country. Black bushcraft and knowledge were invaluable during the early years of settlement.

During the second half of the nineteenth century Australian nationalism was formulated by the popular bush ballads of Henry Lawson and Banjo Patterson. Lawson and Paterson were clearly influenced by the popular racial ideology of the times. The theory of Social Darwinism underpinned the racial thinking of this particular period. Not only were Aboriginal people deemed inferior on the scale of evolution, it was believed they were destined to die out. A general perception persisted that Aboriginal people represented the natural world and would soon be ‘replaced by civilization’ (Reynolds 1989, 114-16). While the methods for assessing racial superiority changed over time, the relative positions in the hierarchy remained the same (Reynolds 1987a, 110). White supremacist theories were also evident in the schooling that Lawson himself received and which therefore informed much of his writing.

As a young boy Lawson attended school in a bush hut near Mudgee, New South Wales. “The Old Bark School” is a piece of prose in which he reflected on
his schooling days. Lawson exclaimed, ‘nearly every book dated back to Captain Cook’, indicating that the history taught at school celebrated achievement that was exclusively British. The following stanza reveals the racist values that were disseminated through the education system itself. Lawson (1988, 128) wrote:

We got little information re the land that gave us birth;
Save that Captain Cook was killed (and very nearly grilled)
And “the natives of New Holland are the lowest race on earth”.

According to Grimshaw et al. (1994, 2; see also Ward 1988, 13) nationalist mythologies, penned by writers such as Paterson and Lawson, celebrated a particular brand of white masculine mateship. Seal (2003, 10-11) argued that the tradition of outlaw heroism was also strongly masculine. Although he acknowledged that Thunderbolt’s wife, Mary Ann, was a valuable ‘helper’ to Thunderbolt, Seal believed that women played a purely subservient role to the male bandit. However a closer examination of events reveals that Mary Ann’s contribution was crucial to Thunderbolt’s survival. The greatest failure of the mateship ethos is that it excluded both Aboriginal people (Smith 1980, 15) and women.

There was considerable interest for ‘Thunderbolt’s half-cast gin’ (Sydney Empire, 2 May 1865). The colonial press depicted both masculine and feminine qualities for Mary Ann when they covered the Thunderbolt saga. “The Captain’s Lady” was a well spoken, intelligent and sophisticated. She also dressed in men’s attire and against the fashion of the day, rode astride and was self-sufficient. On one occasion the editor of the Maitland Mercury (15 May 1866) referred to her as ‘Thunderbolt’s chief lieutenant and right hand man’. Mary Ann, however, has been erased from the Thunderbolt legend.
Throughout the nineteenth century and for much of the twentieth century a considerable distance between black and white Australians was evident in popular published works (Healy 1989, 1). When Mary Gilmore tried to encourage Lawson to write about Aboriginal Australians, he was indignant, insisting that ‘... anyone writing of the aborigine as heroic ... would only be laughed at or ridiculed ...’ (1989, 179). As Australian nationalism was being fashioned, Aborigines were deliberately denied their place (Healy 1989, xvi).

Dynamic relationships of resistance and assistance failed to make it onto the printed page. The close networks and alliances that existed between Aboriginal and settler Australians also failed to register in our national psyche.4 It is these relationships of reciprocity, solidarity and mateship that enabled many of our celebrated heroes, like the bushranger Captain Thunderbolt, to evade capture and survive for many years in the Australian bush.

Australian anthropologist W.E.H. Stanner in his 1968 ABC Boyer Lecture: The Great Australian Silence, described this phenomenon as ‘... a cult of forgetfulness practised on a national scale’ (Stanner 1968, 25). Aboriginal people remained absent from the national narrative apart from the occasional ‘melancholy footnote’ (1968, 26) which referenced an “inevitable demise”.

Stanner sought to have this ‘cult of forgetfulness’ remedied by sending out a challenge to academics to address the deficiencies of the Australian story.

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4 The frontier has been described as ‘a very local phenomenon’. Although commonly characterised by violent dispossession, relationships based on loyalty and intimacy between Aboriginal and settler Australians also emerged (see Critchett 1990, 23).
This thesis documents the life of Mary Ann Ward (nee Bugg), Worimi woman and wife of Captain Thunderbolt. It is important to consider the range of relationships that emerged on the frontier and the bearing that geography played in such encounters. Adopting a regional focus to my work has helped me to achieve this. Mary Ann’s story is used to investigate the diversity of relationships that existed between Aboriginal people and settlers in the coastal and central region of mid northern New South Wales.

Chapter one will focus on the relationships that emerged between Worimi people and settlers associated with the Australian Agricultural Company (AAC). Robert Dawson, the first Company Manager of the AAC has left us with a valuable account of race relations during his tenure in the 1820s. William Scott has provided an intimate account of growing up with Worimi children at Port Stephens and maintaining life-long connections. The journals of Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld were also insightful. Government enquiries tabled by the Legislative Council have also informed my work.

Chapters two and three will document the range of stereotypes used to define Mary Ann throughout her public life. How was she represented in the historical record, popular press and public imagination? The colonial newspapers and Police Gazettes were rich sources of information. The colonial secretary’s correspondence was also informative. By tracing the life of Mary Ann I intend to interrogate common racist stereotypes used to define Aboriginal people during the nineteenth century and explore the ways in which she defied such characterisations. Does Mary Ann deserve recognition for her heroic deeds? In exploring what lies behind the legend of Thunderbolt I hope to address the deficiencies of the mateship ethos.
Figure 1: Map of Worimi Country, based on original by James Miller 1985.
Figure 2: Map of South Eastern Australia, detail of original titled *Aboriginal Australia* by David Horton 1999.
Race Relations – A Regional Perspective

The Country to which the Worimi people belong is bound by the sea to the east, the mountainous Barrington Tops to the west and four major rivers. The Hunter River forms the southern boundary, the Manning River defines the northern boundary and to the west are the Allyn and Patterson Rivers. Within the boundaries of these rivers were eighteen clan groups, divided into saltwater and freshwater clans (Ridgeway, L. 2007, pers. comm., 16 October). Worimi people occupied the coastal valleys throughout the year and understood their Country intimately. The end of summer was signalled by the browning of the leaves on the Casuarina trees. On witnessing this event the coastal clans would travel inland to the plateau country to hunt more abundant populations of kangaroo, possum and wombat. The regal procession of the hairy caterpillars indicated to the Worimi that it was time to move back to the coast, where they would once again feast on an abundant supply of seafood.

Worimi people have continued to maintain spiritual and cultural connections to Country despite the violent dispossession and oppression suffered as a consequence of British invasion. Prominent Worimi nation elder Uncle Les Ridgeway is testament to this. He grew up with the boss men of the Worimi nation clans, who passed on considerable knowledge to him. According to Ridgeway, Worimi Country is neighboured by four nations of people who shared
the “Kuttang-tongue” as their common language. To the north lay the Country of the Birpai, to the west the Wonnarua and Geawegal and to the south the land of the Mount Sugarloaf people (Ridgeway, L. 2007, pers. comm., 16 October).

Communication between these nations did not cease after first contact. The Aboriginal economy was maintained. Aboriginal people continued to come together to exchange knowledge, material goods and take part in important ceremonies, such as initiation and marriage. Uncle Les’ father Arthur Ridgeway was a professional fisherman and fully initiated man. Arthur Ridgeway and his cousins undertook their initiation or “obedience test” as Uncle Les described it, in 1916 (Ridgeway L. 2007, pers. comm. 16 October). This indicates a remarkable demonstration of tenacity and adherence to Aboriginal lore in an increasingly culturally oppressive climate.

The Worimi have a long history of incorporating new comers into their community. In 1790 four escaped convicts were shipwrecked in Worimi waters off the coast of present day Port Stephens. Five years later, when the men were finally discovered by authorities, it was reported that they were married to Worimi women and had fathered several children (Bartlett 1980, 8-12). Mixed marriage continues to be recognised as a central part of contemporary Worimi culture.

Dawson and the Worimi

During the 1820s one million acres of Worimi Nation land at Port Stephens, north of Sydney, was granted by the Imperial Government to the Australian Agricultural Company (hereafter AAC). The intention of this London Company
was to develop commercial enterprises in the new colony. The massive land grant stretched from Port Stephens in the south to the Manning Valley in the north. The harbour at Port Stephens had been identified as an ideal location for the Company’s headquarters. Robert Dawson, the Company’s first manager, arrived in Australia in 1825. His directives were to establish a fine wool industry and begin breeding livestock (Ramsland 2001, 19). He arrived in Sydney with two ship-loads of more than eighty men, women and children, over six hundred sheep, twelve head of cattle and seven horses (Dawson 1987, 1-2).

Dawson’s journal indicates how indebted his people were to the Aborigines for their survival and subsequent prosperity. The AAC also relied on a steady supply of convict labourers to make their venture profitable. Many of the Company’s white employees and assigned servants formed strong unions with the Aboriginal people of Worimi country. They worked alongside them, shared knowledge, skills and material goods and became connected through sexual unions and marriage. Some of the Company employees spoke the Worimi language and their children often became even more proficient (Bennett 1929, 5-6, 26, 35-9).

It was the local Worimi guides who showed Dawson’s party the most accessible routes through their Country and led them to fresh water (Dawson 1987, 9-10). Uncle Les tells handed-down stories of his ancestors who lived and worked amongst Dawson’s people (Ridgeway, L. 2007, pers. comm., 16 October). Without Aboriginal labour, knowledge and hospitality, the AAC’s ambitious enterprise would have been difficult to establish. When the Company Manager led another exploration party into the interior to select grazing land, he
enlisted more Worimi guides. Dawson (1987, 28) recorded the following account in his journal:

Here again I was indebted to the natives, who acted as my guides upon every occasion, not only when on horseback, but also in the boat, in which they frequently rowed me up the rivers and various creeks, accompanied often only by one white person.

The Worimi helped build the first huts for the AAC Estate at Port Stephens. Dawson (1987, 19-20) showed much gratitude for their labour. He provided a detailed description of how indispensable the Worimi of Port Stephens were to the white families:

Their services had almost become necessary to the families in carrying water, collecting and chopping firewood, and supplying them with fish, which they did in abundance. The native women and children were constantly in, or loitering about the doors of the huts, where it was quite common to see a black woman dressed up with an old gown and cap, and dandling in her arms the infant of a white woman; while others, especially young girls, frequently assisted their white neighbours at the wash-tub. Native children of both sexes too, were often seen at their games in all parts of the establishment with the white children; and it was no unusual thing to see a black man, for short periods, at one end of a saw, and a white man at the other, working together with as much cordiality as if they had both been of the same colour and nation (1987, 100).

Whilst labour was used as a means of reforming hardened convicts, Dawson did not perceive Aboriginal people in this same class, or share the view that they were inferior. He tried to impress this firm belief on his convict-servants. He (1987, 194) had great admiration for the pride the Aborigines possessed and
had no intention of reducing them to a life of servitude. He made it clear to the Worimi that they were free to go when they chose, but that if they worked for him, they would receive goods in exchange for their labour. His philosophy was to return kindness for the ‘interference’ of their country (1987, 157). Consequently Dawson never had any problems recruiting Aboriginal workers.

But he became increasingly disturbed by the violence committed against Aboriginal people by his white Company employees and other settlers of the region. During his tenure with the AAC he also acted as magistrate for the district. When Dawson received news of the murder of a young Aboriginal boy, Tommy, by timber getters upstream, he took the matter very seriously. The superintendent to the timber getters had reported the incident and was most distressed. Dawson promptly issued a warrant. The men were apprehended for questioning, tried in Sydney and found guilty (Dawson 1987, 42-4). While Dawson (1987, 58) was able to discipline those committing serious offences within his jurisdiction he was also deeply concerned about the atrocities frequently occurring ‘... in distant parts of the colony ...’. He made reference to what he described as the inexcusable behaviour of convict-servants who shot Aboriginal people down like dogs for the most ‘trifling’ offences.

The Dismissal

Life for the Worimi became increasingly desperate when Dawson’s appointment was suspended in April 1828. Following the dismissal, relationships rapidly deteriorated between the Worimi and AAC employees (Bairstow 1993, 13). Accusations of mismanagement and insubordination had been directed at
Dawson by the AAC committee based in Sydney. Although Dawson requested a hearing to attest his innocence, this was never granted. Members of the influential Macarthur clan sat on the committee which controlled the decision making and financial affairs of the AAC. A damning report was issued by James (son of John Macarthur) reprimanding Dawson for what he described as his ‘disgusting familiarity towards the natives’ (McArthur [sic] in Rye 1966). However contemporary Worimi reflect on Dawson’s familiarity with fondness. As Ridgeway (2007, pers. comm. 3 November) stated:

[Dawson] ... was a good man to both our natives and convicts who lived in the area. Unfortunately other white men in nearby areas were not so kind, they were known to shoot to kill many of our folk ...

While contemporary Worimi remember Dawson as a fair and honest man, his successor, Commissioner Edward Parry, had earned himself a reputation for being inhumane. According to Uncle Les, ‘... he gave his convicts rifles with instructions to shoot the Blacks if they did not obey their orders. Many of our folk were killed by these convicts, and they ran off with our young women ...’ (Ridgeway L. 2008, pers. comm. 28 March). A statement issued by the AAC’s Chaplain Reverend Cowper in 1838 (ten years after Dawson’s departure) confirmed this conduct. He wrote, ‘... the decrease in the Aboriginal population has been, within the last ten years, lamentably great; ...’ (NSW LC V&P 1824-

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Cowper alluded to the immoral behaviour of the Europeans and the prevalence of venereal disease as being the major cause of this decline.

**Kinship Obligations**

Disputes concerning Aboriginal women were a common feature of racial tension between black and white males in the Colony. Initial contact was often characterised by conciliatory measures on both sides of the frontier. Attempts were made by Aboriginal people to incorporate the Europeans into their kinship system through the giving of women. Women were often sent forward as diplomats, in order to establish relations and obtain knowledge (Reynolds 2006, 75-7). The settlers were then obliged to reciprocate by distributing prized items such as food, tobacco and alcohol amongst the clan (Broome 2001, 59). When this was not forthcoming or worse still if Aboriginal women were abducted, raped and held against their will, this led to violent retribution (Miller 1985, 34).

Some women went to the settler’s huts willingly, others were given, and many were taken by force (Broome 2001, 59-60). It was common practice for settlers to abduct Aboriginal women and keep them tied up in virtual slavery. The mistreatment and abduction of Aboriginal women by the white men was the predominant cause of attacks to life and property on the colonial frontier.

Aboriginal clans of the inland were particularly vulnerable. In an attempt to prevent pastoralists from illegally squatting on Crown lands, the Colonial Government in 1829 proclaimed an area known as the Nineteen Counties (the so-called settled districts). The proposed limits of colonisation stretched...
the Manning to Moruya, from the coast to the Lachlan’ (Roberts 1970, 3).

Anyone crossing beyond the boundary or “Limits of Location” would be afforded no Government protection. ‘By 1835, ... the thick black line ... on the map ... had been crossed in all directions’ (Roberts 4). Beyond the settled districts white men outnumbered white women in a ratio of 38:1 (Parbury 1988, 54). Sexual competition for Aboriginal women in the remote regions was intense.

Reverend Lancelot Threlkeld consistently raised concerns about the aggressions taking place in ‘the Interior’ (Gunson: 1974a, 91). In 1825 Threlkeld established a mission on the lower Hunter River where he provided Christian instruction and taught English methods of agriculture to the Awabakal people, a clan of the Mount Sugarloaf Nation. Although distressed by the reports he had received, Threlkeld was not surprised by the escalation in violence. He gave the following explanation:

The un-matrimonial state of thousands of male prisoners scattered throughout the country amidst females, though of another color, leads them by force, fraud, or bribery to withdraw the Aboriginal women from their own proper mates, and disease, and death are the usual consequences of such proceedings, (Gunson 1974a, 137).

James and Charlotte Bugg

Convicts in particular have been noted for the aggression that they directed towards Aboriginal people (Gunson 1974a, 57; Yarwood & Knowling 1982, 106). However, a heavy reliance on stereotypical representations ignores the collaboration that often existed between Aborigines and convicts (Kociumbas
Not all relationships between Aboriginal women and white men were based on exploitation and violence. Some arrangements were consensual and developed into long-term unions and marriage (Grimshaw et al. 1994, 139; Kociumbas 2001, 28; Macleod 1949, 22; Ramsland 2001, 38). This was the case for James Bugg, an AAC convict-servant who was determined to marry his Aboriginal companion. Together the couple raised eight children, established a family farm and remained life partners.

In 1825 James Bugg, then aged 23 was convicted of stealing meat (one wether, two lambs and two pigs) in Essex and sentenced to transportation for life. He arrived in Sydney in 1826 and in 1827 was assigned to the AAC. Noted for his good character and the fact that he could read and write, Bugg was quickly promoted to “Overseer of Shepherds” at the Company’s more remote holdings.

During the 1830s the AAC continued to expand their pastoral and grazing activities to the north-west. James Bugg was posted to one of the outstations at Berrico, County Gloucester. Sometime later he began a relationship with a local Worimi woman, who became known as Charlotte. In 1834 the first of the couple’s eight children was born and given the name Mary Ann. It appears

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2 Some writers have identified Mary Ann’s mother as an Aboriginal woman named Elizabeth or Betty (see Macleod 1949, 22; Williams 1987, 36). However a death certificate for Charlotte Bugg, an Aboriginal of Monkerai, lists all of her eight children, including Mary Ann (see BDM NSW Reg. No. 1861/004535).

3 Mary Ann is proudly claimed by the Worimi. Uncle Les has based his knowledge on the stories handed down to him by his Elders, which he has found to be very accurate. He believes that some writers are basing their findings purely on the written record. However this record is deficient. Ethnologists and anthropologists such as Enright and Elkin who visited Port Stephens for example, could only record the knowledge that was revealed to them. These researchers recorded ten Worimi nation clans. However, Uncle Les was told by his Elders that there were eighteen. Growing up with the Boss Men of the Worimi nation meant that Uncle Les was entrusted with knowledge through family membership (Ridgeway, L. 2008, pers. comm., 24 September). Some writers have described Mary Ann as belonging to the Biripi/Birpai nation (see Janson 1996, 17). Others have stated that she was of Wonnarua/Wonaruah nation descent (see Sinclair ‘Mary Ann Bugg: Captain Thunderbolt’s Lady’) http://users.tpg.com.au/users/barrymor/Mary%20Ann%20Bugg.html (30 September 2008). All three nations mentioned above shared tribal boundaries and spoke Kuttang/Kattang/Katthung as their common language. The invasion of their country would have blurred territorial divisions and pushed nation back upon nation. It has
reasonable to assume that James Bugg like many of the Company employees spoke Kuttang (Bennett 1929, 5-6, 26, 35-9). An understanding of the local language would have been essential for negotiating and maintaining peaceful relations with the Worimi. However, evidence suggests that communications with Aboriginal people from the hinterland had greatly deteriorated after Dawson’s dismissal in 1828 (Bairstow 1993, 13).

Aboriginal clans from the Gloucester region continued to defend their traditional hunting grounds by driving back sheep and shepherds. During one raid in 1835 James Bugg was severely attacked and beaten (Bairstow 1993, 13-14; Oppenheimer 1992, 94). His life was saved by Charlotte who discharged a firearm in the direction of his attackers. Following this display of courage and loyalty James requested that Rev. Cowper marry the pair (Macleod 1949, 22).

The matter was referred to Bishop Broughton (Anglican Bishop of New South Wales) who, quoting ‘... St Paul’s advice to the Corinthians ...’ refused the marriage on the grounds that Aboriginal people were non-believers therefore the union would be spiritually illegal (Reece 1974, 205-06). When appearing before a Select Committee in 1838, Rev. Cowper (NSW LC V&P 1824-1838, 58-9) cited the Bugg case as an example that Aboriginal people were capable of kindness and affection, contrary to the then popular stereotype of the savage. It was not

been noted that with the decimation of some clans, tribal boundaries could no longer be maintained. When the Birpai suffered a dramatic population decline, Worimi people took over their camps and intermarried with the surviving population (see Enright 1932, 76). The information provided by Uncle Les therefore seems credible. The biography of Les Ridgeway written by Professor John Ramsland is due for release in 2009.
until 1848 that the couple were legally married at Gloucester by an itinerant Presbyterian Minister (Macleod 1949, 22).

At the Company level sexual unions between AAC employees and Aboriginal women were ‘discouraged’ and marriage was ‘disallowed’ (Oppenheimer 1992, 95). In 1837 Commissioner Henry Dumaresq went on a tour of the company’s outstation at Berrico. Not only did he become aware of the relationship between James and Charlotte, he now met the couple’s children. Although Dumaresq noted that the station was well managed, he was concerned about the childrens’ welfare (Oppenheimer 1983, 20). It was thought that the only solution for the ‘... poor little Beings’ [would be an] ... abandonment of their Savage life’ through Christian instruction (Dumaresq in Oppenheimer 1992, 96).

Clergymen often concentrated their efforts on converting Aboriginal children to Christianity. Baptism was perceived as a mark of civilisation (Broome 2001, 109; Grimshaw et al. 1994, 140). After much deliberation between the parents, clergymen, company and government officials, it was decided that the Bugg’s children should be elevated above ‘Barbarism’ and separated from their mother (Dumaresq in Oppenheimer 1992, 96). Interestingly, in the Bugg children’s case, there appears to have been parental consent. James Bugg initially agreed to contribute £40 towards the Christian education of his children (Dumaresq in Tunchon, 9). In 1839 Mary Ann aged five and John aged three were baptised by Rev. Cowper and sent to Parramatta Orphan School in Sydney.
Contested Country

Race relations in the closely settled districts were immensely different from those of the inland pastoral frontiers. Following Dawson’s departure, parties of soldiers, constables and AAC employees were armed and deployed to protect the Company’s more remote holdings (Bairstow 1993, 13; Oppenheimer 1983, 19-20). Vigilante groups were often guided by Aboriginal Constables who worked for the AAC. These men had no difficulty in tracking distant clans whom they had no kinship affiliation with and were considered dangerous (Reynolds 2000, 154-55). Such parties were responsible for large scale massacres of Aboriginal people (Blomfield 1981, 121-25; Ramsland 2001, 26-8).

Following the attack on Bugg’s station in 1835, a punitive party was organised to track the culprits. Bugg did not join any of the raids. A few days later a neighbouring station was attacked; five convict shepherds were killed, their sheep driven off and property burnt (Oppenheimer 1983, 19-20; 1992, 95). The Aborigines involved were closely pursued and their camp was fired on at dawn. Not only was this incident reported to the AAC head office in London (Oppenheimer 1992, 95) it is retained in strong local oral traditions, (Blomfield 1981, 121) in which it has been described as a massacre. Aboriginal clans continued to be murdered and poisoned by settlers as they tried to defend their country, feed their families and uphold their lore.

The Worimi remained in a vulnerable position. Their well being was contingent on the philosophy and policy of respective Company Managers. Dawson’s conciliatory aims of cultivating friendship and offering protection had been replaced by ‘… a policy of non-molestation …’ under Parry. By 1840 Commissioner Phillip Parker King attempted only to ameliorate the surviving
Aboriginal population (Bairstow 1993, 15). James Bugg had served the Company for 28 years under Dawson and his successors: Parry, Dumaresq, Ebsworth, King, Blane and Brownrigg. There is no doubt that Bugg would have witnessed the dramatic impact that the change in Company leadership had on race relations.

The Character of Country

The nature of the country and the conflicting methods of land use shaped race relations. ‘European and Aborigine would intensely contest for the land and then some sense of accommodation of each other’s presence would gradually develop …’ (Ramsland 2001, 22). Coastal communities such as the Awabakal, Worimi and Birpai continued to have access to their well maintained hunting grounds. These clan groups managed to combine traditional hunting, harvesting and fishing with station work. During the 1840s coastal clans remained camped near the AAC estate at Port Stephens. Aboriginal people were retained as employees for the AAC and the women in particular were frequently visited by convict servants (Reece 1974, 19).

It was the grasslands people of central New South Wales, such as the Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri, ‘who faced the most rapid and consistently violent invasion’ (Goodall 1986, 30). Squatters continued to move their stock in a steady procession beyond the newly settled districts. Little regard was paid to the waterholes they muddied and ran dry, the hunting grounds they destroyed, the traditional lands they usurped or those they dispossessed in the process.

Nevertheless, initial encounters between the settlers and Aborigines were
often peaceful engagements. Although first contact between the Wonnarua of the Hunter Valley and settlers began in 1822, it was not until 1826 that relations had degenerated into full scale guerilla warfare (HRA Vol. XII 1919, 610-12). Tensions escalated as it became clear that the white man planned to stay permanently. News of the violent dispossession of other Aboriginal nations had travelled inland (Miller 1985, 30-3). The extensive Aboriginal trade routes which covered the entire continent carried the intelligence. When the Wonnarua were forced to yield in 1827, the squatters herded their stock across the rich grasslands into Kamilaroi Country to a region known as the Liverpool Plains (Milliss 1985, 26). Here they were met with strong resistance.  

**Aboriginal Women and AAC employees**

Successive Australian Governors became increasingly alarmed by the frequent reports of violence committed against Aboriginal women. In 1837 Governor Bourke officially outlawed the ‘forceful detention of Aboriginal women’ by white men (Broome 2001, 60). When Governor Gipps arrived in the colony in 1838 he issued a further warning to the investors of the AAC regarding the conduct of their assigned servants. He threatened to withdraw the whole male workforce if they were found living with and travelling about the country with Aboriginal women. Oppenheimer (1983, 18-20; 1992, 97-8) argued that Gipps’ decision was influenced by the news of the notorious massacre of Aboriginal people at

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4 Bill Gammage suggested that the Kamilaroi and Wiradjuri, who were in close contact, devised a co-ordinated strategy to deal with the invader (see Gammage 1983, 3-4)
Myall Creek Station\(^5\), in the north-west. The Governor’s threat caused substantial anxiety amongst Company shareholders (HRA Vol. XIX 1923, 744-48). Acting Commissioner James Edward Ebsworth (1923, 748) assured government officials that:

\[
\text{... in every instance where an assigned servant shall be known to be, as living in intercourse with a Black or Aboriginal woman, he shall be dealt with as the Police Authorities may deem right; ... .}
\]

The reality of a large male convict workforce living in an isolated region meant that such infringements were difficult to police. Aboriginal women continued to maintain ‘connexions’ with white shepherds (NSW LC V&P 1845, 28). According to Ramsland (2001, 38) long-term relationships between Aboriginal women and ex-convicts or ticket-of-leave men were common. Even after the removal of their two children James and Charlotte continued to remain in close contact. James Bugg had received his ticket-of-leave in 1834. When James and Charlotte’s union was legally recognised in 1848 the couple already had a family of seven children. It was their eldest daughter Mary Ann, who was to become a public figure.

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\(^5\) The massacre of 28 Wirrayaraay people of the Kamilaroi nation at Myall Creek in 1838, was a major concern for Gipps (see LC V&P 1839, 7 NSW; HRA Vol. XIX 1923, 701). The media coverage of the Myall Creek Massacre had revealed the existence of widespread racial solidarity amongst white settlers (see The Australian 8th December 1838; Yarwood & Knowling 1982, 109). Seven of the men involved in the murders were found guilty and hanged in Sydney, December 1838. Magistrate Edward Denny Day has been credited for his persistence in bringing the guilty men to trial (see Fredman 1978, 46-9). The Myall Creek Massacre has been recognised as ‘… the first and last time the Colonial Administration intervened to ensure the laws of the colony were applied equally to Aboriginal people and settlers …’ (Garrett in The Koori Mail 2008, 17). This is not strictly the case. However, today it is remembered in these terms. Although uncommon, there were other cases in which white men were tried for committing violent crimes against Aboriginal people. Nevertheless it was extremely rare for the white perpetrators to be punished for such crimes (see Blyton et al 2004, 18-19; Dawson 1987, 42-44; Gunson 1974a, 49; Miller 1985, 40-1; Milliss 1985, 26-7).
Mary Ann Bugg: The Making of a Legend

Mary Ann received a basic education at the Orphan School in Sydney to prepare her for domestic service. This included reading, writing, cooking and sewing. The aim of the orphan school was to enable both black and white children of the Colony to receive Christian instruction under the one roof (HRA Volume XI 1917, 863-4). Grimshaw et al. (1994, 71) argued that these institutions ‘... taught children to submit to a brutal discipline, but did little to convert them to a morality different from their parents’. The Parramatta Orphan Schools were separated by gender rather than race.

Mary Ann was brought up in what was considered ‘settled habits’ and in 1848, aged fourteen she married Edmund Baker an AAC shepherd (CSC Nicholls 1866). The service was conducted by Rev. Cowper at Gloucester. It is interesting to note that while Mary Ann signed her own name, Baker signed with a cross (Oppenheimer 1983, 21). Mary Ann had a degree of literacy which was uncommon amongst people of her race and class of the times.

A short time later the couple left the district for Mudgee where they obtained work at Cooyal Station, owned by Sarah Garbutt, the mother of Fred Ward (Sinclair, B. 2008, pers. comm., 11 August). It is here that Mary Ann is believed to have become acquainted or possibly re-acquainted with Ward.

Fred was recognised as a skilled horseman throughout the Hunter Valley and New England District, where he worked as a stockman and horse breaker. In 1856 he and his step-brother James Garbutt were convicted of horse stealing
and sentenced to Cockatoo Island Gaol for ten years hard labour. Police records indicate that when Ward was arrested in 1856 he was illiterate (Williams 1987, 20). After serving four years of his sentence Ward was released on a ticket-of-leave and required to report to the authorities at Mudgee. He returned to work at Cooyal Station where Mary Ann, now a widow from her first marriage, continued to live.

When Mary Ann returned to the Gloucester region to take up work as a domestic at Dungog, Ward joined her and they were soon married (CSC Nicholls 1866). Mary Ann gave birth to their first child, Marina Emily, in October 1861.\(^6\) In September 1861 Ward borrowed a horse and rode to Mudgee Police Station to report as required. Arriving late he discovered that his ticket-of-leave had been revoked and in addition to this he was charged with stealing the horse on which he rode. According to Williams (1987, 22):

> His trial was brought on before he could get witnesses from the Hunter to attest to his character and his rights to the horse, and he was returned to Cockatoo Island to serve the remainder of his original sentence, with a further three years’ hard labour on the new charge of horse stealing.

Surrounded by the shark-infested waters of Sydney Harbour and heavily patrolled by guards, escape from Cockatoo Island was deemed impossible. Longing to see his wife and infant child,\(^7\) Ward was anything but a model prisoner. The Cockatoo Island Punishment Book has many entries in his name for charges such as attempted escape and consistently disobeying orders. On one occasion he was committed to 28 days in solitary confinement for

\(^6\) (See Birth Certificate NSW BDM Reg. No. 7193/1861, Marina Emily Ward).

\(^7\) Two weeks after his return to prison Fred became a father.
‘disobedience of orders’ (Cockatoo Island Punishment Book 1863, 21 January).

On 11\textsuperscript{th} September 1863 Ward, with fellow inmate Frederick Brittain, became the only prisoners to ever escape from the Island. There is no doubt that the duo were greatly assisted by Mary Ann in their daring escape.

Years later Mary Ann revealed to Police Constable William Langworthy how the escape had been achieved. Langworthy had known the Bugg family since Mary Ann was an infant. Before joining the police force in 1863, he had worked for the AAC. Many different versions of the story have survived and become popularised as folklore. However all recent accounts credit Mary Ann with rescuing the prisoners (Blyton \textit{et al.} 2004, 38-9; Janson 1996, 25-8; Macleod 1949, 23; Oppenheimer 1992, 99-100; Ramsland 2001, 38-9; Walker 1958, 236; Williams 1987, 25), as do contemporary accounts. According to Langworthy while Fred was in prison Mary Ann found domestic work in the harbour-side suburb of Balmain. During this time she gathered information regarding Fred’s movements and the general surveillance pattern of the island. In September 1863 Mary Ann made the courageous swim from Long Nose Point to Cockatoo Island smuggling a file and ‘... a sympathiser among the prisoners …’ assisted in removing the leg irons (Macleod 1949, 23).

The “insider” may have been a Cockatoo Island Guard. Williams (1987, 24-5) reported that an unnamed guard who had formerly deserted from duties, was at the time considered a key suspect. On the night of their escape Mary Ann stood on the foreshore with a lantern to mark a safe site for the men to come ashore. She then supplied the prisoners with provisions and horses and they headed north to the Hunter Valley undetected.
Under Surveillance

Following the escape from Cockatoo Island, police suspected that Fred may have fled north to the Culgoa, where his brother William (Harry) was living (Police Gazette, 7 Oct. 1863). By January 1864 Fred Ward, now known as Captain Thunderbolt, had been sighted again in the Hunter Valley at Dungog. He had returned for Mary Ann and the children. Monkerai, the property leased by Mary Ann’s father, became a base for Thunderbolt’s operations. Charlotte, her mother, now deceased had been buried at the family property in 1861. Thunderbolt had a wide network of support including his father-in-law and extended Bugg family. James Bugg continued to supply fresh horses and important information via the “bush telegraph” (Ramsland 2001, 38)

A Dungog correspondent writing for Maitland Mercury (26 Jan. 1864) announced his presence: ‘we are infested with a gentleman by the name of Ward, lately escaped from Cockatoo:- a colored lady of his acquaintance is the reason for his visiting this district’. The Sydney Empire (4 Jan. 1864) described the bushranger as ‘... a man who is supposed to know every inch of ground’ in the region. Thunderbolt robbed a local property of supplies, ‘... 2 saddles, 1 bridle, 1 double-barrelled gun ... a bullet mould, and a quantity of flour, tea, sugar and beef ...’ and headed back to the Culgoa (Police Gazette, 27 Jan. 1864). The police were now hot on his heels. As the Barrington and Gloucester Rivers

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8 (Mary Ann’s second child may have been Elizabeth Ann Ward born West Maitland. Family tradition indicates this. No birth certificate exists, however the certificate of her second marriage BDM Reg. No. 1914/015775 lists Frederick Ward as her father. The death certificate BDM Reg. No. 1939/013978 again lists Ward as her father, mother unknown. These two documents indicate that Elizabeth Ann Ward was born around 1862/3. Family historian and descendant of Fred Ward, Barry Sinclair, listed the birth of Elizabeth Ann Ward for 2nd September 1864 (see http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=thunderbolt&id=I0028 21 September 2008).
rose Ward made his escape from police pursuit. ‘When last seen he was tolerably well mounted, having two horses, ... and was accompanied by a half-cast woman and two children, which he generally kept in the background when making inquiries’ (Maitland Mercury, 23 Feb. 1864.).

In January 1865 a party of troopers, with the assistance of a Queensland black tracker discovered Thunderbolt’s camp on the Culgoa. Here they found:

... a half-cast gin and two pickaninnies. ... They had been in this camp for upwards of eight months. The Captain brought his gin from the neighbourhood of Maitland. In this case, as well as in many others, the bushrangers are aided by settlers and squatters of a questionable stamp, without whose aid they could not live (Sydney Empire, 31 Jan. 1865).

When Sergeant Cleary and the black tracker came upon the camp they recovered some of the stolen property and interviewed Mary Ann. ‘A half-caste woman at the camp stated that she was the wife of the offender Ward’ (Police Gazette, 8 Feb. 1865).

In March of the same year Thunderbolt’s camp was again visited by Sergeant Cleary. Mary Ann on recognising the officer, taunted, ‘... So you are here again, are you, but you’re too late, they’re off; we saw you when you came on the lake this morning’ (Sydney Empire, 2 May 1865). On this occasion Mary Ann was arrested ‘... for having stolen property in her possession’ (Police Gazette, 19 April 1865). Mary Ann put up a strong fight. Although noted for speaking ‘good English’ she shouted obscenities at the troopers and physically resisted the arrest (Sydney Empire, 2 May 1865). When reporting on the incident a rural correspondent portrayed Mary Ann as both “savage” and “civilised”.
Mary Ann was both articulate and aggressive. She obviously turned racial stereotypes on their head. She was referred to as ‘the gentry’, ‘lady love’, ‘the good lady’, ‘Mrs Fred rick Ward’, ‘Captain Thunderbolt’s half-cast gin’ and ‘Mrs. Thunderbolt’. Yet the same account described her attacking a constable, tearing his shirt to ribbons and threatening him with ‘Fred’s vengeance’ whilst feigning to bring on labour (Sydney Empire, 2 May 1865).

Another account of Mary Ann’s arrest described her as an ‘amazon’:

who sprang like a tigress upon one of the police, ribboning his uniform, and taunting him with cowardice for seeking her apprehension instead of Thunderbolt’s, finally challenging them to a single combat, and resisting her apprehension with such desperation that forcible means had to be adopted to secure her (Maitland Mercury, 18 April 1865).

Mary Ann and her two children were detained at Forrester’s Wilbie Wilbie Station, while the police went in search of Ward. On the 4th April Thunderbolt’s Gang descended on the Station, with Ward rescuing Mary Ann and the gang later returning for supper. They took with them a supply of gunpowder and obtained £10, ‘... without having offered any violence …’ and bid their victims ‘Good evening’ (Maitland Mercury, 18 April 1865).

Thunderbolt at this stage was operating in a gang of four. Evidence suggests that he was inclined to reject supporters who resorted to violence. On such occasions when his men challenged the troopers with crossfire, Thunderbolt quickly disbanded the gangs.9 It was characteristic for Ward to jump on his

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9 Gang members were known as Thompson, McIntosh and “The Bull” aka “The Bully”. Thunderbolt disbanded his gang following a gun battle between troopers in which Thompson was wounded and taken into custody (see Police Gazette 1865, 26 April; Williams 1987, 41,51, 61-6).
horse as soon as the police appeared. He stayed true to his philosophy ‘... that a racehorse was a better weapon than a revolver’ (Williams 1987, 61). Bloodshed was to be avoided at all costs.

**Shielded in Kamilaroi Country**

Ward now made plans to move his family to a safe camp in Kamilaroi country, overlooking the Liverpool Plains, at Wallabadah. Here he enlisted an Aboriginal midwife, to assist Mary Ann who was now pregnant with her third child. Thunderbolt formed a new gang with members known as Kelly and Jemmy. The sympathy for Ward remained strong in this region. The bushrangers received information regarding police presence via the “bush telegraph” and were supplied with provisions in exchange for money (Williams 1987, 53). Kamilaroi elder Aunty Ellen Draper, had relatives who not only rode with Thunderbolt, but acted as what she called “bush telegraphs”. According to Aunty Ellen Thunderbolt had more than one ‘gin’ supporting him. She stated that the other men in Thunderbolt’s gang would have had Aboriginal women also.

... That was handed down and we always knew first hand that there was Aboriginal people involved with most of the bushrangers. ... It would be hard if you did not know how to survive ... (Draper, E. 2005, pers. comm., 30 August).

Bushrangers who formed unions with Aboriginal women became recognised as kin and therefore were expected to reciprocate by sharing their loot. In return
they were shielded from detection, supplied with fresh horses, rations, and vital information. The value of maintaining such alliances should not be overlooked:

... Bushrangers who remained at large for long periods of time were not only dependent on the bushcraft of Aboriginal women but also ... needed to negotiate conciliatory relations with Aboriginal men (Kociumbas 2001, 40).

It is possible that some bushrangers assisted Aboriginal clansmen in defending their country. Kociumbas (2001, 40) argued that some Elders may have seen the offering of Aboriginal women as a means of strengthening strategic alliances.

A Swagman’s Life

In January 1866 Thunderbolt disbanded his second gang, following a gunfight in which one of his members wounded a constable in the arm. Ward abhorred bloodshed (CSC Lethbridge 1867; Williams 1987, 61). He collected Mary Ann, their three children and mid wife and they began the journey back to the Hunter Valley.¹⁰ Police parties were now close on their tracks and they continued to raid Thunderbolt’s camps. On one occasion Thunderbolt was shot in the leg by an officer from Port Macquarie and sustained a back injury when he fell from his horse (1987, 73).

It was believed that the mid-wife became separated from the family during a police raid. After walking for nine days through dense bush and ‘... living

¹⁰ Family historian and descendant of Fred Ward, Barry Sinclair, listed the birth of their third child, Mary Anne Ward, at Wallabadah 1866 (see http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=thunderbolt&id=I0028 21 September 2008).
on yams and wattle gum …’, Mary Ann’s mid-wife reached Stroud and gave herself into the police. She claimed that she had been held captive at the camp and tied up to prevent her escape. The “hostage” maintained that she had agreed to attend to Thunderbolt’s wife during her confinement, however following the birth she had requested to leave (Maitland Mercury 29 March 1866).

When questioned about Mrs Thunderbolt she gave a masculine description of a woman who dressed in men’s attire and accompanied her husband in his plunder (Maitland Mercury 29 March 1866). She killed cattle, by charging at the beast on horseback and cutting a hamstring with ‘… a shear blade, fastened to a long stick …’ (Sydney Mail 7 April 1866). Mary Ann provided the food for her family who principally lived on ‘… beef (very seldom they have flour), wild yams, and wattle gum’ (Maitland Mercury 29 March 1866).

The “informant” appeared to provide the Dungog Police with valuable information and offered to lead them to Thunderbolt’s camp. However it was Thunderbolt’s long abandoned camps that the police were encouraged to fruitlessly search. Williams (1987, 73-5) argued that the “informants” claims of being held prisoner, were made to the police in an attempt prove that she was not an accessory to the bushranger. While it is difficult to determine whether her aims were to assist the police in their search or mislead them, ‘she certainly kept them busy while Ward and his family made their way out of the district’ (1987 74). There were now three police parties out in search of Thunderbolt.

In late March Mary Ann and three children were detained by the Port Macquarie Police at a remote station in the hill country above Stroud. On this occasion Mary Ann was referred to as a ‘yellow girl’ who dressed completely in ‘men’s attire’ and rode astride. One of her children thought to be about six years
of age, was described as a competent rider (Maitland Mercury 5 April 1866).

Again Mary Ann made her escape in search of her husband whom, ‘... she did not think ... could long survive ...’ because of his injuries (Sydney Mail 7 April 1866).

On 27\textsuperscript{th} March 1866 Mary Ann was re captured, this time by the Maitland Police in her camp at Pignabarney, near Nundle. ‘... In a wild unfrequented part of New England district, ... twenty-five miles from any house, hut or homestead ...’, she was charged with vagrancy. When asked if she was Ward’s wife, Mary Ann stated that she was “the captain’s lady”. The Sydney Mail (7 April 1866) reported:

Her swag contained a suit of men’s clothes and some provisions, and on the grass lay a child about nine months old .... She was taken to Stroud (a journey of three days) on horseback, and was there charged with vagrancy, having no fixed place of abode nor visible means of support.

\section*{A Life on Trial}

Mary Ann and her infant child were brought before the Police Magistrate Thomas Nicholls at Stroud on 31\textsuperscript{st} March. The arresting officer Senior Sergeant Kerrigan (CSC 1866, 31 March) stated:

... She said her name was Mary Ann Ward, and wife of Frederick Ward, I said alias Thunderbolt, she said I don’t know about Thunderbolt. ... I asked her if she had any means of support, she said “no”, but what she had got she got from Mr Hook, which he gave her for charity. She also stated that she had no fixed residence, nor had any for the last two years ... .
At the trial Mary Ann (CSC 1866, 31 March) argued that she was not a vagrant ‘... as her husband Ward, kept her’. Mary Ann was sentenced to six months imprisonment in the East Maitland Gaol. She was convicted for the following offences:

... that she the said Mary Ann Ward is an idle and disorderly person, and a companion of reputed thieves, having no visible means of support, or fixed place of residence, and that she the said Mary Ann Ward, has not given a good account of herself ... (CSC 1866, 31 March).

A local resident wrote to the editor of the *Maitland Mercury* (7 April 1866) criticising the Colonial Secretary Mr Charles Cowper for wasting public money on an ineffective police force. He questioned why the police had concentrated their efforts on capturing Mary Ann who he described as a member of the ‘gentler sex’ instead of pursuing Thunderbolt.

Mary Ann’s welfare was intensely debated in the Legislative Assembly. Mr Buchanan moved that the house be adjourned for the purpose of bringing to the notice of the Government ‘... an act of most cruel injustice perpetrated by the bench at Stroud’. He asked the Honourable Members to reflect on the enormity of this action:

Had the police gone into the house of an hon. member and dragged him from his home, they could not have done a greater wrong than had been done in the case of this poor woman, for the wilderness was her home, and the wide bush the only residence she possessed. It would indeed be a very serious thing for this country if oppression of this kind could be tolerated for a moment. The matter could not have originated in anything but the gross ignorance of the bench and of the police, seeing that the aboriginal inhabitants of the colony were excepted from
the Vagrant Act. ... To send her into gaol for living as her ancestors had lived ... was an act of the grossest tyranny and oppression (Maitland Mercury 10 April 1866).

Dr. Lang thought it ‘monstrous’ to see such a woman ‘treated like a criminal’. Mr Hart denounced the act as a ‘gross perversion of justice’:

Here was this woman taken from her natural abode, the native bush of the country, dragged before a police court, charged with a breach of the Vagrant Act, ... and her three children were torn from her (Maitland Mercury 10 April 1866).

The Attorney General James Martin said that he was not aware of the circumstances of the case, but that he would make enquiries and direct the dispositions to be sent down to him, so that the Honourable Members could decide what action needed to be applied (Maitland Mercury 10 April 1866).

In a letter to the Attorney General Magistrate Thomas Nicholls (CSC 1866, 11 April), defended the action he had taken in applying the Vagrancy Act to an Aboriginal woman. He stated that Mary Ann had been baptised. She had received a Christian education and later obtained work as a domestic servant. She had been brought up in what was described as ‘settled habits’ and was therefore civilised. Magistrate Nicholls considered himself an authority, having known her ‘European’ father for more than thirty years. There was no mention made of her Aboriginal mother in the letter.

The Attorney General (CSC 1866, 16 April) investigated the case and stated that he did not object to the conviction on the grounds that Mary Ann was the child of an Aboriginal woman. ‘... There is nothing to prevent an aboriginal, who has been brought up in, or has acquired civilized habits, from being dealt with under the Vagrant Act ...’. However he believed that the conviction had
been inaccurately drawn up and therefore would not be supported by the Supreme Court. He would refer the matter to the Governor and request that the prisoner be liberated.

By intervening in Mary Ann’s case Mr Martin established a legal precedent whereby Aboriginal heritage did not prevent a person from being convicted under the Vagrancy Act.11 Although the Governor ordered Mary Ann’s release because her conviction had been improperly drawn up, this information did not filter through to the general public. Many were of the opinion that she had been freed on account of her Aboriginal heritage.

The same Maitland resident who had previously criticised police for arresting a member of the ‘gentler sex’, was now angered by what he described as the ‘… wretched stump oratory …’ of the Legislative Assembly. He exclaimed that Mary Ann was ‘not an aboriginal’, but a ‘half-caste’. What’s more she was a thievish ‘vagrant’ and ‘Scout’ (*Maitland Mercury* 28 April 1866). The editor of the *Maitland Mercury* (15 May 1866) was quick to criticise the Parliamentary debate also:

> As usual in such cases, the facts have been very grossly distorted. The poor, ignorant aboriginal woman turns out to be a well educated half-caste, who can read and write far better than most European women, having been very carefully brought up in her younger days. So far from being the “poor harmless creature,” who “roamed through her native home, the bush,” she was Thunderbolt’s chief lieutenant and right hand man.

The *Sydney Empire* (30 August 1866) agreed that the public sympathy for Mary Ann was misplaced:

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11 This case is still quoted in contemporary legal texts (See Cummins 1988, 63).
She is a very smart woman, intelligent, and can read and write pretty well. ... She may have some black blood in her veins, but she is not darker than many European women who might easily be made amenable to the Vagrant Act.

The police had hoped that by arresting the Captain’s Lady, they would eventually be led to Thunderbolt himself. Mary Ann’s encounters with the justice system were to continue.
During Mary Ann’s time in prison Thunderbolt had returned to Kamilaroi Country. Several reports noted sightings of the bushranger on the Namoi River. In August 1866 Thunderbolt reportedly robbed the Warialda and Barraba mailman at Dead Horse Gully, seven miles from Manilla. Following the news the Tamworth police were immediately despatched. Mary Ann had been sighted in the Tamworth area earlier in the month looking for her husband. The correspondent for the *Empire* (30 Aug. 1866) covered the mail robbery and was equally interested in Mary Ann’s movements:

Ward’s mistress passed through Tamworth, stating that she was in search of her lover, but, as she had not seen him for some time, if he did not soon turn up, she said she would have to secure a fresh settlement in life. ... She had one child with her, having left the rest with Ward’s friends down country.

Mary Ann knew how to manipulate the media to broadcast her whereabouts. She was noted for ‘freely’ indulging in conversation when in town (*Maitland Mercury* 12 Sept. 1867). Mary Ann’s above remark is often quoted to suggest that the couple had become estranged, due to Ward’s alleged infidelity. However it is highly likely that Mary Ann was attempting to get her message across to Fred. Although police records indicate that Thunderbolt was illiterate, it is believed that Mary Ann was responsible for helping him overcome this difficulty. During
his bushranging days Ward made deliberate attempts to steal newspapers from
the mail coaches that he robbed (Walker 1958, 233). After being separated from
her husband for more than five months it is most likely that Mary Ann was
advertising her presence so that she could have a speedy reunion with him.

By December the couple and infant child were believed to be spending
Christmas with their family in the Gloucester district. Apart from the killing of
one or two head of cattle, in the Thunderbolt’s signature style, no major
depredations were reported. Even so the police remained close on their heels. As
Thunderbolt commented to a local farmer, the neighbourhood had become
hotter than ‘… a nest of hornets for him’ (Maitland Mercury 12 Jan. 1867). In
January 1867 the police raided Thunderbolt’s Allyn Vale camp in the upper
Paterson River. Unable to compete with Thunderbolt’s superior horse riding
skills, they instead arrested Mary Ann for having stolen goods in her possession.

In Possession

When Mary Ann was apprehended by Constable Johnson of the Paterson Police,
she was suspected of being in possession of stolen property. The “property” in
question was seven yards of unbleached calico and five and a half yards of Derry
cloth, which Mary Ann insisted that she had purchased at Wolfe and Gorrick’s
Maitland store. The evidence was heard on the 15th January when Mary Ann
appeared before the Paterson Bench. Unable to produce witnesses or receipt of
her purchase, she was remanded in custody and the case adjourned until the
24th January. At the following hearing Mary Ann was still unable to produce
evidence to the satisfaction of the Bench and was sentenced to three months imprisonment in Maitland Gaol (CSC 1867, 24 January).

Public support for Mary Ann is evident in the letters that appeared in the *Maitland Mercury* (16 Feb. 1867) during the month of February. This time the editor himself displayed a degree of sympathy:

I must contend, whatever has been her former conduct, in this matter she has been wrongfully imprisoned. Unfortunately, Parliament is not now sitting, or probably her case would be brought before it. ... It is a matter which should be looked into by our Government.

In a letter to the editor a correspondent (*Maitland Mercury* 14 Feb. 1867) referred to the case as a ‘gross injustice’:

... It appears that no opportunity was afforded to this woman of proving her statement; no subpoena was granted on her behalf, and no enquiries were made by the police as to the truth or falsity of her statement. ... I am clearly of the opinion that this woman is as illegally in custody now as when she was arrested and convicted under the Vagrant Act by a bench not many miles distant, on a charge of vagrancy, and subsequently discharged from Maitland gaol by order of the Attorney General. Seemingly the sins of Thunderbolt are visited on this unfortunate woman.

I remain, yours truly,

EAST MAITLAND.
P.S.- Since writing the foregoing, I find that this woman’s statement of her
having purchased this property at Wolfe and Gorrick’s is perfectly correct, and I
am prepared to prove it in the proper quarter.12

Mary Ann’s case attracted the attention of Maitland Magistrate Denny Day. As
the prison’s visiting Magistrate, he saw it his duty to make an independent
inquiry. Day was responsible for forwarding Mary Ann’s Petition to Governor Sir
John Young, in which she expressed her innocence and urged him to look into
the case. He (CSC 1867, 16 February) wrote:

I beg leave to report that on enquiry at the Stores of Messieurs Wolfe and Gorrick
of West Maitland I have ascertained that the goods found on Mary Ann Ward, and
the possession of which caused her conviction, were bought and paid for by her,
as stated in her petition. To make this quite clear, Messieurs Wolfe and Gorrick,
at my request, were good enough to send their assistant Mr. Edwards, who had
sold the goods, to the Gaol to identify the purchaser, and in my presence, without
hesitation, pointed out the petitioner, who was then standing amongst many
other female prisoners, as the purchaser.

Signed: Mr D. Day (visiting Justice of East Maitland Gaol).

Mary Ann’s (CSC 1867, 19 February) petition was forwarded as follows:

To his Excellency the Right Honourable Sir John Young, Baronet, Governor in
Chief of the Colony of New South Wales.

12 This letter was signed anonymous however it seems highly possible that it was written by Maitland Magistrate
Edward Denny Day, who is remembered for the role that he played in bringing the Myall Creek men to trial. It
was undoubtedly written by a citizen who was well versed in legal proceedings. Mary Ann’s situation attracted
the attention of the Magistrate, who on this occasion proceeded to make further inquiries into the case on her
behalf.
The Humble Petition of Mary Ann Ward a confine in her Majesty’s Goal [sic] at East Maitland.

Respectfully Sheweth

That your Petitioner is the wife of Frederick Ward commonly called “Thunderbolt”.

That your petitioner in the month of December last purchased a quantity of Drapery and other goods at the stores of Messieurs Wolfe and Gorrick and paid for the same.

That in the month of January last your Petitioner was arrested with some goods in her possession and taken before the Paterson Bench and charged with “having in her possession goods suspected to have been stolen.”

That your Petitioner informed the Bench that she had purchased the property then found on her (seven yards of calico and five yards of Derry cloth) at the shop of Wolfe and Gorrick.

That your Petitioner was thereupon remanded for one week.

That upon again being brought before the Paterson Bench your Petitioner was not in a position to produce a witness to confirm her statement in consequence of no subpoena being granted and no enquiries made on her behalf by the Police.

That your Petitioner was then and there sentenced by Mr E.G. Cory J.P. to three months imprisonment in Maitland Goal [sic].

Your Petitioner therefore humbly prays that your Excellency will be pleased to cause enquiries to be made respecting the truth or falsity of her statement touching the purchase of these goods.
And your Petitioner will ever pray.

(Signed) Mary Ann Ward.

Superintendent Morisset was instructed to look into the matter. He visited the Wolf and Gorrick Store in Maitland and asked Mr Edwards the draper to examine the cloth now in the possession of the police. He collected a statement from Mr Edwards to the effect that he recognised the fabric as being that which he sold to Mary Ann Ward (CSC Edwards 1867, 25 February). In relation to the objection that no subpoenas had been issued, the Superintendent was informed that Mary Ann could not provide them with the name of any persons. She did however write two letters to her friends in Maitland which were posted by the police. Also noted was that the districts most Senior Constable, Johnston, was busily engaged in collecting the electoral rolls during Mary Ann’s remand (CSC 1867, 26 February).

The petition and subsequent representations prompted the Inspector General of Police Captain McLerie to investigate the case. McLerie recommended ‘her immediate release’. He concluded that Mary Ann Ward:

... was wrongfully convicted: being a half caste she may not possibly have comprehended that by failing to procure the attendance of a witness to prove that she was rightfully possessed of the drapery she would be convicted (CSC 1867, 27 February).
Kamilaroi Kin

While Mary Ann was in custody Ward enlisted the assistance of young Thomas Mason, who had most recently been employed near Scone. The bushrangers were first reported together on the goldfields of the Denison Diggings in February. It was believed that Thunderbolt had “bush telegraphs” and sympathisers in the district (Armidale Express 13 March 1867). According to folklore, it was Mary Ann who first introduced Thunderbolt to the teenager, in the hope that he could replace her as an accomplice and scout. When the Scone district became too hot, the bushrangers then rode north concentrating their efforts in Kamilaroi country. Here they continued to hold up stations, hotels and mail coaches.

Sympathy for Thunderbolt in this region remained strong. Not only was he supported by the Kamilaroi, he was aided by settlers of the district. The bushranger also had the endorsement of local Magistrate George Lethbridge of Barraba. In March 1867 Lethbridge wrote to Governor Young, requesting that Thunderbolt be given a conditional pardon. Lethbridge (CSC 1867, 16 March) highlighted the fact that Thunderbolt had never shed blood, stating that he believed the idea to be totally ‘repugnant’ to Ward. He described Ward as ‘... a consummate horseman and a man of undaunted courage.’

Lethbridge argued that the condition of Ward’s pardon should be that he remain in the police force for life and be recognised on equal footing as other men of the same rank. He understood that Ward did not pose a great threat and noted his polite consideration when in the company of women folk. The local
magistrate believed that Ward’s expert horsemanship and bushcraft would be of major benefit to the Colony. He wrote:

His services would be invaluable as a riding master in the force. He is an excellent bushman and can strike across the most difficult and intricate country without the aid of either road or track. ... The Colony would be rid of a determined but not a dangerous highwayman ... (CSC Lethbridge1867, 16 March).

Such pleas were ignored. Two months later the Colonial Secretary Henry Parkes announced that the reward for Thunderbolt’s apprehension would be increased from £100 to £200 (Police Gazette 1867, 29 May).

Thunderbolt, however, continued to be shielded by the Kamilaroi, among whom he was considered kin. This alliance is still remembered by the local Kamilaroi. Aunty Ellen (Draper, E. 2006, pers. comm., 20 July) for instance, who descends from a line of trackers, was adamant that the New South Wales black trackers would not have tracked Thunderbolt:

... They would not track their own people ... eight times out of ten they led them astray. The [NSW] blacks knew where to go and they knew where to stay away. ... They had to bring the trackers down from Queensland ... they were very cruel, those trackers even to the black people ... .

Historical evidence also supports the statement made by Aunty Ellen. Alexander Harris, for instance, who had maintained amicable relations with the traditional owners, described an encounter where he felt protected by them. Harris wrote an account of his experiences living as a settler in New South Wales between
1825 and 1840. When describing an incident in which he was pursued by troopers for suspected cattle-duffing he (1953, 166) wrote:

> Our own blacks I was sure would only mislead them, for they were very fond of me; but if they happened to have seen the other camp, and were to get a black from it, I had every reason to believe my escape would be much more difficult.

In an attempt to break local allegiances the New South Wales Government recruited Aboriginal trackers from Queensland. Aboriginal trackers and troopers were enlisted predominately to drive people off their traditional lands and “prepare” the way for European settlement. These organised squadrons killed Aboriginal people on the frontier because they were ‘... deployed in districts where they were strangers with no particular sympathy for the local clans ...’ (Reynolds 2000, 157-58). The Queensland Native Police in particular had earned a reputation of cruelty and violence (Reynolds 2000, 143-44).

Serving in the Native Police Force offered protection from tribal enemies. This may have been perceived as an attractive option for some individuals living in desperate times. Aboriginal troopers were often recruited from properties on the fringes of town. With the invasion of their lands, traditional economic and social structures were severed. Hunger, disease and malnutrition gripped the camps. Many clans were pushed onto other tribal territories, where they had no rightful place and no kinship affiliation. Aunty Ellen agreed, ‘that is why they brought the trackers in from Queensland cause they were a different lot of people again’ (Draper, E. 2006, pers. comm., 20 July).

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13 Manning Clark argued that Harris’ account *Settlers and Convicts* was not strictly autobiographical. Clark believed that his identity represented a pen name and that the author had based his accounts on stories that he had been told. Clark maintained however that the author’s work indicated that he was a keen observer and patient listener. *Settlers and Convicts* can be read as a collection stories about frontier life, commonly told in colonial New South Wales (See *Settlers and Convicts*, Harris, A. 1953, v-viii).
Despite the presence of the Queensland Native Police and black trackers, Thunderbolt remained protected in Kamilaroi country. This is perhaps the reason he chose to return to this region during periods when his wife was incarcerated. Without the support of Mary Ann, Thunderbolt would have felt vulnerable indeed.

**Thunderbolt’s Boy Turns Himself In**

Following her release from prison, Mary Ann left all of her children in the care of friends in the Hunter and travelled north in search of Ward (Williams 1987, 97). In August she was sighted in Kamilaroi country, this time in the company of her husband and Mason. It was ‘… reported that Ward the bushranger, his young apprentice, and his lady were seen about the Breeza Plains …’ (*Armidale Express* 24 Aug. 1867). Later in the month they were camped on the banks of the Namoi River, near Manilla. The following account was reported by a correspondent for the *Armidale Express* (7 Sept. 1867). Thunderbolt was engaged in shoeing his horse, while Mary Ann acted as a scout. When she spotted two constables gathering water, she hurried over bid to them ‘Good Morning’ in a loud voice:

> … Had not the woman … been so demonstrative in her courtesy, it is fully believed he [Thunderbolt] would have been safely in gaol by this time.

Days later the police chased the trio through the Borah Ranges near Manilla and fired at them. During this raid Mason became separated and blood was noticed on the track. ‘Thunderbolt’s Boy’ (a term used by Mason) was unarmed and gave himself up to the police without offering any resistance (White 1970b, 188-91). Thunderbolt and Mary Ann now travelled south, with the Dungog Police picking
up their tracks near “Monkerai”. Here Thunderbolt was fired on, but managed to escape pursuit. It was noted that the bushranger was mounted on a ‘magnificent beast’. A local correspondent described Thunderbolt as ‘… a fellow who knows every inch of the country, has command of all the best horseflesh, and is known to be the best rider in the district’ (Maitland Mercury 1 Oct. 1867).

Mary Ann’s Last Days

Mary Ann was now gravely ill with pneumonia. Police had sighted ‘Mrs Thunderbolt’ on the the goldfields near Scone and suspected sympathisers to be ‘… sheltering her under their roof …’ (Sydney Empire, 20 Nov. 1867). Reports soon circulated that Thunderbolt had carried off another ‘half-caste girl’ from a settler near Scone, known locally as ‘Cranky Bob’. The tabloid of the day revealed:

Thunderbolt also took a horse ... to carry the yellow one. It is said that the highwayman’s lady is in an interesting situation, and that he wants this one to wait on her. If not, there will very likely be jealousy betwixt the two, when one of them, like the Delilah of old, will deliver him into the hands of the Philistines. Should there be any young Thunderbolt’s, they ought to be looked after, or they may be troublesome (Sydney Empire 21 Nov. 1867).

It was also reported by a local grazier that Ward had purchased supplies in the district ‘... before taking the half-caste from Segenhoe ...’ (CSC Keys 1867, 30 November). Some writers have used this incident as evidence of Ward’s infidelity (Cummins 1988, 86). However, most recent historians agree that Mary Ann was seriously ill (Blyton et al 2004, 40; Ramsland 2001, 39; Walker 1958, 237-38;
White 1970b, 191-93; Williams 1987, 74, 103-05).

It is highly likely that Thunderbolt was securing the assistance of another Aboriginal woman to care for his sick wife. Aunty Ellen believed that Thunderbolt would have relied on the specialised knowledge that Aboriginal women possessed in relation to bush medicines. Not only were bush medicines essential for child birth and curing illness, they were required for bushrangers when they became afflicted with bullet wounds (Draper, E. 2008, pers. comm., 1 June). As Aunty Ellen maintained:

He must have been good to those Gins because they would have left him otherwise, they would have left him, but they didn’t, they stuck with him to the end (Draper, E. 2006, pers. Comm., 20 July).

Did Mary Ann’s ‘interesting situation’ reported in the tabloid, refer to an imminent pregnancy?\(^\text{14}\) This may explain Thunderbolt’s motives for carrying off the Aboriginal woman from Segenhoe.\(^\text{15}\)

During November Thunderbolt had been maintaining a secret camp on Bell’s Mountain near Muswellbrook and had adopted the alias Ryan (CSC White 1867, 5 December). Later in the month he called on Mrs Bradford, a settler of the Goulburn River, and requested that she take his dying wife into her care. A Muswellbrook correspondent reported the incident:

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\(^{14}\) A baptism for a fourth child to a Mary Ann and Frederick Wordsworth Ward was registered in Tamworth, August 1868. Mary Ann may have given birth to her fourth child Frederick Wordsworth Junior late in 1867 with the assistance of the Aboriginal midwife from Scone. The birth of her fourth child may have contributed to her death (see N.S.W. Register of Baptisms, V1868 1400 161).

\(^{15}\) Henry Reynolds has noted that Aboriginal midwives were highly regarded for their expertise in delivering bush babies (see Reynolds 2000, 79-80). An Aboriginal midwife had been enlisted to deliver Mary Ann’s third child (see Maitland Mercury 29 March 1866).
It appears that on Saturday morning Thunderbolt went to Mrs. Bradford’s and told her the woman was very ill in the bush, and asked her to bring her to her house and take care of her, as she would not be long alive; he described the spot, and said if she would not promise to take charge of her he would ask the clergyman (the Revd. Mr. White, who happened to be in that direction, and who was at the poor woman’s deathbed) to report to the police to have her removed and attended to; ... Mrs. Bradford found the woman as indicated by Thunderbolt, about two miles up a mountain, protected from the sun’s rays. She was removed in a cart, but was speechless, and died at nine o’clock on Sunday morning. The police have in their possession a horse which Thunderbolt left tied near where the woman was found (Maitland Mercury 28 Nov. 1867).

To this day controversy remains regarding the true identity of the woman who died in Mrs. Bradford’s care. According to Oppenheimer (1992, 105) ‘this is always a problem when a folk hero, living on the edge of society, is both the object and product of that society’s imagination’. In the months following the woman’s death the press reported three very different accounts, based largely on town gossip.17

When reporting on the death the Muswellbrook correspondent referred to the woman as ‘... Louisa Mason, commonly known as Yellow Long …’ (Maitland Mercury 28 Nov. 1867). Some historians have argued that it seems probable

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16 Koori historian James Miller of the Wonnaruwara/ Wonaruah clan described Rev. James White as a Christian humanitarian who took more than a keen interest in the welfare of the Aboriginal people in his pastoral district, the Hunter Valley. He allowed Aboriginal people to camp on his Property Gowrie near Singleton (see Miller, 1985, 51, 103-05).

17 A Singleton correspondent reported that Thunderbolt’s lover died from a hemorrhage following a fall from her horse. This woman supposedly died in the bush without medical attention (see Maitland Mercury 28 Nov. 1867). Another Singleton Correspondent reported that the woman who eloped with Thunderbolt took ill from exposure and he sought the assistance of a Cassilis woman. According to this account the dying woman was brought in to Cassilis and there is no mention of Mrs Bradford or Rev. White (see Sydney Empire 11 Dec. 1867). The most reliable account as quoted above referred to the presence of eyewitnesses such as Mrs Bradford and Rev. White. It also provided details of the results of an autopsy conducted by T. Hungerford which revealed that the woman had died of acute inflammation of the lungs (see Maitland Mercury 28 Nov. 1867).
that the deceased ‘... was in fact Mary Ann, the wife of Ward ...’ (Walker 1958, 237-38) who had been identified by one of her many alias’ (Oppenheimer 1992, 106-07; Williams 1987, 25, 74).

Another version suggests that Thunderbolt had become attached to another Aboriginal woman known as Louisa Mason\(^\text{18}\) (Cummins 1988, 86-7) while his wife was in gaol. According to this account Mary Ann became jealous of Thunderbolt’s womanising ways and left him for a man named John Burrows (Oppenheimer 1992, 105-06). However Mary Ann Burrows (nee Briggs) appears to be a different individual altogether.\(^\text{19}\) Following the death of his wife, there were no further police reports of Thunderbolt with a female accomplice. Nor was he sighted again in the Hunter District and surrounds.\(^\text{20}\)

\(^{18}\) *Black Mary*, a play based on the life of Mary Ann Bugg, chose to depict Thunderbolt’s wife as a victim of her husband’s betrayal. The playwright acknowledged that she drew inspiration from the work of Bob Cummins. Towards the end of the play Fred is engaged in a love triangle, where he chooses to abandon his wife and marry Louisa Mason. The last scene of the play features Mary Ann and the spirit of her deceased mother singing together in their native tongue and affirming their cultural heritage (see Janson 1996). The title *Black Mary* is somewhat inaccurate, as the historical record suggests that Mary Ann Bugg was never known by this name. In this sense the play can be read as a stereotypical representation of race relations between a white male bush bandit and an Aboriginal woman. It has been argued that a deeper analysis of the rhetoric and mythology of race relations between Aborigines and convict-bushrangers is needed (See Kociumbas 2001, 51-2). Black Mary was the name given to Mary Cockerell, a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman and companion of the notorious bushranger Michael Howe, who was noted for his aggression. Historical accounts of Black Mary described her as a victim of his violence (see *Hobart Town Gazette* 12 April 1817,). Mary Cockerell has been depicted as an unfortunate young girl, who was deliberately shot by Howe, because she could not keep up with him, whilst pregnant with his child (see Bonwick 1969, 46-7; Kociumbas 2001, 44).

\(^{19}\) Although there are remarkable coincidences between Mary Ann Briggs born Bay of Islands, New Zealand 1835 and Mary Ann Bugg born Gloucester, NSW 1834, they are two different women. Mary Ann Briggs married Patrick McNally in 1851 at Stroud and the couple had three children. Mary Ann Briggs had her first child to John Burrows in 1858 and was officially married at Cooyal, Mudgee in 1879. Mary Ann Burrows had ten children from her second marriage. Her occupation was listed as a nurse (see N.S.W. Register of Deaths, no. 5831, 22 April 1905). By 1848 Mary Ann Bugg had married her first husband Edmund Baker. Magistrate Thomas Nicholls who had known the Bugg family for over thirty years, made no mention of Mary Ann’s marriage to a McNally, when he provided a character witness at her trial in 1866. He did however mention that Mary Ann had been married to both Baker and Ward (see CSC Nicholls 1866, 16 April). Mary Ann Bugg was listed on her mother Charlotte Bugg’s death certificate in 1861 along with her seven siblings (see N.S.W. Register of Deaths, no. 4535, 26 April 1861) however she was not listed on her father James Bugg’s death certificate in 1879 (see N.S.W. Register of Deaths, no. 8485).

The alias “Yellow Long” fits Mary Ann’s complexion which was described in *Police Gazettes* (1866, 2 May) as ‘dark sallow’. Yellow Long or Yellilong may have been adopted by Mary Ann as a proud statement of her mixed heritage. Just as Ward used aliases such as Blake, Frost (Williams 1987, 19) and Ryan, Mary Ann was commonly known as Yellow Long (Bradshaw 1924, 59-60, 64; Ramsland 2001, 38; White 1970b, 191-92; Williams 1987, 104)

The troopers were certainly more interested in apprehending Thunderbolt than identifying his wife. Information supplied at the police inquiry described Mary Ann simply as an ‘unfortunate woman’ (CSC Keys 1867, 30 November) and ‘half caste’ (CSC Morrisset 1867, 2 December). Rev. White’s (CSC 1867, 5 December) eye witness account only referred to her as ‘... the woman who usually accompanied Thunderbolt.’ If this description is taken to be correct then the deceased woman was certainly Mary Ann, who had remained loyal to her husband until death.

**Thunderbolt Immortalised in Uralla**

Police continued to pursue Thunderbolt who now concentrated his efforts on the New England Tablelands. Sometimes he recruited scouts, but generally the bushranger now chose to operate solo.21 According to the Thunderbolt legend, Ward was shot dead by Constable Binning Walker at Kentucky Creek, Uralla, on 25th May 1870. This version however, continues to attract controversy.

21 A young apprentice William Monckton was recruited to assist Thunderbolt following Mary Ann’s death. Monckton parted company late in 1868 and was arrested shortly after. Sometimes accomplices were engaged on a temporary basis (see Walker 1958, 230; Williams 1987, 105, 109-11, 116-24,130-35).
Barry Sinclair, local resident and great grand nephew of the bushranger, is only too happy to share his alternative version with visitors to Uralla. He holds firmly to the belief that the man buried in the grave at Uralla is not Fred Ward, but his older brother William or Harry as he was also known. Sinclair has combined family stories handed down to him with archival research and arrived at the conclusion that there was more than one Thunderbolt active in New South Wales.

According to the Ward family tradition, during the late 1860s Harry operated in the south around Uralla, while Fred was present in the Ebor area, to the north-east. After Mary Ann’s death, Fred is believed to have boarded a boat to America following the gold rushes, and lived the remainder of his life in Canada, until his death early last century (see Ruddick 2004, 36). However the Uralla Historical Society (UHS) established in 1979, believe that opposing accounts of the Thunderbolt saga are ‘unhealthy’ for tourism (Murphy 2003, 2). The Thunderbolt brand is so profitable for tourism, that any attempt to undermine the legitimacy of the legend is considered serious indeed. 23

The legend of Thunderbolt has undoubtedly revitalised the local economy. A life size bronze statue of Thunderbolt on his horse boldly lights up

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22 Aunty Ellen agreed that the man buried in the grave is not Fred Ward. Her reasoning was very different from Sinclair’s however. She believed that the blacks would have dug him up, taken him somewhere else and given him an Aboriginal burial out of respect. Aunty Ellen was adamant about this claim, stating that her cultural knowledge informed her (Draper, E. 2006, pers. comm., 20 July).

23 In August 2005 Barry Sinclair received a letter from the General Manager of the Uralla Shire Council requesting that he refrain from attending the “Thunderbolt County Fair”, scheduled the following week. The Uralla Shire Council had received formal complaints from the then president of the UHS, arguing that Sinclair’s alternative version to the Thunderbolt saga was impacting negatively on the visitor’s experience. During a lengthy meeting with the General Manager Sinclair outlined the extensive contribution that he had made in promoting Uralla, at a local, national and international level and the ban was lifted (see Fulcher 2005, 1-2; Murphy 2003, 1-2).
the intersection of the main streets. Visitors to “Thunderbolt Country” can sample a Thunderbolt pie, indulge in a glass of Thunderbolt’s Shiraz, pose for a photograph at Thunderbolt’s Rock, visit Thunderbolt’s grave and get a taste of culture at McCrossin’s Mill Museum and Thunderbolt’s gallery. The Thunderbolt Inn and Bushranger Inn are more than happy to accommodate the tired traveller. The spirit of Thunderbolt lives on in Uralla. However, it seems a pity that there is no recognition for the important role his Aboriginal wife played in the partnership. Contemporary memory and commercial interests have divided a couple, who were strongly united in life.

24 The statue created by Dennis Adams was commissioned for the sum of $60,000 to celebrate Australia’s bicentennial year. Other works by Adams include fallen heroes of the battlefields which are housed in the Australian War Memorial, Canberra. The idea of immortalising the image of Thunderbolt in statue form came from the then nine year old Debbie O’Brien of Uralla (Sinclair, B. 2008, pers. comm., 12 May).
Cockatoo Island Gaol, Sydney Harbour

“Thunderbolt” display Nymboida Inn, northern NSW, believed to be Fred Ward on his Wedding Day C. 1860.
Statue of Captain Thunderbolt Uralla, NSW

Land Release, Gloucester NSW, 2008
Conclusion

Reciprocal relationships that developed on the frontier between Aboriginal and settler Australians lie at the heart of the Thunderbolt legend. The “bushman/bushranger” could not have survived without the local knowledge and bushcraft of Aboriginal people. Settler Australians were deeply dependent on the goodwill of the first Australians. Yet nationalist mythologies continued to promote a brand of mateship which was exclusively white and masculine. The self-sufficient “Aussie Bushman” denies the diversity of partnerships that developed in colonial Australia.

Doctrines of egalitarianism, collectivism and mateship were personified through the “Aussie Legend”. McGrath (1995, 5-6) argued that the ‘features of Aboriginality’ were appropriated, so that white men could assert their superiority. The Australian bush ethos closely resembles values that are essential to the maintenance of Aboriginal culture. Egalitarianism is reflected in the non-hierarchical structure of Aboriginal society and collectivism relates to the cultural obligations of sharing. Mateship corresponds with kinship.

Frontier life was characterised by violent encounters. However, many relationships based on love and loyalty developed between Aboriginal and settler Australians. From first contact attempts were made by Aboriginal people to incorporate the Europeans into their kinship system through the giving of women. This established a reciprocal relationship whereby the Europeans, who were now recognised as kin, were obliged to share their goods and possessions with the clan. If the Europeans did not reciprocate or worse still, mistreated Aboriginal women, violent retribution would ensue.
The Worimi in particular have a long history of accommodating newcomers into their community. Dawson acknowledged how indebted he felt to the Worimi, for their hospitality, knowledge and generosity. His philosophy of conciliation and his determination to cultivate friendships (Dawson 1987, 57-8) is remembered by Worimi people today (Ridgeway, L. 2008, pers. comm., 28 March). Dawson emphasised the ‘cordiality’ that was displayed between the Worimi and AAC employees. They worked in unity ‘... as if they had both been of the same colour and nation’ (1987, 100). Such representations of equality however, were not fashionable with the bush balladeers. The construction of Australian nationalism was based on popular racist ideology, which positioned Aboriginal Australians as the inferior subjects. Lawson himself was not going to be ridiculed, for writing about Aboriginal achievement at the expense of undermining the dominant pioneering myth that celebrated white men conquering a “hostile” land.

Although race relations between the Worimi and AAC employees rapidly deteriorated following Dawson’s dismissal, his philosophy may have continued to influence the behaviour of long serving employees, such as James Bugg. The relationship between James and Charlotte Bugg challenged the then popular racial stereotypes that chose to define Aboriginal people as primitive, savage and inferior. When Reverend Cowper was questioned by the Legislative Council about the character of the Aborigine, he dispelled such stereotypes, providing numerous anecdotes to support his claims. Cowper argued that Aboriginal people were not savage but capable of ‘affection’, ‘kindness’ and ‘gratitude’. He cited the incident where Charlotte had saved James’ life as one of many examples (NSW LC V&P 1824-1838, 58-9).

The virtues of courage and loyalty displayed by Charlotte correspond with
the values embedded in the mateship ethos. However, being an Aboriginal woman she did not fit the white, masculine stereotype. Even with such an obvious display of compassion Charlotte was considered barbaric. The marriage between James and Charlotte Bugg was initially refused on the grounds that she was non Christian and therefore not civilised. The racial ideology of the times continued to portray Aboriginal people as savage heathens who were to be feared.

The belief that racial characteristics determined one’s behaviour, would have been completely absurd to a people who identified by kinship association, language groups and territorial boundaries. ‘The people who saw themselves as members of hundreds of distinctive language groups or nations all became ‘Aborigines’, to be regarded and treated alike’ (Reynolds 2005, 9-10). Reynolds wrote of the disempowerment Aboriginal people experienced as a consequence of having a homogenous and inferior identity constructed for them (2005, 9).

Australians of mixed heritage faced the most widespread condemnation. Half-castes were blamed for a multitude of social problems and general racial disunity (Reynolds 2005, 3-5). It was assumed that half-castes were physically and morally inferior. They had inherited the worst traits of both of their parents and the merits of neither. They were ‘... unpredictable, unstable and degenerate’ (Reynolds 2005, 3).

Colonial authorities throughout the world became increasingly anxious about the ‘proliferation’ of half-caste children (Reynolds 2005, 5). Baptism was the mark of civilisation. It was hoped that by removing the Bugg children from their parents, they would be elevated above barbarism. Christian instruction was the sure path to civilisation. The fact that James Bugg was literate himself and contributed financially towards his children’s education indicates that he valued
such opportunities. The good will displayed by the parents may be the reason that Mary Ann was indentured for domestic work in the local district, after completing her training. Many so-called “orphans” were not so fortunate. Once removed, they were never reunited with their parents again. They were expected to abandon their “savage” ways and were strongly discouraged from socialising with their kin.

Mary Ann remained at the centre of both government and public debates in relation to what constituted an “Aboriginal” person. She was somewhat of a public curiosity and her character was intensely scrutinised. At times the stereotype of savage was used to define Mary Ann, as she resisted arrest and leapt at the trooper like a tigress, tearing his shirt to ribbons. Yet when Mary Ann failed to be intimidated, held her head high and defied such rhetoric, it was deemed that she was civilised and therefore ‘not an aboriginal’ at all (Maitland Mercury 28 April 1866).

To the colonial citizens Mary Ann was quite a phenomenon. Her public profile challenged the racial discourse that positioned Aboriginal people as intellectually, physically and morally inferior. The outpouring of public sympathy during Mary Ann’s trials indicates that not only did she have the support of many dignitaries, but many white people perceived her as one of their own. In response to this public display of solidarity, the Vagrancy Act itself was amended. Mary Ann’s case set a legal precedent whereby Aboriginal heritage did not prevent a person from being amenable to the Vagrancy Act.

It is through Mary Ann’s encounters with the law that we learn the most about her character and the public opinion of the times. Most commonly she was referred to as a half-caste. The impersonal nature of this racial classification has meant that even in her death Mary Ann’s identity has continued to be
questioned. She was a woman who clearly had a foot firmly planted in both worlds and appeared to be proud of her mixed heritage. Mary Ann fashioned her own style of self-representation and boldly publicised her cause through the media, announcing herself as ‘The Captain’s Lady’ alias ‘Yellilong’.

Mary Ann was a legendary figure whose valuable contribution to the Thunderbolt legend should not be overlooked. She possessed a superior understanding when it came to both European and Aboriginal systems of knowledge. Indeed she had taught Fred a degree of literacy. It was her specialised knowledge of bushcraft that served the couple and their family, while they were forced to live as fugitives in the Australian bush. Mary Ann also taught her husband to appreciate Aboriginal lore. When asked by his young apprentice why he did not flee the country, to avoid capture, Thunderbolt explained that Mary Ann’s blood bound her to her country. She could not live in exile and he could not live without her (Williams 1987, 136).

Thunderbolt is recognised for having the longest bushranging career in New South Wales. However, it is unlikely that he would have survived for this length of time, without the support of his Aboriginal wife. The bushranger took his kinship obligations seriously and was therefore protected by Aboriginal people. Ward shared his loot with Aboriginal clans and was shielded from detection in their country. He was supplied with fresh horses, rations and vital information in return. The Kamilaroi in particular still recognise Thunderbolt as one of their countrymen.

Aborigines, convicts and the landless poor identified strongly with the image of Thunderbolt, as a hero of resistance. The legend itself gave voice to their shared struggle against a system of oppression and injustice. By adopting a philosophy of non-violence he conformed to the Robin-Hood stereotype and his
relationship with the wider community developed into one of solidarity. Thunderbolt had sustained a wide network of support, including men of great influence such as Magistrate Lethbridge.

Although many versions of the Thunderbolt legend have portrayed Fred as a ‘colonial Casanova’ (Williams 1987, 74), some writers have described his faithfulness to Mary Ann as the bushrangers most redeeming feature. It has been argued that such stereotypically exploitative relationships between Aboriginal women and convicts cannot easily be sustained. Aunty Ellen maintained that he must have treated his ‘gins’ with respect otherwise they would have abandoned him. Even to this day the Kamilaroi show affection for Thunderbolt.

Although many writers have credited Mary Ann for rescuing the prisoners from Cockatoo Island Gaol (the only two inmates to have ever escaped), she has not been honoured in the Thunderbolt legend. There are no statues or monuments to celebrate the role that Aboriginal people played in keeping the “legend” alive, as he lived at large in the Australian bush. Mary Ann exhibited the virtues made popular through the “Aussie Legend”, however being a ‘half-caste’ woman she failed to fit the shallow stereotypical scope. The principles of remaining loyal to one’s mate during times of hardship came to be celebrated as something inherently “Australian”. Yet it has been argued that the greatest failure of the mateship ethos is that it was based on a racist doctrine (Smith

25 The Trooper Police of Australia, paid tribute to the mounted police, describing them as the colonial heroes who ‘advanced the guard of civilisation in the wilderness’ (see Haydon A.L. 1911, viii). Although the author’s aim was to glorify the troopers, he argued that Captain Thunderbolt’s redeeming feature was his faithfulness to his ‘half-caste woman’ (1911,180).

26 Kociumbas argued that this was a most complex period of colonial history, where there were no clearly delineated heroes and villains (see Kociumbas 2001, 54).
Nineteenth-century nationalist constructions continue to have a firm grip on the Australian psyche today.

Contemporary writers, artists and cultural commentators have tried to engage in a public debate to address this aforementioned ‘cult of forgetfulness’. However some attempts to convey heroic Aboriginal figures to a contemporary audience have been criticised for being idealistic. 27 Defence of Aboriginal land, lore and culture, has often been dismissed as a criminal act, rather than that of brave defiance or an act of war. More recently, significant Aboriginal resistance fighters have been elevated from criminal status to that of hero in the Australian context. This has been achieved most successfully through the artistry of Aboriginal Australians themselves. 29

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27 Acclaimed writer Thomas Kenneally in his novel *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* (1972) attempted to portray Aboriginal outlaw Jimmy Governor as a heroic resistance fighter (see Miller 1985, 112). Despite his endeavor Kenneally’s interpretation has been criticised as an idealised account (see Clune 1970, 172; Lowe 1994, xiv; Miller 1985, 113). Governor’s protest was that of a man of mixed heritage, insisting that he was equal to the white man. He had adopted the white Christian work ethic, learnt to read and write, played in white cricket teams and tracked for the Cassilis Police near Mudgee. By the Government standards of the day Jimmy showed much promise for becoming “assimilated” into white society. His final act of integration was to marry a white girl Ethel Page and raise a family (see Miller 1985, 110-12). The unrelenting racist derision that the couple received from the wider community incensed Jimmy, until finally his rage exploded. Jimmy’s fight was not for freedom, but to restore his sense of pride. The Governor’s story is a tragic indictment of the effect that racist ideology had on the lives of many individuals of the nineteenth century, both black and white.

28 *Forgotten Rebels* documented Aboriginal resistance fighters of the nineteenth century who courageously fought the invasion of their country (see Lowe 1994, xiv).

29 The lack of recognition that Aboriginal resistance fighters had received in the mainstream history was a major concern for the late Lin Onus, an acclaimed artist of the Yorta Yorta Nation. He tried to publicise the political struggle with the creation of his *Musqito* series (1979-1982) celebrating the life of the commanding freedom fighter Musqito (see Seal 2003, 35-7). An epic narrative told over ten panels. Onus has himself been described by one art critic as a ‘visual historian’ (Neale 2001). The final painting in the series titled *Wanted, One Rope Thrower* (1979-1982) documents Musqito’s last cries for justice as he awaits the noose in Hobart Town. Musqito is represented drowning amongst pieces of paper, white man’s law, consisting of accusations for crimes never substantiated: an artist’s appeal to historians to reconsider and rewrite Australia’s past. Tasmanian Aboriginal artist Jennie Gorringe was determined to pay tribute to an Aboriginal warrior known as Walyer. Her installation titled *Warriors and Whalers* (2001) paid homage to Walyer, a charismatic Tasmanian Aboriginal woman of the north-west who led violent attacks during the late 1820s and early 30s and was much feared by both settlers and un-affiliated Aboriginal groups (see Seal 2003, 38-41). Both The *Musqito* series and Wayler installation entered the Australian popular culture in 2003 when it featured in a travelling exhibition presented by the National Museum of Australia in Canberra. *Outlawed* was the first major exhibition to focus on legendary outlaws from a global perspective.
Courageous Aboriginal figures such as Mary Ann\textsuperscript{30} have not been given the attention that they deserve. Yet a closer examination of events reveals that Mary Ann’s contribution was crucial to Thunderbolt’s survival. The greatest failure of the mateship ethos is that it continues to exclude Aboriginal people and women. Reciprocal relationships that developed between Aboriginal and settler Australians represent the essence of the Thunderbolt legend.

*    *    *    *

The Thunderbolt saga was first told by my great grandfather and has become somewhat of a family legend, handed down the line. No sibling of mine has entered into adulthood without being spared the tale. It may be that “Uncle Fred” was a term of affection used by my Great grandfather to express his solidarity for the bushranger and his cause. Great grandfather Percy had worked for a time with a Fred Ward at \textit{Goonoo Goonoo} Sheep Station near Tamworth, which Thunderbolt himself had been known to visit.\textsuperscript{31} It may be that Percy Ward worked with “Fred Ward Junior” the son of Thunderbolt, who was first recorded in the district in 1868.

The family yarn may have its origins, in the rich storytelling tradition that characterised station life in rural New South Wales. Although it appears that “Uncle Fred” is not a blood relation, he certainly is claimed by our Ward family. However, if it was not for my curiosity about our family story, I would not have

\textsuperscript{30} The \textit{Outlawed} exhibition chose to focus on Fred Ward as the bushranger hero, while Mary Ann was noted for her role as helper (see Seal 2003, 10-11).

\textsuperscript{31} Weeks after Mary Ann’s death Thunderbolt visited \textit{Goonoo Goonoo} Station and stole the celebrated racehorse Combo (see Williams 1987, 105). It is interesting to note that Frederick Wordsworth Ward “junior” was baptised in the Tamworth district in 1868 (see Williams 1987, 105; N.S.W. Register of Baptisms, V1868 1400 161).
uncovered the vital role played by the bushranger’s Aboriginal wife. I believe that the Captain’s Lady was one of the most courageous and vivacious women in colonial Australia. I hope that in the future she will be recognised for her valuable contribution.

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‘Bugg descendants to hold reunion’ (15 Aug. 2007, 25) reported the Koori Mail. The heading caught my eye. An image of Uncle Les Ridgeway lit up the page. He was pictured with Bugg descendant Victoria Dobson. I scanned the article and found our family name, Ward. My correspondence with Uncle Les over the last couple of years has enriched my understanding of race relations in colonial New South Wales.

On the 19th April of this year, while Kevin 07 was holding his “2020 Summit” in Canberra, members of the extended Bugg Clan held a summit of their own. The Manning River which borders Worimi Country was chosen as the meeting place for the first ever Bugg reunion. Uncle Les believes that there is so much talk about “reconciliation”. He planned the Bugg reunion to demonstrate just what the “coming together” of the two cultures can actually mean. With over one hundred and fifty descendants in attendance it was a very historic event. My family and I felt privileged to be a part of it. We paid tribute to James and Charlotte Bugg and their eight children, whom many at the reunion descended from. Some people had only recently found out about their Aboriginal heritage and others were beginning to trace their European ancestry.

Towards the end of the nineteenth and for much of the twentieth century government officials continued to divide Australians by the colour of their skin
and policies such as segregation and assimilation took effect. ‘So much was sacrificed … for the nation’s grand passion for racial purity’ (Reynolds 2005, 9). The White Australia Policy itself cut through the complex ‘webs of kinship’ and severed family ties (Reynolds 2005, 10). The lives of Aboriginal people came under increasing government surveillance with the establishment of the Aboriginal Protection Board in 1883. Mission managers were appointed and given the authority to round up Aboriginal people and impound them on missions or reserves. Many Aboriginal children were forcibly removed from their community and raised in government institutions.

For these reasons, events like the Bugg reunion, can be highly emotional experiences. Many members expressed joy as they found their place in the family tree. People exchanged photographs, yarns and made connections. It was a real “coming together” as Uncle Les had wished. Mixed marriage remains central to contemporary Worimi culture. When Uncle Les (2008, 1-2) addressed the crowd he described us as ‘one big family’:

Get to know who we are, where we are coming from and talk and mingle with one another because we have been divided for so long, come together enjoy one another’s company, … we are a mixed group of people. … this is the first occasion that the Bugg family came together. … this has been a wonderful occasion … whether we are black, white, yellow, red no matter who we are. …we are all one big family, we are just as important as the royal family of England. … Have a look at the Australia we live in, it is a magnificent country, … we can move mountains if we unite together and work together as people and that is what it is all about. Life is about working co-operating together so forget who we are forget what position we are in society, we are all one blood and we all bleed red blood believe it or not.
I am sure that Robert Dawson would have been proud to hear those words expressed by our Worimi Elder in 2008. The Company manager and friend of the Worimi had articulated a similar sentiment during his tenure in the 1820s. Another Bugg family reunion will be held in 2010.
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