WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Colleen O'Sullivan *Mudgee Guardian* 8 June 2015

"What's in a name?" the *Mudgee Guardian* asked its readers in 1900. That question encapsulated the confusion, change and mystery associated with the village of Clandulla.

First there was Carwell, then Ilford, followed by Mornington, Carwell again and finally Clandulla. I am having trouble sorting it all out but hey that is just a hurdle of history. I am hoping that by the end of this article you will understand as much as I do. And perhaps you will have something to add.

Let's start with the name Clandulla. It is the name of the parish where the village of Clandulla is situated, one of 7,419 parishes in NSW. Clandulla parish is in the County of Roxburgh. Surprisingly as far as I can discover, there is no person or place with the name Clandulla in United Kingdom. Clandulla sounds a bit Scottish, clan being a group of interrelated families. And I did come across Clan Duille, a Scottish clan of bagpipers associated with the McLean family. Given that McLeans were prominent in the Capertee Valley perhaps there's a connection. In any case Clandulla rolls off the tongue nicely.

Two of the first families to settle in the parish of Clandulla were the Vincents and Nevells. John Nevell married James Vincent's daughter Elizabeth, who bore him six children. And so a clan was started. In 1829 according to local history books the Vincents and Nevells moved from the Bathurst area to "Carwell", the name they gave their property and the headquarters of all the other properties they acquired. *Rylstone Area History of Settlement* explains:

> "a veritable township grew up...cottages and huts...stores, barns, woolshed and appurtenances which go to complete a large grazing complex."

"Carwell" also had a cemetery, blacksmith and school. It is shown on the map as about nine or ten kilometres north-west of present-day Clandulla.

There was also a property called "Clandulla", one of the properties the Vincent-Nevells acquired. By the 1870s it belonged to the Farrellys. RDHSwiki (Rylstone District Historical Society) identifies "Clandulla" as the present "Mount View". When Mr and Mrs Hugh Farrelly retired to Rylstone in 1912 after 40 years on "Clandulla", their sons took over the management. Early maps show the Farrelly family had extensive holdings in Clandulla parish including Haystack Mountain. The 1884 historical map of Parish Clandulla also shows "Mount Clandulla or Marsden".

So far so good. A little mystery but not much confusion I hope. Then the railway arrived in 1884. The historical parish map shows that the government was making plans for three villages along less than ten miles of track. At the place where Clandulla is now situated, they allocated land for the village of Carwell, including a cemetery. Four or five miles down the track they reserved land for the village of Clandulla including a public school (probably Upper Flatlands Public School). And a couple of miles further along land was set aside for Brogans Creek Railway Station.

By 1887 the village of Carwell had been surveyed and a plan had been printed at the surveyor general's office showing the lots, sections (1-23) and twelve streets: Vincent, Mead, Rylstone, Farrer, Nelson, Russell, Arber, Ferris, Ilford, Clandulla, Nevell and Rooney.

It was in 1884 that confusion really started. The Railways Department decided to name the new railway station at the village of Carwell, Ilford. Why? Well all I know is that the line was originally surveyed to go through Ilford. The Rylstone community petitioned for it to go through Rylstone and won. Perhaps the Railways Department thought it would placate the Ilford crowd by naming it Ilford. The trouble was, Ilford village was about eight miles southwest of the railway station.

That mightn't have been a problem except mail travelled by train and there was a post office at Ilford village; and, from 1898, a postal receiving station at Ilford railway station. You can imagine the difficulty in those days. What to do with a letter addressed to an unknown person at Ilford – send it to the village post office or leave it at the railway station?

The confusion continued until April 1900 when the *Mudgee Guardian* reported that: "In order to avoid confusion through the similarity of the names borne by the Post Office at Ilford and the Receiving Office at Ilford Railway Station, it has been decided to change the designation of the latter to ' Mornington.'"

Why Mornington? I hear you ask. In that same year Mornington Oil Proprietary Company established "their immense works" in a mountain area of 3,400 acres near Ilford Station. I don't know exactly where (perhaps Haystack Mountain) but its purpose was to make a motzer extracting oil from shale. It was an impressive operation requiring the construction of a huge retort, the first of its kind, built by Clyde Engineering Works. It also involved the making of 60,000 bricks on site, which was tendered out. The Public Works Department was so impressed it gave a special grant of £150 for the construction of a road from the railway to the shale works. Obviously the railway and postal departments were also impressed enough to change the name.

Unfortunately Mornington Oil Company appears to fade into oblivion. The last mention on Trove was January 1901.

If Ilford was a bad choice Mornington was a worse one. Mail was now coming to Mornington NSW meant for Mornington Victoria, and vice versa. Before the year was out residents were petitioning the railway commissioners with alternative names. The Ilfordites suggested Coen, an Aboriginal name meaning brave or thunder, while the Carwellites suggested Nevelton, to honour the pioneer family.

In 1903 both the Commissioners and Post Master General chose Carwell to replace Mornington as the name of the station and post office (upgraded from a receiving office in 1902 but still operating at the railway station). Perhaps by this time they had examined an old parish map. On the other hand they might have noticed that Carwell was in the news. A small gold rush occurred at Carwell Creek early in 1903.

Carwell might seem a pretty good choice given it was the original name for the village when it was reserved for subdivision back in 1883. But again there were objections, no doubt due to it being confused with "Carwell" property and Carwell school, some miles away. Finally locals learnt (*Mudgee Guardian* 11/5/1905):
> "The Railway Commissioners and postal authorities have agreed to change the name of Carwell railway station to Clandulla. The consent of the Lands Department is being awaited before the change is officially made."

That's good – three departments working in sync. The Lands Department had already begun the name-change in October 1904 when they cancelled "the design of the village and suburban lands of Carwell". By September 1905 Clandulla had officially replaced Carwell.

This article began as an inquiry into the origin of the village of Clandulla and the correct information to put on entry signs. Like many towns and villages in Australia it is often difficult to establish a specific year of origin. In the case of Clandulla was it 1882 when Clandulla Public School opened or 1884 when Carwell village, which would become Clandulla, appears on a map, or 1885 when the village was notified in the Government Gazette, or 1887 when the Surveyor General released a plan of the village or 1905 when the village name and railway station was changed to Clandulla?

At this stage I am retreating to Kandos.