

Gostwyck Chapel and Deeargee Woolshed

A short drive, 11km east of Uralla along Tourist Drive 19, brings you to the picturesque vine-covered chapel at historic “Gostwyck” and the unique octagonal woolshed at neighbouring “Deeargee.”

“Gostwyck”, one of the earliest squatting runs in New England, originally extended from the outskirts of Armidale and included the area south and east of Uralla as far as Salisbury Plains.

Edward Gostwyck Cory obtained a holding of 80,000 acres, which he settled in 1832 and named “Gostwyck”. In 1834, Cory sold his grazing rights to William Dangar, who subsequently sold them to his brother Henry Dangar.



Henry Dangar had been an Assistant Government Surveyor under John Oxley and had been responsible for the survey of Newcastle and much of the Hunter Valley. In 1831, Dangar retired from surveying to his Singleton property, “Neotsfield”, to concentrate on his pastoral and business interests. In 1845, he was elected to the Legislative Council and from 1856 lived in retirement in Sydney, where he died in 1861.

By 1841, the community at “Gostwyck” had grown to forty eight inhabitants, and included two married women and two children, along with forty men who were employed as shepherds.

Later, “Gostwyck” was managed by Arthur Palmer, who became Premier of Queensland between 1870 and 1874. Following both World Wars the government reclaimed portions of the property for Soldier Settlement blocks. By 1970, only 13,000 acres remained of the original holding and this was divided between the two granddaughters of Henry Dangar – each receiving 6,500 acres.

The western side, or homestead area, retained the name “Gostwyck”, whilst the eastern side on which stands the historic woolshed, was re-named “Deeargee.” This name was derived from the old “Gostwyck” wool brand, DRG, which in turn stood for “Dangar, Gostwyck.”

Gostwyck Chapel

The chapel at “Gostwyck”, officially named “All Saints Anglican Church”, was built in 1921 in memory of Major Clive Collingwood Dangar (1882–1918) who had died of injuries sustained during WWI just a matter of days after his return to Australia.

The site of the chapel was carefully chosen by the property’s manager, Mr Ashley Clarendon Cox, at the request of Mrs Dangar, wife of Major Dangar MC. The chapel was consecrated by the Anglican Bishop of Armidale, Bishop Wentworth-Shields.

The magnificent avenue of two hundred elm trees was planted by a man brought out from England by the Dangar family specifically for the task. During times of drought the trees were tenderly nurtured and watered with buckets of water from the nearby Salisbury Waters.

Gostwyck Chapel (continued)

The chapel is built of bricks entirely made and fired on the property. The furnishings, ornaments and accessories were all presented by immediate family or close friends. They consist of a Credence Table, Communion Rails and Table, Font, Prayer Desk, Lectern and Pulpit, Hymns and Psalms Boards.

The stone wall surrounding the chapel was built as protection against flooding, but the floods of the 1950s rose higher than the walls and caused much damage to the furnishings and carpets. Since that time, when floods are imminent, all contents are removed to storage nearby.

Deeargee Woolshed

The unusual woolshed was erected on “Gostwyck” in 1872 to replace the property’s original shed which had burnt down under suspicious circumstances several months earlier. The octagonal design was the product of Canadian-born architect John Horbury Hunt, who also designed other significant New England buildings, including St Peter’s Anglican Cathedral in Armidale and “Booloominbah” at the University of New England.

The woolshed was constructed of tallow wood by local builder, Alexander Mitchell, who had completed John McCrossin’s three-storey flour mill in nearby Uralla just two years earlier.

Erected on brick pillars, the uniquely designed woolshed lacks a central supporting structure and features two tiers of glass windows. The successive roofs of galvanised iron were originally clad with shingles. This radical design provided light and ventilation for up to 80 blade-shearers working away in wooden pens to harvest wool from the property’s 55,000 sheep – the maximum flock size a property was legally permitted to stock.



The middle section of the woolshed was built in 1889 in response to the invention of the mechanical shearing handpiece by Frederick York Wolseley in Birmingham, England. With twenty seven stands divided between the two sides of the extension, the shed would have been one of the first in Australia to use the new invention. Built off the side of this extension is the engine room which housed first a steam driven engine and then a diesel engine used to power the shearing stands.

The woolshed was finally completed in 1901 with the addition of a brick section, which housed the belt-driven wool press and provided additional storage for wool bales.

Additional buildings on the property include a community hall built in the 1930s which also served as a library for the community at “Gostwyck”. Originally located on the western side of Salisbury Waters, the building was later relocated to its current position on “Deeargee”.

Please note:

Although internal access to the chapel and woolshed is not permitted, the owners of “Gostwyck” and “Deeargee” welcome visitors to view and enjoy this historic precinct. You are welcome to picnic in the surrounds of Gostwyck Chapel, but please be aware that there are no public amenities on site. Please also be sure to take any rubbish with you and dispose of it thoughtfully .

Visitors are reminded that “Gostwyck” and “Deeargee” are working properties and to be respectful of the privacy of the owners and their employees.