

UARBRY

A drive through the countryside to Uarbry.



Journey time is approx. 43 minutes / distance 46 km one way.

Drive to the small village of Uarbry by exiting town via Campbell Street/Cassilis Road. Approximately 18km from Coolah turn right into Tongy Lane. Of note on Tongy Lane are the location of a number of old stories – John Jones, the owner of the Turee Station in 1837 was attacked by an employee Edward Tufts, with a pair of shears - wounded in the thigh and groin he died a few days later and was buried on the property. Mary Elliot, whose husband William Elliott held New Turee in the 1860s, died at Turee in 1864. Her above ground sandstone vault stands in a paddock about a kilometre off the Lane near the grave of John Jones. Mary often wore a red dress and old timers claimed that on many occasions at night an apparition in a red dress has been sighted near her vault. The nearby Croppy Creek also features a headless rider scaring late night travellers. Also along the Lane was the place where two troopers and their horses were killed and buried and old timers reported seeing a bobbing light in the area at night.

The last property on Tongy Lane is Tongy Station whose sandstone homestead was destroyed by the Sir Ivan fires in 2017, however the historic woolshed can still be seen on the right hand side of the the Lane. Tongy Station was initially owned by Robert Fitzgerald, an ex-convict who through hard work and charm increased his fortune. In 1838 he had 41 assigned convicts on Tongy mostly engaged in clearing the land. Tongy came into the Bailleau family in 1923 and is still held by a family member.

Continue down the Lane to the T-junction, and turn right on the Golden Hwy. A few km further and the village of Uarbry is on your right (although this is the second village, an earlier village being located to the left on the plains but prone to flooding in its first few years, causing the move to higher ground and its present position). Mentioned as early as 1833 by the Surveyor Robert Dixon *“Arrived at Uarbry and obtained for Captain Piper a native guide”*. Always a small village, it nevertheless was full of community spirit holding horse races and having a tennis and cricket club and of course a pub all in the late 1800s. The Mudgee Guardian of 30 July 1900 reported that Joe and Jimmy Governor *“called at Robinson’s, Uarbry ... asking for George Cohen and France Piper, and wanted to know if they were home or not...”* – this was during the time of the Governor’s rampage (made famous by the film *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*).

Uarbry was almost completely destroyed by the Sir Ivan fire in February 2017, losing its charming little church, community built hall and all but two residences, and fire damage is still very evident around the town as it slowly recovers. The cemetery at the rear of the town (on a short but unsealed road) has mostly survived and contains some touching family stories, most notably that of the Hobbins family. Settling near Leadville (over the hill to the west of Uarbry) at Old Castle (now Dhu Robin) in the 1850s, Martin Hobbins left his family at Christmas 1876 to go droving, not returning until May 1877. During this time his eldest daughter Catherine died, followed 2 weeks later by Teresa aged 9, twelve days later Ambrose age 6 died, all from diphtheria. On April 26th Martin's wife Catherine died while giving birth to twins and a month later Mary, aged 18 also succumbed to the disease. Martin arrived home soon after. He is said to have cut, shaped and inscribed all the headstones with his own hands whilst mourning, then carrying them by horse and dray to the cemetery at Uarbry. Martin died 13 years later and is also buried there.



Uarbry church before and after the Sir Ivan Fire 2017.

More history on Uarbry, Tongy and Turee Stations can be found in the book "Around the Black Stump" by Roy Cameron, a copy is available to view in the Coolah Library.