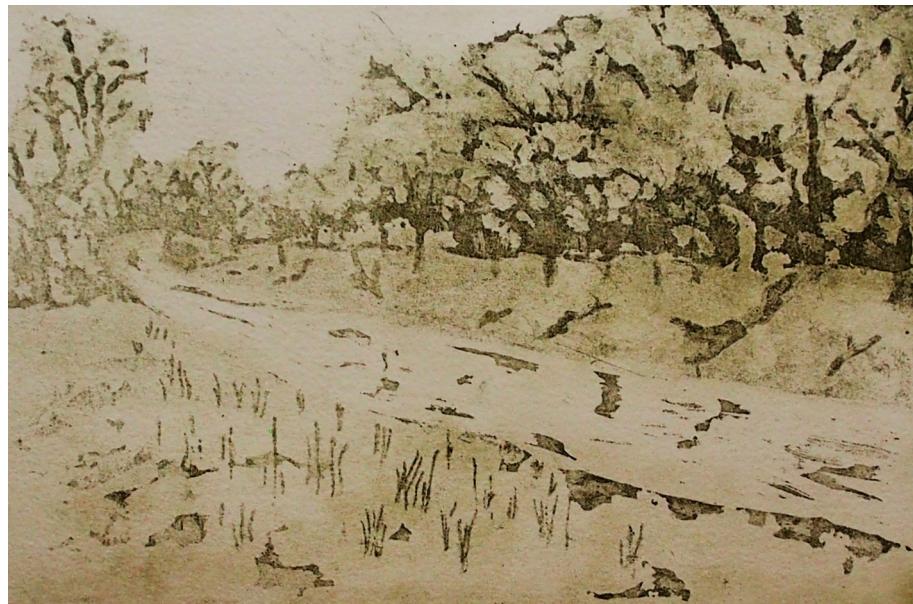




Alex Byrne, *Barka 17 - Western Carp Gudgeon*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
210 x 120

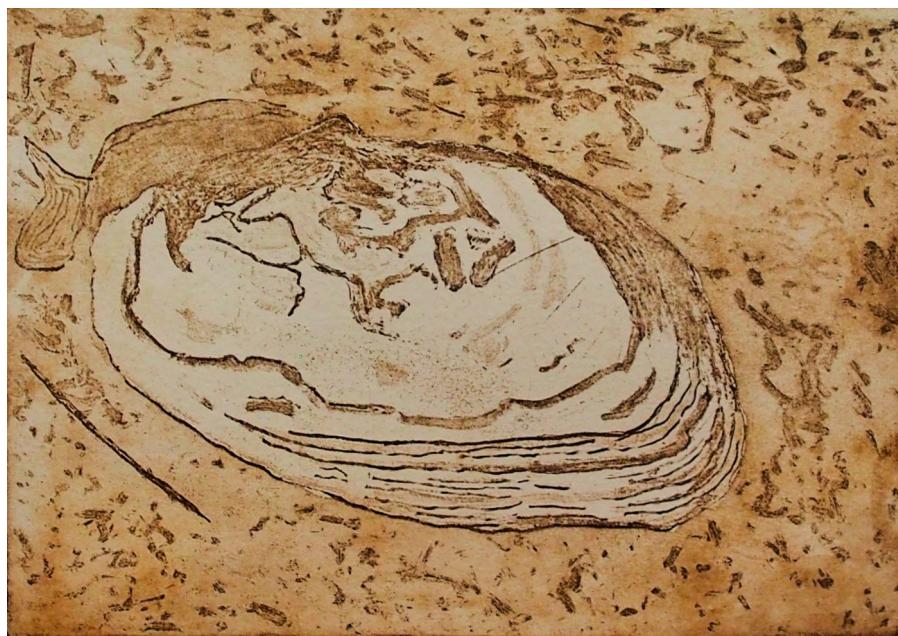
Western Carp Gudgeon, *Hypseleotris klunzingeri*, is widespread in slow flowing sometimes turbid, heavily weeded areas 1-3 m deep. They can congregate in large schools below dams and weirs. Gudgeons are important forage fish for the larger native species such as Murray cod, golden perch, Macquarie perch and freshwater catfish.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 18 - Barka Bank*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
365 x 260

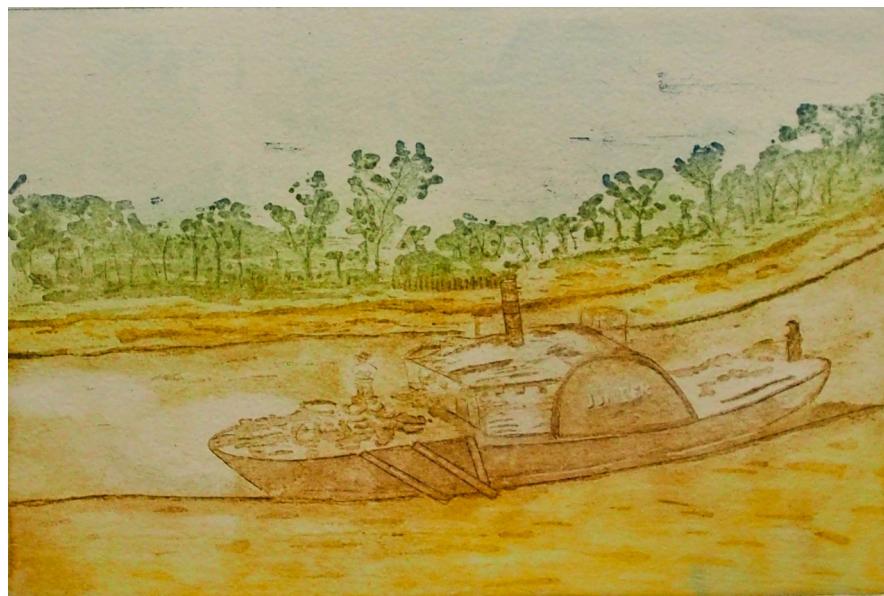
In April 1855, the Darling lands were surveyed and opened for tender. The small river frontage blocks preceded the great Darling stations of later years. One block became known as Kinchega and was the place where the ill fated Burke and Wills expedition picked up the infamous William Wright in 1860. His failure to meet the party on the return to Coopers Creek was a major cause of the demise of leaders of the Burke and Wills expedition.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 19 – Mussel*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
340 x 260

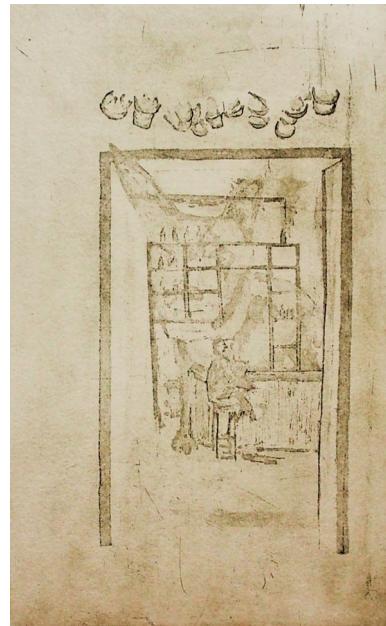
The Paakantyi diet consisted of small mammals, birds, golden perch, yabbies and fresh water mussels as can be seen in numerous middens along the Barka. The freshwater mussel, *Velesunio ambiguus*, is 120 mm long and burrows shallowly in silty sand and mud in streams and billabongs where they can tolerate low oxygen concentrations and long periods out of water.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 20 – Loading*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
365 x 265

In the late 19th century the Barka/Darling became a major freight route for the pastoralists of western New South Wales. Droughts and the river's ever changing sandbanks and snags made river transport uneconomic as rail and then motorised road transport grew over the past century.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 21 - Louth Hotel*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
260 x 365

Louth was established in 1859 when Thomas Andrew Mathews built a pub to cater for the passing river trade. Known as the 'King of Louth', he named the town for his home County of Louth in Ireland. My great grandfather, John Alfred Byrne, was the teacher at the Public School in the 1890s when it was a river port near Dunlop Station and on the track to Cobar.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 22 - Murray Cod*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
255 x 210

Murray cod, *Maccullochella peelii peelii* or Goodoo, is the largest Australian freshwater fish, reaching 114 kg and 1800 mm length and living up to 48 years. The species is important in Aboriginal mythology: a huge Murray cod is responsible for forming the Murray River and all its fishes. Generally associated with deep holes in rivers, the Murray cod make an upstream migration up to 120 km to spawn then returning to the same area, usually to exactly the same snag.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 23 - Flow at last*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
365 x 260.

The Barka's flow is extraordinarily irregular: it dried up on forty-five occasions between 1885 and 1960. Floodwaters come from Queensland via the Condamine, Barwon and Paroo systems and can spread out to 70 km near Tilpa in a good year. The trickling of water down past Tilpa in February 2019 signalled the waning of the most recent drought as the surrounding plains were greened by local rain.



Alex Byrne, *Barka 24 – Battle*, 2020

Aquatint; Barka/Darling series on Hahnemuhle 300 gsm 1 AP + 5;
350 x 250

The fight for life is most extreme in dry times, when the Barka is reduced to drying ponds separated by cracked mud and sandbanks. Mussels and frogs burrow to survive, surviving fish try to find the remaining deep holes, mammals stop breeding and die (even the goats) and birds leave if they can.

