

# NEWSLETTER

No.1 February 2018

of

**MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC** (Founded 11<sup>th</sup> June 1958)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society

ABN 34611778680

PO Box 450 Muswellbrook NSW 2333

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## Our Museum - an update

For many years the Muswellbrook Shire Local & Family History Society Inc ran a small museum in the bottom two rooms of Weidmann Cottage. This was open on Saturday mornings to the general public.



Photos taken of the bottom two rooms by Lionel Ahearn when the Museum was operating

When the Society moved from Weidmann Cottage it was necessary to do something with our Museum items. Garry Meissner and I photographed most of the items, boxed them and entered the details on a data base. With the permission of the Muswellbrook Library the boxes were stored in what is known as the 'undercroft area'. This is an area under the foundations of the Library.

Some of the items were too large to be stored in that area. These had been stored originally in the cellar of Weidmann Cottage. We were fortunate that Glen Fellows came to the rescue. He agreed to take these articles on loan and to display them in his museum. Below is a photo of his large trailer just about ready



Glen Fellows loaded up ready to depart

to depart. These articles were also photographed and recorded.

He was also able to identify some of the articles which we could not. The article on the right was one of them. Can you identify it? Answer in the next Newsletter.



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## DETAILS ABOUT THE SOCIETY

### Objectives:

- To collect, preserve and promote the social, cultural and physical history of Muswellbrook Shire, its environs and its people for future generations.
- to promote public access to our collections and research facilities, and
- to provide information, advice and assistance to individuals, community groups, organizations and businesses.

### Meetings

The Society meets on the third Tuesday of each month starting at 7.00 in the Society Room, behind Muswellbrook Library, come to the rear of the building. All members and visitors are welcome to attend the meeting and stay for a cuppa, biscuit & a chat after.

### Premises

The Society maintains its records in a section of Muswellbrook Library. You will find us at the rear of the Library. The Research Centre is open every Saturday from 9.30am to 12.30pm. The Research Centre may be opened at other times by appointment. Bus & tour groups are most welcome.

### Annual Fees

Single \$25 Double \$35 Pensioner Single \$15 Pensioner Double \$25 (There is a one off joining fee of \$5)

The Hon Secretary may be contacted via the post office box or email [mei2@bigpond.com](mailto:mei2@bigpond.com) The Society also has a web presence thanks to Darrin Khan and Lionel Ahearn at <http://www.mbkhistorical.org> and a research site at <http://research.mbkhistorical.org>

One section of the museum was not recorded. This was the valuable collection of clothing items, some of which date from the 1800s. They were stored until we were fortunate enough for Glenda Murray to take an interest in this collection. She has been doing a marvellous job of sorting, recording and storing the items appropriately. This has been a large job but Glenda has also found the time to display some of these items in the large glass display cases towards the rear of the library.



Two of the display cabinets organised by Glenda Murray from articles in the Society's Museum Collection.

Photos by Lionel Ahearn

The Society continues to collect items for the museum but due to storage restrictions large items cannot be accepted. Recently Jenny Wall donated a number of items from her father's pharmacy which operated for a large number of years in Bridge Street. Glenda Murray has arranged a display of these items in the library. If you have the time the display is well worth a visit. The photographs don't do it full justice.

The Society has also been involved with Muswellbrook Public School in Roger Street. During 2017 Garry Meissner and I took a collection of relevant items to the school as part of a History Unit by an Infant's grade on the early settlement and history of Muswellbrook.



A selection of the object donated by Jenny Wall As displayed by Glenda Murray



Some of the items taken to Muswellbrook Public School

Many of the items had never been seen before by the young children. We were even able to baffle all the teachers with one item. It is shown below. Do you know what it is? Answer in the next newsletter.



A power point presentation using a selection of the Society's large collection of photographs was also been a feature of this history unit.

A few years ago I was given a copy of a University Assignment by Alison Bell<sup>1</sup>, a long-time member of the Society. It records the history of changes in wedding apparel over the years. With her permission I have included some excerpts from this work as I feel they tie in with Glenda's display.

### Wedding Photographs



Emily Annie Attkins (1861-1931)  
married 18 July 1894  
John Osborne Smith (1866-1912)

John's typical country clothing consists of a dark single-breasted, high-buttoned jacket and waistcoat, a feature of men's dress in the 1890s. His shirt and tie are white while his light coloured trousers of wool or moleskin have narrow legs slightly flared at the foot to accommodate his brown, rather shabby, boots. He wears a buttonhole of orange blossom and a watch chain is just visible on his waistcoat. Following the fashion of the 1890s he wears a moustache and his hair is cut short and centrally parted.

Emily wears a simple dress in a lightly toned, probably woollen, fabric reflecting the fact that her family was not rich enough to afford 'one-day only dress'. She was able to choose a fashionable hourglass shape. The separate tight fitting bodice, worn over a high-necked sheer chemisette, is buttoned to one side with the sleeves high at the shoulders and tightly fitted from elbow to wrist. The gored skirt has two double rows-of tucking. Orange blossom is pinned to the chemisette and a brooch is worn at the neck. Emily wears her hair in fashionable curls at the front and bun at the back, topped by a sheer veil attached to a crown of orange blossoms. Emily, known for her needlework, probably made her dress, perhaps with the aid of a paper pattern available by mail order.

Albert wears a formal clerical suit with high-buttoned tailcoat and straight trousers, a black clerical shirt with white clerical collar and cuffs. His highly polished shoes are black and he carries white gloves. Albert's hair is short and he wears rimless glasses.

Molly wears a lavishly trimmed, typically Edwardian two-piece wedding gown in silk and organza. The high-necked blouse is pouched and decorated with lace. The sleeves are full, caught at the elbow with a wide ruched effect under which a sheer layer of lace-trimmed fabric falls to the wrist. The silk skirt, with tight-fitting belt, has elaborate tucking and ruching from knee to floor widening at the back to form a train. Her veil is attached to a row of orange blossom while her hair is fashionably bouffant, worn off the face and padded at the sides.<sup>23</sup> She carries white gloves and a prayer or service sheet. Orange blossom is pinned to the bodice and she wears drop earrings, a brooch at the neck, and a cross hangs from a chain around her neck. She, too, wears rimless glasses



Albert Ernest Attkins (1872-1947)  
married 02 February 1906  
Mary Matilda Coupland (1873-1946)

<sup>1</sup> The Family in Australian History, Research Assignment, Wedding Photographs 1894 to 1971 by Alison Bell



William Arthur Atkins (1870-1934)  
married 12 May 1908  
Sarah Ann Wharton (1873-1950)

William wears a dark three-piece suit with high-buttoned waistcoat popular at the time. His shirt is white with stiff collar and cuffs and his tie is white. William's hair is cut short and he wears the fashionable walrus moustache. He holds white gloves and wears a buttonhole of orange blossom. His watch chain is threaded through a special waistcoat buttonhole.

Sarah wears a high-necked white silk gown. The bodice has a high collar and the fashionable bell-shaped sleeves are tied with a bow at the elbow. The slim fitting skirt, fuller at the back where it forms a train, is detailed with an embroidered panel on the - right and there is a stiffened border at the feet. Sarah wears elbow-length lace gloves and her bouquet of mixed flowers is tied with a long ribboned bow. Orange blossom is pinned to the bodice of her gown while a brooch decorates the neck. Her hair is swept up and her fashionably large white 'frothy' hat was, 'perhaps, unusual given a veil was more traditional.

Bow wears a dark three-piece suit, white shirt with stiff wing collar and white bow tie. He wears a white glove on his left hand and holds the other in his right hand. His black shoes are highly polished.

Dulcie's dress of white crepe de chine and satin reflects the fashion for a 'fitted silhouette' with a more defined waist and longer 'swirling' modified handkerchief hemline. The bodice is sleeveless and the wide neckline is piped with satin. Lace is inset at the shoulders. Dulcie's hair is softly shingled in the prevailing fashion and her floor-length veil is attached to a close fitting coronet of pearls and orange blossom. Dulcie wears a sprig of orange blossom and a crystal necklace. She carries a bouquet of white lilies. Her stockings and shoes are white. The bridesmaids wear dresses of chartreuse and apple green with brimmed but different hats. Both wear pearls and carry bouquets of mixed flowers. Margaret wears a pink silk and lace chemise dress with pink 'pudding bowl' hat, white socks and black shoes. She wears a crystal necklace and carries a basket of flowers.



Mary Dulcie Smith (1898-1980)  
married 20 December 1930  
William Wallace Bowie (1904-1986)



Margaret Emily Bell (b.1924)  
married 19 January 1946  
Keith Roderick McDonald (1920-2003)

Keith wears a dark suit, white shirt and a dark tie. He wears a white rose in his buttonhole. His shoes are black.

Margaret's dress, made by Muswellbrook dressmaker Miss Nowland, presented a challenge given the shortage of dress materials still evident after the war. The Women's Weekly reported a trend to heavy brocade-type fabrics but Margaret chose a more timeless design in white organza with lace dyed in coffee to achieve the desired off-white tone. The bodice has a round neck and capped sleeves, trimmed with lace. The bodice extends in a modified frill over the flared skirt. Margaret's short veil is gathered onto a headdress of hand made roses. She wears elbow-length gloves and carries a bouquet of white roses tied with a satin ribbon. Margaret wears her grandmother Emily's gold sovereign brooch pinned to the petticoat under the sheer bodice.

The photographer poses the standing bride and groom in the centre of an undecorated studio. This contrasts considerably with the early photographs but reflects the fashion for even less ornamentation than that of the 1930 photograph and its velvet curtain.

With an early evening wedding, dress for all participants conforms to contemporary Australian custom. Leonie's gown of white georgette was made by Teresa Vignando, a Leichhardt dressmaker. The design was adapted from an evening dress seen in a fashion parade. The bodice has a panel of hand-made georgette roses across the top and short sleeves. The simple skirt was gathered at the waist with a long train, decorated with georgette roses, falling from the back. The long veil is gathered on a white silk headband which holds her loosely styled hair. Leonie wears long gloves and carries white roses. She wears a single string of pearls and her great-grandmother Emily's gold sovereign brooch.

Peter and his groomsmen wear dinner suits with fashionably frilled dress shirts and black bow ties. They wear buttonholes of white carnations and carry white gloves. The bridesmaids wear simple white long-sleeved georgette dresses over satin petticoats with fine gold ribbons at the waist and gold shoes. They carry bouquets of gold daisies tied with gold ribbons.



Leonie Margaret McDonald (b. 1949)  
married 17 April 1971  
Peter John Manchester (1945-1992)