

NEWSLETTER

No. 2 April 2018

of

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC (Founded 11th June 1958)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society

ABN 34611778680

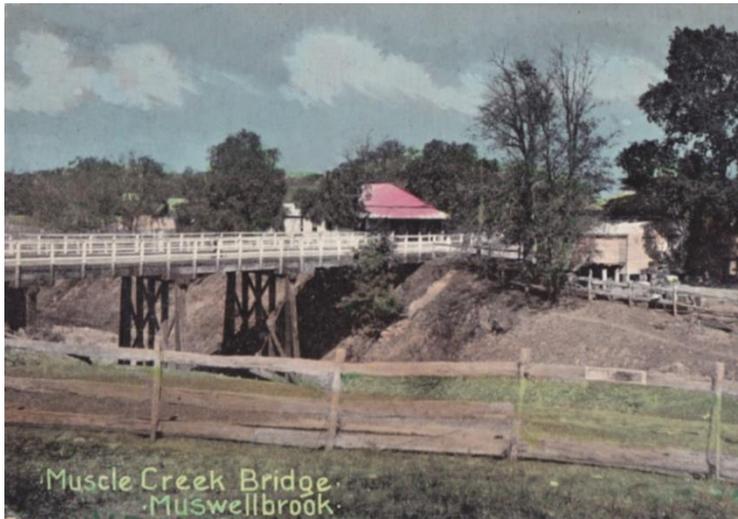
PO Box 450 Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Editor Lionel Ahearn

Visit to Newcastle and District Historical Society Inc

On Sunday, 25th March Garry and Heather Meissner and I visited the above Society in their temporary meeting room at the old Astoria Theatre at New Lambton to present a power point presentation on Muswellbrook. Their Society was forced into temporary accommodation two years ago when a storm damaged their rooms. The majority of their records are still stored at the University of Newcastle while they wait for the Council to repair their room. The presentation was well received by approximately twenty members.

The photo below is a copy of a postcard owned by Mr Richard Milne, Vice President, Newcastle Historical Society,



who is an avid collector of old postcards.

The photo is of particular interest as it shows the bridge from a different angle to any other photo held by our Society. The colour of the photo, particularly around the split rail fence in the foreground, suggest that it was hand coloured. It also shows the foundations of the bridge.

The grey scale photo below is cropped from our Society photo 1304 which shows the same area at an earlier date.

The building on the western side of the bridge is the Plough Inn which was well known in the early days of the town. It consisted of the brick building, later known as the Royal Hotel, numerous outbuildings and an adjoining weatherboard cottage. (See advertisement in Maitland Mercury in 1879, shown below)¹



Lot 3. –Those Well and FAITHFULLY ERECTED PREMISES, built of Stone, containing 7 Rooms, with capacious Cellars, extensive Kitchen, Out-buildings and Stabling, and large Garden and Orchard, Stockyards, Well of Water, a large Underground Tank, and also the Weatherboard Cottage adjoining, containing 8 rooms. The whole forming the old established and well-known Hostelry, The Plough Inn, so long and successfully conducted by Proprietor, John M Browne, Esq., and his successors. (Out-Buildings demolished 1927 when subway built.)

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 7.00pm in the Society Room, at the rear of the Library 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 1.00pm. 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 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>

¹ Maitland Mercury 22 February 1879

OLDEST BUILDING STILL STANDING IN MUSWELLBROOK

One Saturday morning, a few weeks ago at the Society, there was a discussion on what was the oldest building still standing. Quite a few thought the Weidmann Cottage was the oldest while a few others thought that the Boyle building was older. It was a week later that a third building was suggested. This was the original St John's Presbyterian Church, which was later used as a hall and is now used by the Christian School. I, therefore, decided to see if I could answer the question.

WEIDMANN COTTAGE.



Council photo 229 showing shop attached to the northern side of Weidmann Cottage

David Brown purchased five blocks of land in Muswellbrook on the 12th July 1838. One of these was Allotment 8 Section 6 for which he paid twenty two pounds. It was sold on to Richard Henry Cloweth of Muswellbrook for fifty pound in 1849. Land transfers at the time only describe the location of the land and not what was built on it. As David Brown never lived in Muswellbrook it is likely that the cottage was built after the purchase in 1849.



Society photo 381 as it stands today

PLOUGH INN, ROYAL HOTEL, BOYLE REAL ESTATE



Society photo 1064 showing part of the Royal Hotel sign

The building now known as the Boyle Building is the site of the original Plough Inn. John Brown purchased the block of land for fifty pound on 15th June 1843 and commenced his occupation as a wheelwright and blacksmith. It is thought that he did build a stone house and call it the Plough Inn towards the late 1850s. In 1874 this became the Coach and Horses Inn and traded until 1879. It then became the Royal Hotel and the sign can still be seen on the south west wall although it is now becoming indistinct.

As reported in the auction notice on page 1 there were a number of outbuildings attached to the inn which were demolished to make way for the building of the subway that opened in 1927.²



Society photo 2730 as owned by Muswellbrook District Workers Club today

ORIGINAL ST JOHN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



Original St John's Presbyterian Church Society photo 2658.2

The Under Secretary for Lands stated, "In March, 1843, the Colonial Secretary informed the Surveyor-General that sites for a Presbyterian Church, Manse and school had been selected by the Moderator of the Synod and the Governor (Sir George Gipps) had approved of the sites in the township of Muswellbrook". In July, Surveyor, G. B. White, arrived to measure the sites and allotments. Leading citizens associated with the building of the church were Messrs George Bowman, J. H. Keys, T. S. Hall, Ebenezer Hall and Donald Macintyre. When the church was erected Rev. Irving Hetherington, of Singleton, was the Minister in Charge. The original Presbyterian Church was built in Hill Street by the end of 1843.³

It would appear, therefore, that the present St John's Hall is the oldest Muswellbrook building still standing.

² From 'Chronological Early Introduction to the History of Muswellbrook Inns & Hotels, talk to MUHHS 13 October 1998' by Malcolm Rothe

³ From Society publication 'From Muscle Brook to Muswellbrook' for Year 1843

Muswellbrook newspapers (Part 1)

The following list contains a brief description of Muswellbrook based newspapers. Copies of early newspaper are extremely limited and in some cases no papers exist.

Muswellbrook Monitor

The first recorded newspaper published in Muswellbrook, *the Muswellbrook Monitor*, commenced in May 1869. The *Monitor* office was located in Bridge Street near the NE corner of Bridge and Hill Streets.

Publishers Hines and D'Orney were the defendants in a libel case brought by Dr R Pierce in December 1870. Dr Pierce, a doctor practicing in Muswellbrook brought the action in response to an article published in the *Monitor*. It appears, because of the action, the paper ceased production in July 1870.



Bridge St looking north c1882. Monitor office on right. Cropped from Society photo 0117.

Upper Hunter Courier

The *Upper Hunter Courier* commenced in Muswellbrook on 25th March 1871. The office is understood to have been in the same building occupied by the *Monitor*.

The publisher Richmond Thatcher announced, '*in the penultimate issue of the 'Upper Hunter Courier' published in Muswellbrook we announced our definite intention of publishing a paper in Murrurundi...*'.

A second version of the *Courier* was produced in Murrurundi on the 15 August 1871. The production of the paper in Murrurundi appears to have been short-lived. According to Sanzi '*the last known issue of the Murrurundi edition was dated 7 November, 1871.*'

Thatcher appears to have returned to Muswellbrook and continue production. Some details of an early *Courier* are contained in an article in the *Muswellbrook Chronicle* in September 1933;

An interesting record of the early days of Muswellbrook in our possession, through the courtesy of Mr J H Keys. Mr Keys brought to light a copy of the 'Upper Hunter Courier' of May 3, 1872, printed in those far-off days at Muswellbrook, and one of the town's first newspapers.

No Muswellbrook based newspaper

Date period June 1872 to December 1882.

A public meeting was held in Muswellbrook in June 1872 'for the purpose of arranging means to establish a local newspaper in Muscle Brook.'

The meeting resolved that a newspaper be established in Muscle Brook under the title of '*The Musclebrook Liberal and Upper Hunter District General Advertiser.*' A committee of prominent townspeople was formed to proceed with the project. The report stated: '*It was intimated that the Upper Hunter Courier will cease at the end of the present quarter and hence the present movement.*'

It appears that the good intentions of the townsfolk were all to no avail. Whilst it cannot be stated for certain, it appears the '*Muswellbrook Liberal*' never eventuated.

Upper Hunter Standard

The Upper Hunter Standard was first published by Arthur Peacock in December 1882.

*'This journal was published weekly and has a circulation of 500. It is carried on on liberal principals, and advocates every measure for the public good, irrespective of person or party.'*ⁱⁱ

The *Upper Hunter Standard* operated from offices formerly used by the *Monitor and Courier* in Bridge Street. In 1885 Peacock moved to offices in the former 'Conroy's old hotel in Sydney Street.

The paper was advertised for sale in April 1888 by William Toseo of Muscle Creek (Peacock's father-in-law). Arthur Peacock died in July 1888.



The Upper Hunter Standard;

The Muswellbrook Times
With which is Incorporated the "Upper Hunter Standard."
WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1888.

The first issue of *The Muswellbrook Times* was printed on 25 July 1888. An article by the owners Arthur Smith and George Rixon stated 'We desire to inform residents of Muswellbrook, Denman, Merriwa, Cassilis, and district, that we have purchased the plant etc. of the 'Upper Hunter Standard.

The name of the paper has been changed to THE MUSWELLBROOK TIMES and it will be published twice a week the publishing days being Wednesday and Saturday.'

It is not known for how long the *Times* was published. A reference can be found in the *Maitland Mercury* on 22 December 1888 in an advertisement for Muswellbrook Athletic Sports Carnival..

Arthur Smith moved to Scone and established the *Scone Advocate*. George Rixon moved to Murrurundi and published the *Murrurundi Times*.

Muswellbrook Register

Having sold his interest in the *Muswellbrook Chronicle*, (more in part 2 next newsletter) Pierce Healy started the *Muswellbrook Register*. The new paper called *The Muswellbrook Register and Robertson Recorder* commenced in July 1894.

The Municipal Council rate records for 1895-96 regarding the use of premises in Sydney Street for printing *The Register*. Name of person in occupation P Healy Lessee W H Smith Owner D Ferguson Description Register Office.

An aside. It appears there were two buildings on this lot: the Register Office and secondly a residence and shop. The shop was that occupied by M Campbell when he commenced business in 1862

The Register was offered '*For Sale, by Tender -The complete plant of the Muswellbrook Register newspaper and printing business. Machinery extensive and modern.. Tenders to be addressed to R. G. D. Fitzgerald, Solicitor, Muswellbrook, 11 February 1896.* Mr Healy then took on a role as correspondent for the *Maitland Mercury*

Contributed by 'Cub Reporter'

ⁱ K J Sanz – *Newspapers of the Upper Hunter*

ⁱⁱ Who was who in the Upper Hunter towns in 1888. Compiled by John Turner 1984.