

NEWSLETTER

No. 1 February 2019

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



The Members Say Thank You to Sarah Shelford

Sarah volunteered her time on a Saturday mornings to help in the many tasks that needed to be performed to keep the Society open and active. She donated her time whenever possible during 2017 and 2018. Her computer skills were greatly appreciated as was her keen interest in the preservation of local history. On completion of her studies at Muswellbrook High School she was successful in obtaining a place at the University of New England at Armidale. We wish her every success in her endeavours and look forward to seeing her again during the term breaks.

Thank You to Bill Spicer for Donation

At our February Meeting Bill donated three books to the Society for research. The first called 'More Than A Headline' is an in depth study of the many newspapers that have been produced in Muswellbrook. Excerpts from this study were produced in our Newsletters last year. The second is called 'The Other

Four Corners' and as Bill said it is not a T V program but a detailed history of the four corners at the intersection of Brook and Bridge Streets. The third and final book he named 'Bits and Pieces'. This book is a collection of sixteen different stories.

The books are not for printing at this stage as he feels that some more information may be added at some future date. They will be available for reading at the Society and will form a valuable collection for research purposes. All three books display Bill's knowledge and experience with local government history and the valuable local government records, many of which are housed in the Society. Without this type of research much valuable knowledge would over time be lost. On behalf of us all and future historians we say a heartfelt thank you.



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 at the rear of the Muswellbrook Library. 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

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>

Sydney Street business

William McNeill

William McNeill was a tailor.

An early reference to the business was contained in an article published in 'Messrs. W McNeill & Co., Tailors who have their place illuminated by gas¹.' (*The Maitland Daily Mercury* on 3 January 1895)

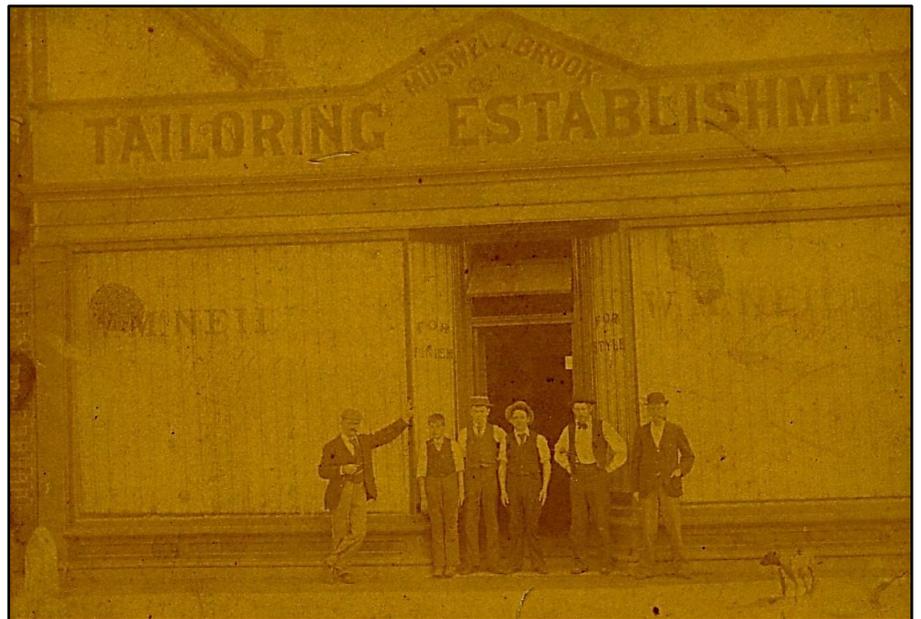


W McNeill shop was located on the vacant lot. Sydney Street - Streetscape T Tame 1982. Society Photo
Owner William McNeill - Occupier Spilsted. Description - House and Shop (Rate book 1894-1895)

Owner William McNeill - Occupier William McNeill. Description - Tailors Shop. Capital value £300. (Rate book 1897-1898)

Mr McNeill was elected to Muswellbrook Municipal Council in 1896. He served three years as an Alderman. He stood for re-election in February 1899, however he was not successful at the election.

Several items referring to Mr O'Neill were published in *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* on 6 September 1899. One item referred to debts owing to Mr McNeill to be paid to his assigned estate. Another item described the premises in relation to an auction sale: The valuable freehold property in Sydney Street, lately occupied by Mr W McNeill tailor. The property has a good frontage in an excellent business position, the premises are in good repair and the terms of sale are very reasonable. A third item is a classified advertisement advising William Clendinning, instructed by mortgagee to auction on Monday 11th inst. The property lately occupied by Mr W McNeill, Sydney Street – Good frontage, with large shop, premises in good repair, Title Freehold. There appears to be very few references to Mr McNeill in newspapers after this time.



W McNeill Tailoring establishment. Society photo 0248.

¹ Municipal gas works established 1894.

Sydney Street business

Charles Worms rented a building owned by Harris Clark on the northern side of Sydney St next to a building known as 7 Sydney Street or 'Thorley Building'. The site is now part of the Workers Club Car Park.

Charles Worms and Co

In July 1897 Charles Worms and Co were advertising in Singleton. The business moved to Muswellbrook and were trading on 1 January 1898. Early advertisements referred to women's clothing and boots and shoes in their Christmas sale.

Our Winter Goods.

We have to inform our Customers that it is really impossible for us to issue our price list just now. Our business has made such rapid progress the last four months that we are thinking very seriously of securing larger premises in town, so as to cope with the extra trade. You see we are placed in a much better position than the majority of storekeepers, as the most of our goods are purchased for prompt cash, so that, as it were, we buy at our own prices, and sell far cheaper than the other blokes, and in consequence our business goes on increasing every day. (*The Muswellbrook Chronicle* Wednesday 16 March 1898)

Special Attractions for the Show.

WE intend to keep our "FAIR" on for SEVEN DAYS longer, in order that our Customers may take advantage of our LOW PRICES during "Show week."

SOME SPECIAL LINES.

10 Only LADIES' BLACK FIGURED ALPACA SKIRTS, all lengths
usual price 9/6. Fair price 5/3

7 Only LADIES' BLACK COATING SERGE SKIRTS, usual price 11/9
Fair price 10/9

8 Only LADIES' BLACK SERGE SKIRTS. For the Fair, price only 8/-

10 Only LADIES' BLACK SERGE SKIRTS. For the Fair, price only 6/-

YOU should secure one of these Skirts.

Charles Worms & Co.,

THE PRICE REDUCERS,
NEXT SOL. HARRIS, SYDNEY STREET, MUSWELLBROOK.

Our Rose Pink Flannelette at 4 ½ d is the best value in town, sold up the street from 6 ½ d. Well, if you are over the bridge at any time give us a look in—always pleased to see you. A lot of improvements over here lately. Of course, you have seen the new water cart the Aldermen have put on. Quite an acquisition over here - keeps the dust down well. Charles Worms and Co. (*The Muswellbrook Chronicle* 30 April 1898)

An advertisement was published in *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* on 26 February 1898: Wanted – Smart Boy, for our Boot Department, and to make himself useful. Charles Worms and Co. Muswellbrook.

Worms once advertised: 'See our price list at once. Plenty of the goods left that are advertised. We don't advertise lines that we have not got, for we are no jerry-me-diddlers. Charles Worms & Co.'

At some stage, Charles Worms moved to Bridge Street, immediately south of Eaton's Hotel. In December 1906, Worms advertised as located 'next to Eaton's Hotel'

Mr Charles Worms, who for about ten years has managed the business carried on in this town under the name of Charles Worms and Co. left on Thursday morning last. The business has been closed. (*The Muswellbrook Chronicle* 20 March 1909) - Contributed by Bill Spicer

New Members

The Society takes much pleasure in welcoming two new members, Jim McDougall and Roger Mauldon. We wish them an enjoyable and rewarding time with our Society.

Outings for 2019

Our hardworking Secretary, Heather Meissner, has already begun working on arrangements for some more outings this year to take place in the same form as last year's visits. All going well we might be able to visit Pickering Homestead, Bengalla Homestead and also take a visit to the historic town of Morpeth.

Upper Hunter Shows

...snippets from the first 140 years



Compiled by
Ted George

Show Book

A book on the Upper Hunter Shows, compiled by Ted George, is well on the way to completion and will be launched at this year's Upper Hunter P & A Show. The book contains snippets from the shows over the last 140 years. It is only thanks to the availability of the various newspapers that have reported the news from Muswellbrook, that we were able to find something on nearly every show.

With the growing trend to place a number of stories and reports on the internet and not to publish them in the newspapers we need to think of how we are to keep track of, and to store, this information for future generations.

The book will be on sale at the Show.

Muswellbrook Chronicles

While the Society has a full record of the Muswellbrook Chronicle on microfiche reels, it was found that the photos stored as black and white images were suitable for reproduction in the above book. We were very happy therefore to receive a quantity of bound copies of the Chronicle. They are now in the process of being properly stored so that in future it will be possible to obtain a good quality photo to include in books or research.

We sincerely thank the Chronicle Office for their generous donation.

Flanders Store

The plate as shown here was donated to the Society by Coffs Harbour Historical Society. They were assessing their museum items and felt that it should be returned to the area from which it came. We gladly accepted.



Cropped from Society photo 0412.25 showing 'A W Flanders sign' on the awning of the building in Bridge Street.

The inscription as seen on the plate reads as follows:

Grocers Produce & General Merchants
A. W. Flanders & Co.
"The Service Stores"
Bridge Street
Muswellbrook

An article in the Muswellbrook Chronicle on Saturday 12 June 1920 states:

New Business – Messrs A W Flanders and Co announce in our business columns today, that they will, on Monday next, commence business as grocers, produce and general merchants in those spacious premises next to Eaton's Hotel. The new firm will specialise in produce and already has several important agencies.

Around 1925, 1926 an advertisement appeared that H R Flanders had taken over the business of A W Flanders.²



² A W Flanders is believed to be a son of H R Flanders. H R Flanders was the Mayor at some stage, resigned and may have been re-elected. Flanders Avenue is named after the Mayor H R Flanders. The above information comes from Bill Spicer's book 'Bits & Pieces' as mentioned on page 1 of this newsletter.