

NEWSLETTER

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

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society

ABN 34611778680

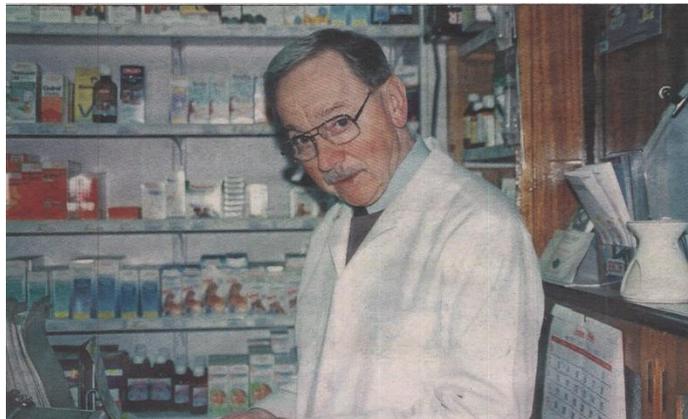
PO Box 450 Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Editor Lionel Ahearn

No. 3 June 2021

Vale – George Tasker

The members of the Society were saddened at the passing of George Tasker who died on 19 April, 2021 at 91 years of age. He served for many years as a Patron of the Society until he moved away. While originally not intending to stay long in Muswellbrook, George Tasker became a stalwart of the community. He joined Campbell & Company as their pharmacist where he spent 20 years. In 1974 in partnership with John Jobling he purchased Wall's Pharmacy in Bridge Street which was renamed Muswellbrook Pharmacy.



George Tasker at work in the Muswellbrook Pharmacy – Hunter Valley News photo 19 May, 2021, page 3



He was also a member of the Apex Club, the Camera Club, Wine Appreciation Clubs, Rotary Club, treasurer of the Muswellbrook & Upper Hunter Eisteddfod as well as our Patron even after leaving the district. At 90 years of age he wrote his life story, '*By George – My Life in a Country Town.*'

Muswellbrook Pharmacy in Bridge Street. MSL&FH Soc. Inc photo 2279.02

Book Donation

We were thrilled to have Bill Spicer attend our meeting on Saturday to present the Society with three books. As he explained he had been working on them for quite some time and will probably be adding to them in the future. The first two are 'SOUTH SIDE: Snapshots and Snippets' Volumes 1 & 2.. As Bill explained, over time the work expanded until for convenience it was split into two volumes. The third book is 'Bits & Pieces 2' which is an expanded version of the one he presented earlier.

They were presented to the Society to be used for Research and not for publication and as such will be an invaluable resource for our Society. From the interest shown by the members I'm sure they will be well read.

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 Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 in the Society Room at the rear of the Muswellbrook Library. All members and visitors are welcome to attend the meeting.

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>

Air Beacon for Muswellbrook

The photo below was recently donated to the Society on a Saturday morning. It is a very unique photo and members had not seen a copy of it and were puzzled as to its purpose. Thanks to Bill Spicer's research the following is now known.



REQUEST GRANTED BY COUNCIL.

Muswellbrook is likely to be one of the first inland towns in' the State to have its air beacon to assist aviators when engaged in night flying. Campbell's Garages, Ltd., proposes to install a 30ft tower, carrying a Neon sign, over the firm's Muswellbrook garage.

The proposal was considered at Wednesday's meeting of the council, when an application affecting the installation was read from Claude Neon, Ltd., who, in association with the Commonwealth Civil Aviation Board, have been engaged in erecting aviation beacons in coastal towns in New South Wales.

The beacon will burn from sunset to sunrise every night of the year. The light will flash in Morse code an official call-sign in a colour to be allotted by the Department, the colour to be green if the sign is within two miles of an aerodrome and red if the aerodrome is situated over that distance. In the event of the foregoing conditions being carried out the beacon would, it was stated, receive official recognition on all maps and notices to airmen.

The proposed beacon will consist of a three-sided steel tower, 30ft. high. The application was granted, subject to the electrical engineer's approval of the site to be selected. Aid. Halliday said the beacon would be a valuable addition to the town.¹

Personal Observation

I believe the tower would have had a short life span due to the outbreak of WWII. With the introduction of blackouts it would probably have been removed.

Another feature of this photo is the eight bowsers on the footpath. Each brand of petrol had its own pump.

New Members

The society welcomes the following new members

Shiralee Jean Neverov, Denman
Cheryl Young, Baerami. NSW
Dianne Gai Brown, North Rocks. NSW
Benjamin Thompson, Chirn Park, Qld.
Susan Tutin, Nth Booval. Qld

¹ Muswellbrook Chronicle Friday 2 April 1937 page 3

St Heliers Convict Register

A few Saturday morning's ago the Society had a research request on an early convict, Martin Heagney, assigned to Henry Dumaresq of St Heliers. Information was found in the above register. A copy of the book was purchased.

St Heliers Convict Register

This Volume called "St Heliers Convict Register", transcribed by Rob Tickle and produced and printed by the Historical Society, has been extracted from the journal records kept for the management of the St Heliers Station.

The "St Heliers Convict Register" shows the meticulous method of record for the management of the Station and the particulars of when a new convict arrived at St Heliers.

This recipe is an article in the Register and is for a Christmas Cake which we have christened the "Convict Christmas Cake"

3Ib butter, 3Ib currants, 1Ib lemon peel, 1Ib plums, 2Ib dates, 3Ib sugar, 3 nutmegs, 3 icing sugar, 3 dozen eggs, 1/- worth rum, baking powder, 3Ib flour, 6d of almonds.

Martin Heagney

In Memory of our 3xGreat Grandfather, we celebrate his story and his life in Australia and his beginnings at "St Heliers" Station, Muswellbrook

Martin Heagney (21 years) & John Heagey (30 years) both Roman Catholics from County Galway, Ireland were convicted of the crime of "whiteboy". Martin was single and could read and write, John was married and had no education. Both were tried on 24th March 1832, sentenced to life and transported on the ship "Eliza II". The "Eliza II" arrived in Port Jackson on 6th September 1832 with 196 male Irish convicts, 40 were from Galway and 26 of these 40 were convicted of "whiteboyism". The term of "whiteboy" was given to the association of suppressed Catholic Boys with a secret Irish agrarian organization in 18th century Ireland. It arose in Ireland around 1760 and was formed in protest against English Protestant landlords, to resist the collection of tithes (or rent), excessive priests dues, evictions and other oppressive acts by landlords. Landlords and tithe collectors were the target of the "whiteboys".

Martin Heagney was assigned to Henry Dumaresq of "St Heliers" Muswellbrook on 12th December 1832 and later followed William Dumaresq to Armidale. Henry & William Dumaresq (sons of Colonel John Dumaresq) held large stock runs in Armidale "Saumarez" & "Tilbuster".

Martin was granted a Ticket of Leave dated 9th January 1841 and was allowed to remain in the district of Muswellbrook and then later gained a Conditional Pardon dated 10 April 1847.²

The three Gilchrist sisters, Anne Collins, Helen Gurney and Kay Collins decided to bake the Christmas Cake. Their two main difficulties were in finding a large enough mixing bowl and deciding how much rum 1/- would have bought in the 1830s. They also only used 30 eggs.

Following the baking the Society received a portion of the cake for Saturday Morning Tea



Kay Collins 3X Great Grandchild and her two Grandchildren who are 5X Great Grandchildren of Martin Heagney. *And very nice it was too.*

² Notes by the Gilchrist sisters

Visit to the old Denman Courthouse

On Saturday afternoon a number of members of the Society enjoyed a wonderful visit to the Courthouse at the invitation of Maria and Ian Simpson. Afternoon tea was supplied by members and Maria supplied tea and coffee and the use of facilities.



The Court House situated in Palace Street was built in 1881 to a design by colonial architect James Johnson Barnett.



Photo by Lionel Ahearn

The Sergeant's Quarters out the back were built in 1860. The land at the back of the property was used to stable the horses used by police.



MSL&FHS photo2410.4

In 1912 the present lock up was brought in from Jerry's Plains when the original goal was burnt. The Court House was used until 1973 and was then used by a number of local groups until it was sold in 1992 to be used as a private residence.

Maria and Ian bought the property in 2018 and it is currently a B & B and small event venue. They have continued to renovate the interior and have planning permission to do up the Sergeant's Quarter to a Disable Access B & B unit. Extensive work will be required to fix foundations and the original sandstock bricks.



The original gallery has been converted to bedrooms with and an additional loft bedroom added.

Upstairs there were also additional bedrooms and bathrooms finished to a very high standard. It was wonderful to see such an old building brought back to life with every possibility of it doubling its lifespan.



Photos by Lionel Ahearn