

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. 4 August 2020

Reopening

Beginning in mid July the Society has opened on a restricted basis on Saturday mornings. We have asked those attending to use hand sanitizer, to record their arrival and departure details and contact information and to practise Social Distancing. The July meeting and the Annual General Meeting and August monthly meeting were held at 12.00 noon on Saturday mornings. This has allowed us to conduct research for a few visitors.

One couple popped in one Saturday morning on the off chance we might have some information on a grave at Wybong Cemetery. They went away delighted with a copy of our 'Three Cemeteries' book which contained not only a photo of the grave but exact instructions on how to get there. The accompanying photo and message was sent to us.



It was so lovely to meet you today. Thank you so much for all your help in my quest for Mary Flanagan. Thought I would share this photo with you of my meeting with Mary, the cemetery is amazing and so peaceful. We had no problems finding it and I was impressed by the perfect conditions of all the graves.
Jo Kearney

It is great when things come together so perfectly.

Our New Executive for 2020/2021

President	Lionel Ahearn	Vice President	Helen Ellis
Secretary	Heather Meissner	Treasurer	Malcolm Rothe
Public Officer	Malcolm Rothe	Publicity Officer	Helen Ellis
Research Committee Coordinator	Garry Meissner		
Assistant Researchers	Eve Ellis, Mal Rothe, Margaret Dolahenty, Ted George		
Pre 1900 Research Specialist	Rob Tickle		
Heritage Officer Coordinator	Garry Meissner with Rob tickle as consultant		
Newsletter Editor	Lionel Ahearn		
Committee Members	G Meissner, E Ellis, G Murray, T George, M Dolahenty, R Logue.		
Publication Editor	Rob Tickle		

Fees

Fees are now due. Please see below for details. Also be aware of the change to Meeting Times and Place set out below. This will continue until further notice due to difficult conditions.

New Member

The Society is pleased to welcome Mr Mathew Jeans of Muswellbrook as a new member.

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 will meet on the third Saturday of each month starting at 12.00 Noon in the Society Room at the rear of the Muswellbrook Library.

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>

YARRAWA BRIDGE

The Yarrawa Bridge is on the Yarrawa Road and crosses the Goulburn River to the west of the town of Denman. Completed in 1927, the Yarrawa Bridge was one of the last Allan type timber truss bridges built. This type of bridge was designed by Percy Allan and was one of the 105 built in NSW.¹

Heavy Rain

In early February 1955 heavy rain began to fall over the whole Hunter Valley.

5 ¼ INCHES OF RAIN IN 24 HOURS.

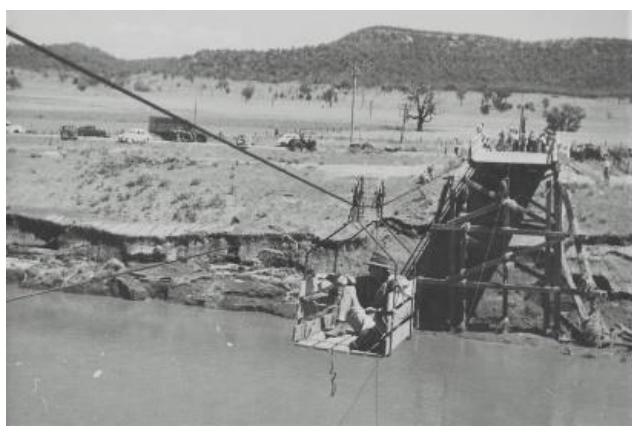
For the 24 hours ended 9 a.m. yesterday 5 ¼ inches of rain fell in Muswellbrook. The flood, however, was due to the heavy rains which fell in the higher reaches of the watershed. For the 24 hours ended 9 a.m. today, 141 points of rain fell, making a total of 666 points for the 48 hours. Heavy rain again set in this morning.²



Yarrawa Bridge over the Goulburn River after the 1955 flood. MSL&FHS photo D3181

GOULBURN RIVER AND YARRAWA BRIDGES CLOSED

Two spans of the Yarrawa Bridge were washed away leaving many residents from the Yarrawa, Jones' Reserve and Martindale areas cut off from the town of Denman.



Flying Fox at Yarrawa Bridge Crossing MSL&FHS photo D3180

The line was used to pull a rope across the stream and later a strand of wire. The wire was used to allow a flying fox service to be set up, a cut down oil drum being used to convey food stuffs, etc, across the stream.³

GOLF BALL AND FISHING LINE

Help Build Flying Fox

A fishing line attached to a golf ball, was the medium used to enable a flying fox to be constructed over the Goulburn River near the Yarrawa Bridge and Denman

With the line attached Mr Ken Pascoe, well known Muswellbrook golfer, hit the ball over the Goulburn River, with a margin of eight yards to spare.

¹ Yarrawa Bridge over Goulburn River. RTA Heritage & conservation register, 9/7/2006

² Muswellbrook Chronicle, Friday 25 February 1955, page 1

³ Muswellbrook Chronicle Tuesday 1 March 1955, page 1

The growing frustration of the people cut off led to a deputation to the Shire Council led by Mr J A Oliver (representing a Public Meeting). Of major concern was getting milk to the Muswellbrook Factory. 'That area,' Mr Oliver continued, 'provided just on one million gallons of milk to the Muswellbrook Factory in the six months ended 31 December 1954.'⁴

As a temporary measure a section of Bailey Bridge was constructed.



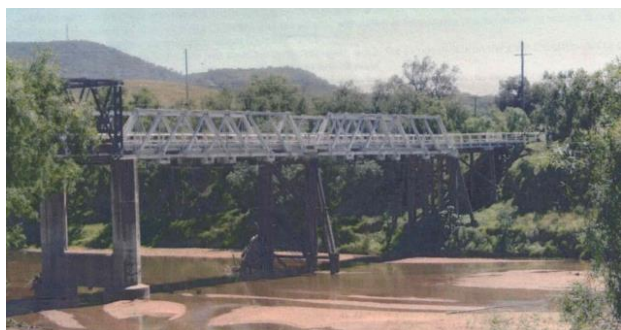
Bailey Bridge being constructed MSL&FHS photo D1331



Bailey Bridge ready to drive on MSL&FHS photo D1332

The Bailey Bridge continued to operate until 1960 when that section was replaced by two sections of steel trusses.

MSL&FHS photo D1333
Yarrawa Bridge in 1960



The two wooden Allan Truss Bridge Sections (on the other end of the bridge) were still in place in early 2009. However the bridge was damaged by flooding in June 2007 and was closed.

The old timber Allan truss bridge sections were demolished in May 2009. They were replaced with two new concrete spans.

Demolition of spans in May 2009 MSL&FHS photo D3183



Early this year (2020) an ABC article featured the 65th Anniversary of the 1955 flood. John McCormick kept the ball given to him by Bev Barry's father. It has been framed and is on display at Two Rivers Winery.

New concrete spans in background.⁵

⁴ Muswellbrook Chronicle Tuesday 15 March 1955, page 1

⁵ Abc.net.au/News/20-02-24/11987150, Hannah Palmer

PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2019/2020

We come to the end of another busy year which has seen us face some new and unusual challenges. After a lockdown of over three months the Society has begun to reopen. We have opened again on Saturday mornings practising social distancing to the best of our ability and space available. Our first meeting this year was conducted in July on a Saturday morning and seemed to have the support of the members.

The usual stalwarts have continued to provide their unfailing assistance. A special thanks must go to Heather Meissner, our Secretary, for keeping the members up to date with what is happening. She has also maintained the services provided by the Society and research requests have been maintained. Thanks in this area must go to Garry Meissner for his efforts and trips to the Society to search for information.

The sale of books continues even through the shutdown and our finance statements provided by Treasurer Mal Rothe shows that they are still a good earner. The Society has again managed a small profit for the year even with the difficulties faced. Mal has also been busy as we have updated a further computer. I did manage to get our old photocopier in the Society working again. This allows us to print A3 pages when required. This is probably the area to examine for an update in the future as we have been told it will no longer be repaired under contract, being too old.

A number of members attended a very successful outing to the Denman Heritage Museum and the Denman Men's Shed in September last year and also partook of a wonderful lunch. Their plans to expand the Museum will make a future visit a distinct possibility. We thank their members for their hospitality and presentation. Further excursions were planned but with the Covid-19 shut down these will have to be held over until it is safe to do so.

On the 23rd November 2019 Jeff Harrison launched the publication 'Life in the Upper Hunter – Mac Bridge Remembers'. This was a huge success and a credit to Margaret Asford and the committee of Society members who worked on it for many months. Sales are approaching 200. More publications are planned for the future depending on what can be arranged in these uncertain times.

Rob Tickle has also added to our Research Material in two areas. These are the Bowman Records and more Insolvency Files. These form part of the growing Bill Campion Memorial Record Section of our research data. Our thanks to Rob for his efforts, especially the indexing. He has also continued to provide research information, especially in the pre 1900 era and advise on publications.

Our Christmas Party at the Muswellbrook Workers Club was a great success. Everyone enjoyed a great meal and the fine company of members and visitors.

The Society could not continue to function without the dedication of the small band who continue to turn up each week to keep the doors open. A special thank you also to Eve Ellis and her helpers for continuing to add to our growing index. The work on revising and enhancing the index is of great assistance when research is being conducted. It is one of those never ending jobs which is so important to the future of our record keeping.

With the closing of the Chronicle Office in Market Lane we were given a ute load of bound copies of The Muswellbrook Chronicle and The Upper Hunter News. While we have copies of the Chronicle on reel these papers become extremely valuable when a photo is needed. Copies from the reels do not produce very well. In addition we also received a ute load of The Denman News when that publication ceased. They have now been sorted and stored and have already proved a valuable reference.

I have managed to keep the Newsletters going and have appreciated the comments from both local and distant members. I am always appreciative of donated stories and snippets that can be used. As you probably realise I enjoy adding photos and the Society's collection continues to grow. I'm sure there are still many gems hidden away in albums and cupboards that we would add. After scanning, the originals can be returned. Bill Spicer, Garry Meissner and I have been spending a morning a week correcting and adding to the photo database. Every week it gets a little better and I thank Bill and Garry for giving up their time.

We continue to receive items for our Museum collection and Glenda Murray and Terry Gill have arranged for displays in the Library. When things settle down we can look forward to new displays.

New members are always welcome This year we have accepted many new members. To all members a reminder that fees are now due.

My thanks to all those who have helped this year. To those not mentioned by name you are still greatly appreciated.

Lionel Ahearn

President 2019/20

EARLY MUSWELLBROOK – Through the Lens

Some time ago I discovered a number of photos on the NSW Library Website. They were listed as being from Muswellbrook and Scone dating from perhaps the 1880 to the early 1900s. They had simple headings such as 'Residence' and 'Bar' etc. Because I have an interest in old photos I discussed them with Bill Spicer. And as they sometimes say, 'The rest is History.'

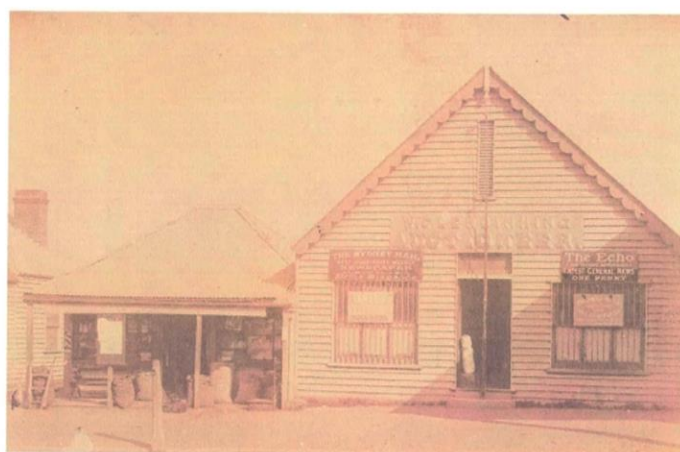
Bill began to investigate the location of each of the photos and its history with a little help from me. We planned to devote a page to each photo and when finished send the resulting book to the NSW Library so that they could add the history of each photo to their collection.

This was accomplished last week with the Society posting a copy to the Library and another being donated to the Society. It is not intended for publication at this stage because it is hoped to add a further forty odd photos and their history to produce a book which will be for publication.



On the left is a copy of the cover of the book and to the right is a sample page from the book. We look forward to launching the full book which will run to approximately one hundred pages towards the end of the year, conditions permitting.

24 W Clendinning – auctioneer. State Library NSW PXA 2177/24



The subject photo shows, on the left, W Clendinning's former store and on the right, a new store constructed for him. The buildings are situated on the western side of Bridge Street Muswellbrook between the Royal Hotel and the former Commercial Bank (now NAB).

William Clendinning was an auctioneer and storekeeper. He was born in the north of Ireland in 1835 and came to Muswellbrook in 1854 and after three years working at Rocky River and Meroo, settled in Muswellbrook as an auctioneer, storekeeper and general agent. He married in 1862³ and was father of one son and two daughters. He served as an alderman on the Municipal Council, elected Mayor, as well as playing an active part in establishing and running the School of Arts, the Upper Hunter P and A Association, the Prince of Wales Lodge of Freemasons and also a member of the Oddfellows society for many years.⁴

A summary of a land sale in the *Maitland Mercury* on 5 September 1889: 'The sale of town and suburban lands to-day was a great success. Mr. W. Clendinning wielded the hammer in splendid style, and the whole of the lots (87) were knocked down in two and a half hours. The total amount realized was £2890. The Department is to be congratulated on having entrusted the sale to a practical and experienced auctioneer.'

In later years Mr Clendinning operated a newsagency, hence the advertising signs on the building. In May 1898 Clendinning was appointed as a justice of the peace and in June 1898 sat on the bench for the first time.

Mr Clendinning died on 25 May 1901. He had been at work in his office in the week of his death. On his headstone is written, 'Erected by the people of Muswellbrook in recognition of many public services during 47 years residence.'

³ NSW BDM 1862/2500 Marriage. William Clendinning to Sarah Leonard at Muswellbrook.

⁴ John Turner, 1984, *Who Was Who In The Hunter Valley in 1888*. Hunter Valley Publications, Newcastle

The following was found by Bill Spicer while researching other material.

Jubilee Demonstration at Muswellbrook. (From our Muswellbrook Correspondent.)

The fiftieth anniversary of the accession of Her Gracious Majesty Queen Victoria to the throne of Great Britain, was celebrated in Muswellbrook...

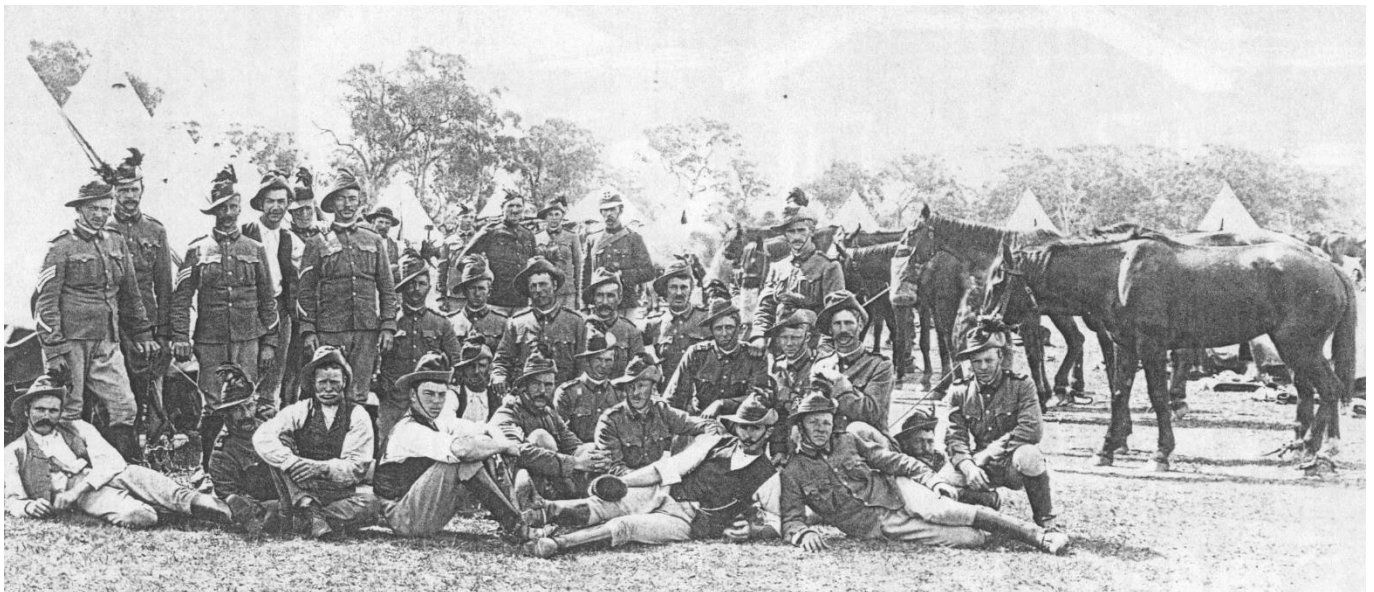
THE GREAT FETE,

A bright sunny morning ushered in the day of the great demonstration, and at an early hour vehicles of every description, conveying visitors of all ages and both sexes from all parts of the district, began to crowd into the town, while the townspeople gaily dressed in holiday attire might be seen proceeding on foot, some towards the cricket ground where the procession was to form, while others took up posts of observation all different places along the line of march, Gerald Park being the most favoured. Precisely at ten o'clock the bells of St. Albans Church were heard, inviting us to a short Thanksgiving Service which was conducted by the Rev. Canon White. Eleven o'clock saw the long procession formed on the cricket ground under the direction of the Mayor (Mr. S. J. Dowell), who acted as foot marshal, while Senior-sergeant Smith and Constable Cook on horse-back rendered invaluable aid in forming and keeping the procession in line. The teachers of the several day and Sunday schools, as also the clergymen of the various denominations, gave great assistance in marshalling and directing the children. Precisely at eleven the procession started, the Mayor leading, followed by the members of the Muswellbrook Brass Band, discoursing sweet music.

Next to the Band came the brothers and sisters of the Independent Order of Good Templars wearing their regalia, and then followed the children from the various schools in the town and district carrying flags and banners. About 400 youngsters marched, the lasses first and lads behind, the following being the schools chiefly represented: Muswellbrook Public School, Convent School, St. Albans' Sunday School, and the Public Schools at Aberdeen, Kayuga, Dunbar's Creek, Muscle Creek, and Rouchel.

The procession moved along Brook-street as far as St. Alban's parsonage, then through Hunter Terrace, past the Mayor's residence to Hill-street, along Hill-street to Bridge Street, and down Bridge-street to the Park entrance. Over the gateway of Gerald Park a triumphal arch had been erected, gaily decorated with flags and evergreens, and bearing the neatly-lettered inscription " God Save our Queen," the whole being surmounted by the royal monogram and crown and presenting a capital appearance. Through the Park the procession marched to the gate of the Show Ground, where another arch, profusely ornamented with evergreens, and embellished somewhat similarly to the first, met the eye. As the procession advanced along the Park, the crowds of spectators on both sides of the avenue fell in at a little distance behind the children and marched to the Show Ground. Here the members of the band proceeded to occupy their usual positions on the band stand, while the children were formed in an enclosed circle round the stand, which was also occupied by the gentlemen of the Executive Committee, and several ladies of the town and district who had contributed largely towards the success of the fete.

Mr. R. G D. Fitzgerald, M.L A., who occupied a prominent position on the stand, at the request of the Executive Committee, delivered an appropriate address to the assembled multitude, which, including children, at this time must have numbered over 1000 people, and which number increased as the afternoon wore on until, at one time there were fully 1500 people on the ground.



Troopers celebrating the Queen Victoria Jubilee

MSL&FHS Inc photo 2219.6