

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. 5 October 2021

Reopening

We are once again open on a Saturday morning from 9.30 to 12.30. In the coming months restrictions will be gradually eased. You will still be required to log in and log out and provide proof of vaccination. We will continue to have written registration for those who have difficulty with their phones.

We were able to hold a late Annual General Meeting and below is a list of the Executive. There are not many changes from the previous year. Sincere thanks to all for once again volunteering. Most people have already paid their fees but if you haven't they are listed below. Fees remain the same as last year.

Our New Executives for 2021/2022

President	Lionel Ahearn	Vice President	Helen Ellis
Secretary	Heather Meissner	Treasurer	Malcolm Rothe
Public Officer	Malcolm Rothe	Publicity Officers	Helen Ellis & Heather Meissner
Research Committee Coordinator	Garry Meissner		
Assistant Researchers	Eve Ellis, Mal Rothe, Margaret Dolahenty, Ted George, Ian Ellis		
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 Consultant	Rob Tickle		

Max Watters

A statue honouring local artist Max Watters OAM was unveiled in front of the Muswellbrook Art Centre on Wednesday, 20 October 2021 at 5.30pm.



Muswellbrook Mayor Rod Scholes and gallery Director Elissa Emerson were on hand to dedicate the statue in honour of Watters' contribution to the arts community in the Upper Hunter.

"Max lived his life for art, with art and through art and was, for the people of Muswellbrook, a mentor, benefactor and friend" Mr Scholes said.



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 noon 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>

A new bridge over Muscle Creek

From 1875 to 1956 Muswellbrook Showground was situated where Olympic Park is now. The main access to the showground was gained from the continuation of Sydney Street high-level bridge over Muscle Creek leading to Gerald Park (near the railway line). Leaving the roadway between the bridge and the railway line, the community passed through the R. Thom. Keys memorial gates erected in 1913.

When the subway was completed in 1928, the Railway Commissioners wanted to close access to the bridge. This met with great protest from the Municipal Council and the local community. A compromise was reached whereby the Commissioners would allow access in emergencies, such as flooding, and for the two to three days of the annual show.

About 1947 the Council became aware of the dangerous condition of the bridge. A plan was considered to build a low-level bridge over the creek, near the baths, with access from both Lorne Street and Sydney Street.

The plan required Council gaining ownership of land to create a street, later named Haydon Street. This would allow the community to gain access from Lorne Street and Sydney Street over the new bridge. The road leading to the new bridge was later named Wilkinson Avenue.



Original low-level bridge over Muscle Creek. Photo courtesy Mrs Bev. Goode.

A new bridge

Council proceeded to build the lower-level bridge which was completed in 1947 and to construct the street between Lorne Street and Sydney Street, with access over the bridge to Gerald Park. A concrete high-level bridge downstream from the low-level bridge was erected 1972.



Bridge over Muscle Creek in Wilkinson Avenue Circa 1972 ¹

The bridge forms part of Olympic Avenue later re-named Wilkinson Avenue.

¹ Muswellbrook Shire Council Collection 1415



Original bridge abutment (centre) and railing 1972 bridge (right). Bill Spicer photo

Haydon Street and Wilkinson Avenue

A local resident Brian Wilkinson had competed in swimming at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. The Council sought his concurrence in July 1957 to have an avenue, named for him. This road started at the swimming pool Car Park then Olympic Avenue, to the new Baths dressing Shed and continued behind the bowling club to rejoin Olympic Avenue. Mr. Wilkinson was pleased to accept the honour. This was the original Wilkinson Avenue which has now disappeared.

After the construction of the high-level concrete bridge over Muscle Creek in 1972, Council resolved to name the road from Hayden Street to the main gate at Olympic Park, Wilkinson Avenue.

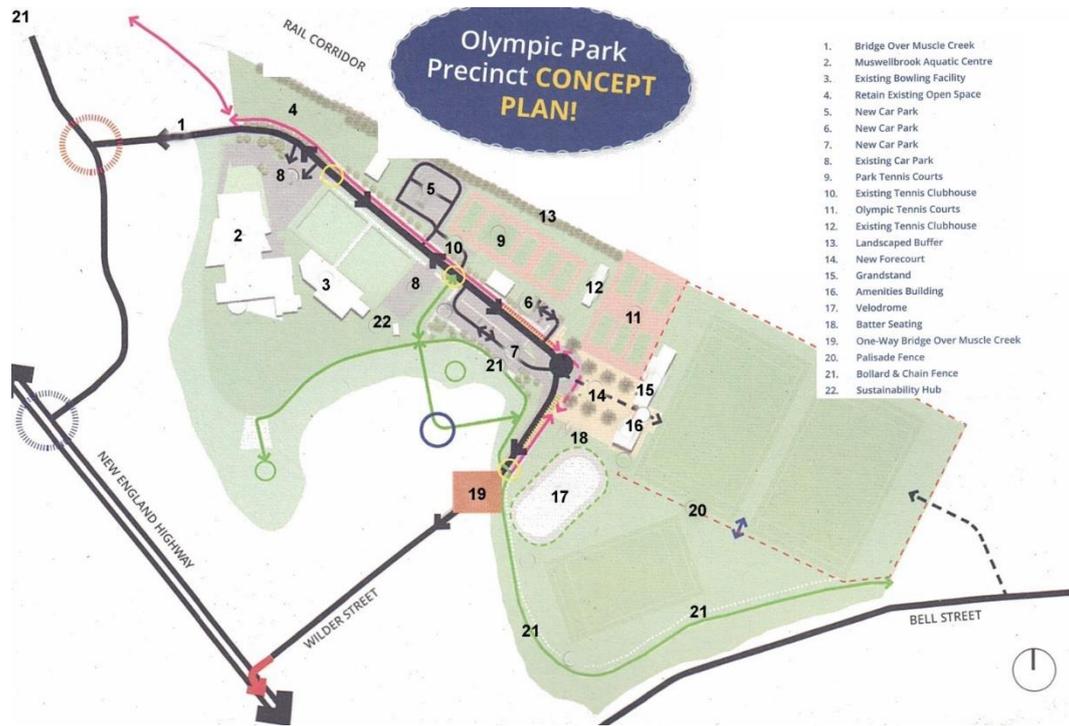
The Council rejected the Town Clerk's suggestion of Olympic Way or Fitzgerald Way. After the usual advertisements in the local press did not prompt any objections the formalities resulted in Wilkinson Avenue and Hayden Street being gazetted on the 17 April 1973.



Wilkinson Street bridge from Muscle Creek. Bill Spicer photo

Olympic Park Precinct and Another New Bridge

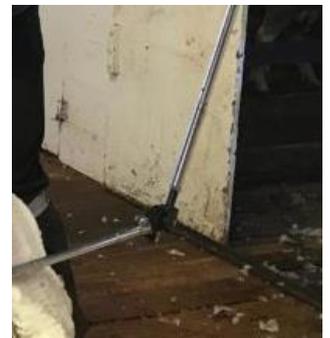
Like most of you I recently received a copy of the Muswellbrook Shire Council Community News for Spring 2021. It reminded me of the above article written by Bill Spicer in March 2021. It sets out the plans for the Olympic Park Precinct which includes another new bridge over Muscle Creek to Wilder Street.



Campbell's Clock



This photo cropped from a Muswellbrook Council photo reminded me of a conversation I had with Jeff Wolfgang. He explained to me how the clock was wound. Apparently a hole was drilled through the brick wall and a rod was attached to another long rod which travelled up to the clock using an elbow from a shearing stand. This rod at a 45 degree angle can be clearly seen. A handle was attached inside when the clock needed winding. Jeff commented that he was given permission on one occasion to wind the clock.



Shearing elbow as seen just outside wall

Clock showing winding rod at 45 degree angle.
Cropped from Muswellbrook Council photo 0009



Congratulations

The members of the Muswellbrook Historical Society wish to congratulate Brian & Wendy Dever (nee Mitchell) on the occasion of their 60th Wedding Anniversary on 30 September 2021.

They were married at St Lukes, Scone on 30 September 1961