

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. 6 December 2020

Book Launch

On Saturday, 5th December the Society held the launch of three new publications. They were 'Through the Lens', a study of approximately 100 photos from the period between 1884 and 1894, 'Little Bits of History', a collection of 26 stories most of which have appeared in the Society Newsletters over the years and 'Cultivation Allotment 8', a study of an allotment set aside in the early days of the town and its history through the years,

Once again we are indebted to the hardworking members who give of their time and effort to make our events such a success. Special thanks to Heather for her organisation and recording of orders and to Garry Meissner for setting up.



Social distancing being observed

Christmas Luncheon

This year it was decided to hold our Christmas get together at the Seminar Room on Saturday, 12th December. The members excelled themselves with the variety and quantity of food available. While the numbers were down slightly on previous years the enjoyment displayed could not have been better.



An excellent venue and a great meal



Finger licking good



Camera shootout at ten paces

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>

Muswellbrook St James Younger Set 'Mock Wedding' Entertainment

Local residents were agreeably surprised while visitors from other centres were unstinted in their praise as to the wonderful performance staged by members of the St James Younger Set when they were seen to advantage in an entertainment arranged for a two-fold purpose. Firstly as a surprise to Rev. Father Flannagan, who established the Club, and secondly to raise funds for the annual Convent Cabaret.

Announcement that something unusual was to be enacted had aroused considerable interest, and accordingly, the school room was filled to capacity as the big hour approached, and Rev. Father Flannagan, who had been kept in the dark, was surprised and pleased on his arrival to see such an animated gathering.

Eager eyes sought the entrance as the various guest were announced, and rounds of applause greeted the various characters. Naturally, the 'Bride and Bridegroom' were the centre of interest, and as they wended their way in blissful happiness through the thronged room, they were enthusiastically received.

Maitland diocese has been renowned for the dignity of its bishops, and on this occasion Right Rev. Dr. Michael O'Lynn was no exception to the rule and his arrival was the cause of rapturous enthusiasm. At the conclusion of this admirable entertainment, the Bishop called on the President of the Younger Set to preside over a surprise function to farewell Rev. Father Flannagan.¹



THE PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS IN THE MUSWELLBROOK ST. JAMES YOUNGER SET 'MOCK WEDDING' ENTERTAINMENT.

Reading from left to right: Mr J Moffat (Best Man), Miss Muriel Castledine (Bridesmaid), Mr Noel Quinn (Bridegroom), Miss Mary Torpey (Bride), Miss Belle Fairweather (Bridesmaid), Mr Ken Sainsbury (Groomsman)

LARCENY. -William O'Brien, a poor, miserable looking scarecrow, was brought up in custody, charged with stealing a swag containing the twenty years' gathering of his mate, a Norwegian, named Neil August Clarsen. The usual defence was set up by the prisoner, namely, that his mate having got on the "tear," he (prisoner) out of pure charity and "mately" feeling, had taken charge of the swag which he was carrying to Scone when arrested.

His mate had arranged to go to Scone with him, but went on the drunk instead, and he (prisoner) thought the correct thing under the circumstances was to hump the "bluey" along, lest it might fall into other less honest hands. There was an air of probability about William's story, and he consequently got off with seven days' gaol.²

This report was noticed by Bill Spicer while researching. Perhaps the prisoner was not too unhappy with a dry bed and seven days food.

¹ The Newcastle and Maitland Catholic Sentinel, October 1, 1938

² Report on proceeding of local police court at Muswellbrook in *Maitland Mercury* Saturday 7 September 1889

New Rail Bridges on Ulan Line

Garry Meissner and I visited the site of the work being carried out on the Ulan rail line at the invitation of the ARTC. The three bridges to be replaced are the southern bridge over the subway, the bridge over Muscle Creek and the bridge over the Hunter River. The bridge over the subway will be replaced in its present position. Many of the pylons have already been installed as has the supporting barriers for the earth work.



Steel barriers to prevent further slippage of earthworks at the subway. Beautification work will be undertaken on Completion.



Pylons in place west of the subway. These are double pylons with an interior core pylon for safety if a train was to come off the tracks.

The bridges over Muscle Creek and the Hunter River will be replaced with one long bridge. The sections will be cast then fitted together and gradually pushed out over Muscle Creek and then the Hunter River. Preparations of the area has been completed and the pylons will be installed shortly.



Photo on left

This flat area has been prepared for the assembly of the sections. The weight of the sections still on the bank must always exceed the weight of the sections that have been pushed out over Muscle Creek and the River.

The crane is used in helping to dig through the top layers of the soil and then the pylon is lowered into the hole and driven deep into the bedrock.

Photo below

Another pylon casing arrives ready to be hammered into place. Behind the truck can be seen the reinforcement steel which will be placed inside the casing.

Work on sinking the pylons has been temporarily suspended for the breeding season of the flying fox colony that exists along the Hunter River near where the bridge is to be built.

The new bridge over the river will be slightly to the north of the present bridges.

To obtain access to the area between Muscle Creek and the Hunter River so that pylons and abutments can be built it is necessary to build a bridge over Muscle Creek. Fortunately, a temporary bridge was obtained. As sections are pushed out over the creek more sections are bolted onto the back.



The temporary bridge already beginning to extend over Muscle Creek.

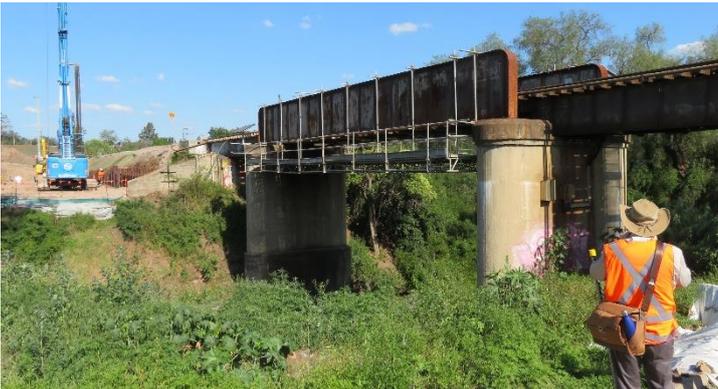


One of the bearings on which the bridge rolls. One under bridge behind on abutment behind flag.



This photo shows the bridge out over Muscle Creek heading towards the abutment already formed on the other side. At the present time all access to the other side is through the caravan park. This will not be possible when the pylons and abutments are being constructed for the permanent bridge. All the concrete and steel for the huge sections will be trucked in through the site in Lower Williams Street.

This site was the Caltex Depot and before that the site of Muswellbrook Superior School.



The present bridge over Muscle Creek with the prepared area for the new bridge on the left. This is the area shown above from the other side.



The present bridge over the Hunter River. A train driver noticed that steel work in the top section of the bridge had cracked.

A temporary fix was to bolt a plate over the crack so trains could continue to cross. All four corners were plated.

This deterioration plus the subsidence at the bridge over the subway led to the need to replace these bridges as quickly as possible.

One of the plates appears as the blue section in the top centre of the photo.



Thiess Brothers Staff

The following photo was donated to us by Terry Gill. He found it among some material that was to be thrown out. It is a marvellous record of a time when Thiess Brothers was an important firm situated in Muswellbrook and shows the size of the staff employed.

