

# NEWSLETTER

MUSWELLBROOK SHIRE LOCAL & FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC (Founded 11<sup>th</sup> June 1958)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society

ABN 34611778680

PO Box 450 Muswellbrook NSW 2333

Editor Lionel Ahearn

No. 1 February 2021

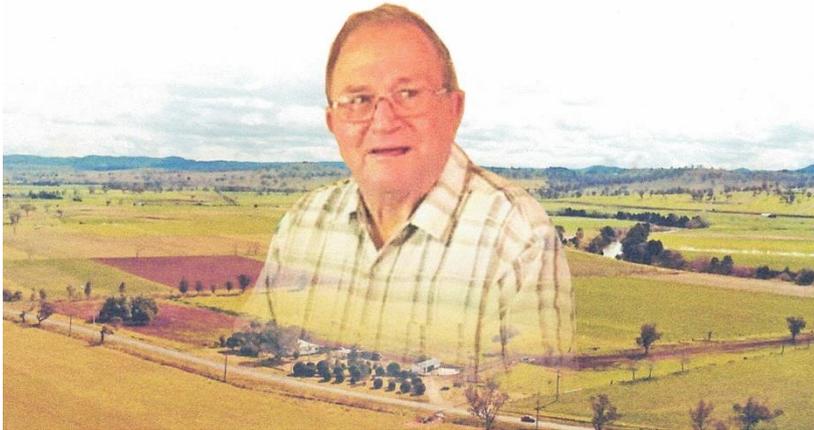
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## What's Happening

The Society continues to open each Saturday morning with quite a few of our members dropping in to say hello. We are still recording details and encouraging the use of sanitising hand spray. It is encouraging to note that we are still selling a selection of books. Plans for excursions this year are still on hold but as things improve we will again plan for some more visits to historical sites.

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### Vale Colin Lindsay Ellis



The members of the Society were saddened by the passing on 21<sup>st</sup> December 2020 of long term member Col Ellis. Each Saturday morning Col would bring Helen down to the Society and stay for a chat. At lunchtime Col would return to see Helen safely home. He was a font of knowledge on the local district, especially the early years. Due to the restrictions a private funeral was held for Col. On the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2021 a Memorial Service was held at the Muswellbrook RSL which was attended by a large number of his friends and family. A great number of Historical Society members were delighted to also be able to attend.



The story of Col's life as presented at his Memorial Service was a true snapshot of life in the Upper Hunter. It illustrated the good times and the hard times and the love of family. His devotion to Helen and family was obvious from the tales related as was his joy in playing cricket, tennis and practical jokes.



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## 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](mailto: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>

## The Rise and Decline of Dairy Farming in the Upper Hunter

This article is a brief look at the Dairy Industry in the Upper Hunter and concentrates on three Dairy Factories. These were at Aberdeen, Denman and Muswellbrook Factories. From small beginnings with farmers hand milking a limited number of cows the industry grew until it was one of the major industries and employers of the district. The Soldier Settlement Scheme after World War 1 led to a rapid increase in the volume of milk produced. This also led to dairy farmers supplying milk rather than cream to the factories.

In the 1950s there were believed to be over one thousand dairy farms in the Upper Hunter area. This changed with increased mechanisation. 'Eight years ago (2010) there were only one hundred and fifty farmers left. Hunter Valley Dairy Development Group Chairman Scott Wheatley said that had shrunk to around fifty and more were leaving.'<sup>1</sup>

### Aberdeen Butter Factory

The butter factory was a successful enterprise of the A C & F Company (The Aberdeen Meatworks) set up to keep a regular income source because the meatworks was a seasonal operation. It was built in McAdam Street, Aberdeen just past Honeymoon Lane and commenced operation on 4<sup>th</sup> November 1898. The separated milk by-product was pumped over the hill for feed in the piggery. The butter was sold on both the domestic and export markets.

They produced three grades with the first grade, Thistle Brand, wrapped in 1 lb and ½ lb blocks. The factory produced between 25 and 30 tons of butter weekly. The factory closed sixty four years later in 1963.<sup>2</sup>

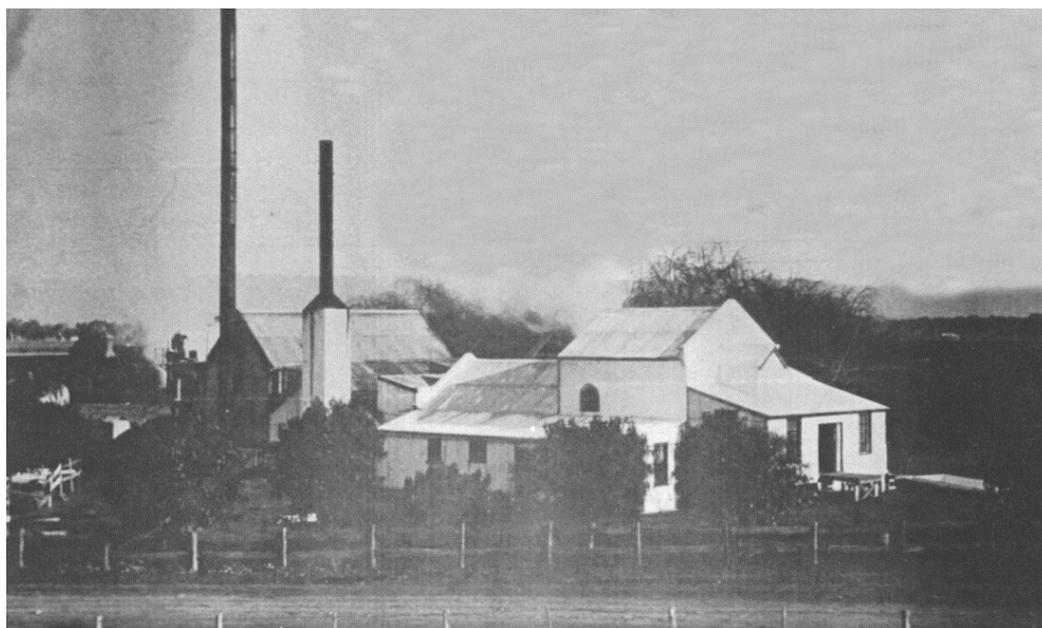


Milk Truck from Aberdeen A C & F Co Dairy Factory MSL&FHS photo D1064



Ron Vaughan tells us that the logo was designed by his uncle, Doug Vaughan and was used on the butter boxes and the paper used to wrap the blocks of butter.

Personal Note. The butter paper was never wasted as Mum always used it to line the cake tins.



Aberdeen A C & F Co Dairy Factory MSL&FHS photo in folder F145 courtesy John Knight

<sup>1</sup> [abc.net.au/news](http://abc.net.au/news) 2018-03-11 interview with Scott Wheatley

<sup>2</sup> Upper Hunter Museum of Rural Life Newsletter February 2013

## Denman Butter Factory



Denman Cream Depot & delivery carts MSL&FHS photo D1413

The output of butter in the first year was 153 tons, which increased to 767 tons by 1922. This increase was due to a big expansion in the local industry because of the success of the Soldier Settlement Scheme started after WW1.

The intensive farming brought about the need for a new factory to handle the increased products. A start was made in the erection of a new establishment in 1922. It was located in Kenilworth Street beside the rail link. The new factory cost \$25000 and is believed to have commenced processing around 1925.



Denman First Butter Factory in Jerdon Street MSL&FHS photo D3187

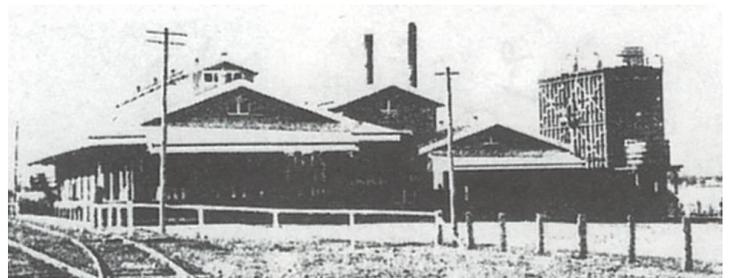
The dairy farming industry from 1900 to the 1970s was Denman and districts most important industry. In recent years that has changed dramatically as three out of four dairy farmers have left the industry.<sup>3</sup>



Mangoola Station with cans waiting for the train MSL&FHS photo 1946

The original factory was purchased by the Masonic Lodge in 1928. In 1933 due to the effect of the great Depression an amalgamation with the Co-op at Hexham took place.

This factory was demolished in 1982.



Denman Second Butter Factory in Kenilworth Street next to Railway Line Photo courtesy Ray Barry



The pre-war line up of carriers at the Denman Butter Factory MSL&FHS photo 0064

Believed to have been taken on the first day milk was delivered to the factory instead of cream.

<sup>3</sup> Centenary Times 1983 page 23 produced for the Centenary of Denman Public School

## Muswellbrook Co-operative Dairy Company Ltd

The Butter Factory was built in 1919 with the establishment of the Muswellbrook Co-operative Dairy Company on the corner of New England Highway and Aberdeen St. The factory was extended in 1926 to include the handling of bulk milk for the city trade. This was discontinued after a short time and full butter production resumed. After having been closed for some time the factory was hurriedly reopened in 1941 to again receive liquid milk for city markets. As part of the Hunter Valley Dairy Co-operative the factory operated until 1953.



Muswellbrook Co-operative Dairy Company milk collection vehicle MSL&FHS photo D1063



It became a garage and operated for many years. The buildings were converted into a veterinary hospital in 1986-87.

Unloading dock at original Muswellbrook Dairy Co-operative Factory in Aberdeen Street MSL&FHS photo D1086



The Muswellbrook Oak Factory. Photo from the Hunter Valley Dairy Co Pty Ltd centenary publication December 1953

The Muswellbrook factory was designed by the Hunter Valley Co-operative Dairy Company to meet the greatly increasing milk production from the Upper Hunter. Construction of the factory commenced in 1945 and continued through to 1953 and included milk treatment sections, condensing room, drying room, butter room, refrigeration, boilers, laboratory and an employee's amenities block. Production of dairy products, in particular powdered milk, continued at the factory until June 1994 when, as a division of Australian Co-operative Foods Ltd, operation ceased. Another company leased/purchased the area and utilising much of the stainless steel equipment the factory area was converted to wine production.<sup>4</sup>



Milk is weighed



Recorded for dairy farmer



Milk is tested.

Photos from MSL&FH Society collection Photos 2496.2, 2496.3, 2946.4

<sup>4</sup> Muswellbrook Heritage Study Inventory 1996, Oak Milk Factory Muswellbrook