

# 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. 4 August 2022

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## Our New Executive for 2022/2023

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

On behalf of all the members of our Society I wish to acknowledge Mal Rothe's long and dedicated service beginning in 1999 and included I believe sixteen years as the Treasurer as well as time spent as President and Vice President. A remarkable effort.

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## President's Report 2021-2022

Another year has passed and with the easing of restrictions it is pleasing to see local members again turning up on Saturday mornings. Hopefully the Society will soon be able to arrange some more outings to visit local historical sites.

The backbone of the Society is the executive. It is their continual attendance and dedicated performance that keeps us on track and growing. Special thanks to Heather and Garry Meissner, our two newest life members. Their daily attendance to Society tasks cannot be underestimated. Thanks also to our treasurer, Mal Rothe, who has kept us in the black and we again made a small profit for the year.

Eve Ellis and Lynda Neumann work quietly away in their corner but their work is invaluable. A huge amount of new material is added to our databases every week and the constant improvement of our records makes research so much easier.

In June we launched two new books, *South Muswellbrook – Section Two – Mill Street to Subway* by Rob Tickle and *Four More Cemeteries of the Upper Hunter* by Lionel Ahearn and Garry Meissner. They continue to sell together with many of the past publications. The Society Members as usual excelled themselves with morning tea. Also thanks to Heather, Eve and Lynda for organising and recording sales.

A special thanks again to Bill Spicer for donating his latest books of collected stories for research and borrowing. I managed to publish *Little Bits of History – Volume 2* during the lock down, which is a collection of stories from past newsletters with a few additions. Volume 3 is slowly coming together. Also I have completed another update of the Muswellbrook Cemetery. I have amalgamated the original survey and the two updates onto one U&SB stick. The database has been changed to Excel as not many people now have the Access program.

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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 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](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>

Thanks to the rostered members who turn up on Saturday morning to provide assistance to visitors. My thanks also to Margaret Dolahenty for her supply of photos of special occasions.

Lately we have been experiencing difficulty with some of our equipment. Our microfiche reader and the old photocopier are often temperamental. Our committee will be investigating how best to update the equipment.

Looking at the statistics on the material the Society has gathered shows what a valuable collection we have. There are:

More than 15 000 photos scanned, indexed and ready to print.

Nine local cemeteries have been recorded with over 9 000 photographs.

The full Muswellbrook Chronicle is available on microfiche and available for research.

An almost completed copy of the Hunter Valley News has been scanned and available for research.

We have 65 books for sale which we print and bind.

At last count we had 1 955 books in our library for research together with 12 filing cabinets of research files, newspaper clippings and research letters.

There are over 22 000 names on our family tree index and growing.

A proud record for a small country Historical Society.

On 28 May we were asked to help the Muswellbrook Coal Company with their family day to mark the closing of company after 115 years of operation. As usual the members of the Society got involved and we enjoyed mounting a display of material and selling their book. We thank them for their generous donation to the Society for our effort.

Thanks to Glenda Murray, Garry Meissner and others numerous displays were mounted in the library of our museum items. These have received very favourable comments. The last display mounted by Mr Anyerin Drury with the help of members was of great interest. As a collector of typewriters he was able to demonstrate the advances made and the unusual machines invented.

There are so many more members who contribute constantly and to all of them I thank you on behalf of the Society. Let us look forward to another successful and rewarding year.

Lionel Ahearn President

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## Memorial Gates

Over many years some impressive memorial gates have been erected within the Muswellbrook Shire. Below are shown some of those gates with a short history.

### Keys Memorial Gates

The gates were erected by the citizens of Muswellbrook in memory of Mr Richard Thom Keys. They were erected in 1914 at the entrance of Gerald Park leading to the showground. This was prior to construction of the subway, when traffic crossed Muscle Creek over a bridge, an extension of Sydney Street. The gates were located between the eastern bank of Muscle Creek and the Great Northern Railway line.



Richard Thom Keys Memorial Gates in original position

MSL&FHS photo F3.2

Following demolition of the bridge in 1949, a new bridge was constructed on Wilkinson Avenue and the gates were relocated to the entrance to Olympic Park. The showground was re-located to the current site in Maitland Street and the former showground became Olympic Park in 1956.

Gates at the entrance to Olympic Park  
MSL&FHS  
photo D0453



In 2022 the gates were again removed to allow for the construction of a new road and bridge across Muscle Creek to link up with Wilder Street. Hopefully the gates will be erected again as an entrance to Olympic Park.<sup>1</sup>

### Walter Barrett Memorial Gates

These gates were unveiled by the Mayor, Ald. R R Cousins M.B.E. at the official opening of the Muswellbrook Bowling Club in Fitzgerald Park on 18 August 1956. They were donated by F W Barrett in memory of his father Walter Barrett, a foundation member, a past president and one who played a big part in the civic and industrial life of the town.<sup>2</sup>

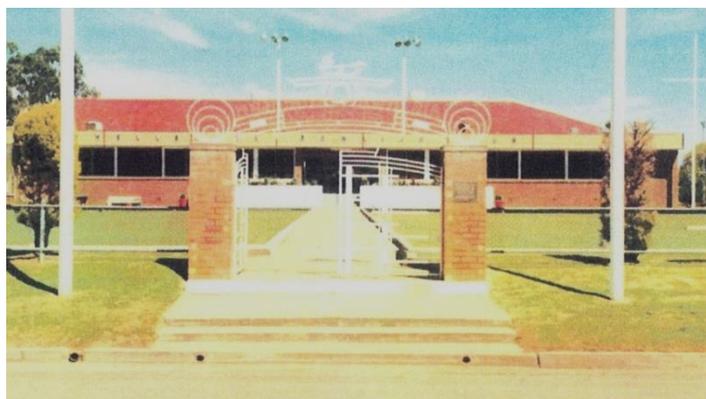


Photo from *Muswellbrook in Picture* by Bruce James page 51



Cropped from MSL&FHS photo D1051

These gates were removed when the Muswellbrook Bowling Club amalgamated with the RSL Club in 1995.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> From *Standing the Test of Time* page 92

<sup>2</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* 21 August 1956

## St Alban's Anglican Church Gates



These gates were erected in memory of Margaret Bassingthwaighte who passed away 7-8-45 under a bequest of her husband. The lamps were erected in memory of the Reverend Canon Cyril Francis, rector 1957 – 1970.

## Campbell's Gates



Campbell's Store in Bridge Street in 1870  
Cropped from MSL&FHS photo D0866



This photo shows the gates still in position in Sowerby Street outside Atherstone.

Photo cropped from MSL&FHS photo 1217.1

The above photo shows the gates to the south of the first section of Campbell's Store erected in Bridge Street. When a further section was erected to the south the gates were moved further south but later they were dismantled and moved to Atherstone, the residence of Mr John Watts Humphries, a principal of M Campbell & Co.

## Balmoral Gates

The gates right are positioned to the north of the Bridge Street entrance to the Muswellbrook RSL Club. The gates, donated to Muswellbrook R.S.L. Sub-Branch by the Bowman Family had originally been sited at the family residence, Balmoral.<sup>4</sup>

Balmoral gates MSL&FHS Photo D0540 supplied by Margaret Dolahenty



<sup>3</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* 11 March 2005

<sup>4</sup> *Muswellbrook Chronicle* Friday 29 April 1983

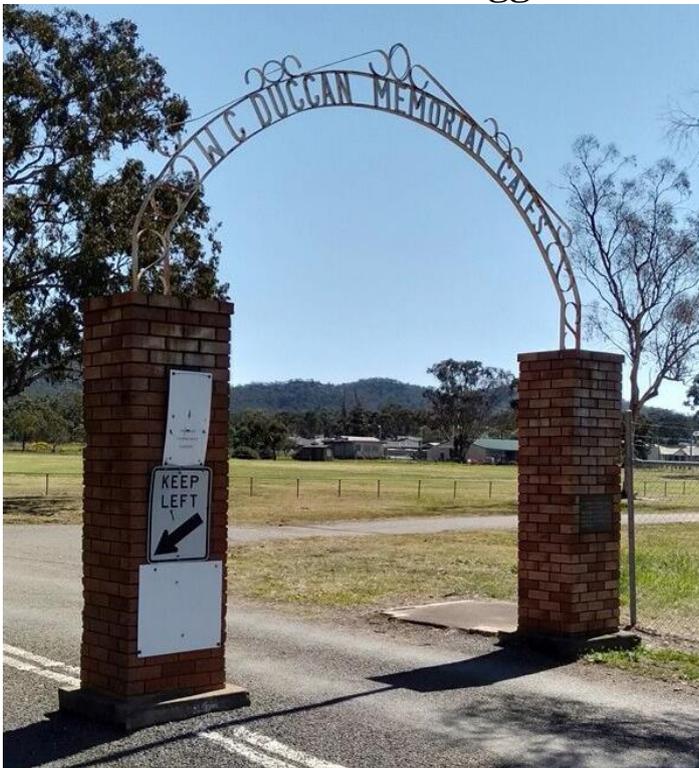


The Rev. Peter Ashley-Brown performing the dedication of the Ray Bowman Memorial Gates on Monday<sup>5</sup>



Balmoral Homestead MSL&FHS photo F3 supplied by Lionel Ahearn

## William G Duggan Memorial Gates Denman



The W G Duggan Memorial Gates were officially opened in 1963.

The late Mr Bill Duggan was associated with the Denman Rugby League Club for over 30 years, and at the time of his death was president and a life member of the Club. He had started his association with the Club as a player and was a member of the first Denman team to win a premiership.

The late Mr Duggan was the first person to receive life membership of Group 21.<sup>6</sup>



Photos by Lionel Ahearn

## New Member

The Society makes welcome our newest member Mrs Jane Thatcher of Muswellbrook.

<sup>5</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* 11 March 2005

<sup>6</sup> *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* 21 September 1977 page 11.

## The Baerami Flour Mill

This mill began operation in the early 1870s. It was an elaborate two story structure about twenty feet high and was equipped with elevators, augers and sieves. A considerable amount of cedar was used in the construction of its internal fittings. This flour mill was one of four in the district, the others being at Denman, Muswellbrook and Aberdeen.

In 1879 there were three hundred and twenty acres of wheat grown on *Baerami Station* yielding four thousand bushels of grain. Grain was also obtained from other local growers. A Harvest Home Festival was held each year in January or February at the conclusion of the grain harvest and up to two thousand people attended. (The boiler at the mill exploded in 1881. More on this story later).

The building containing the mill survived intact until it was destroyed in the huge 1957 bushfires.

Notes from Ian Ellis

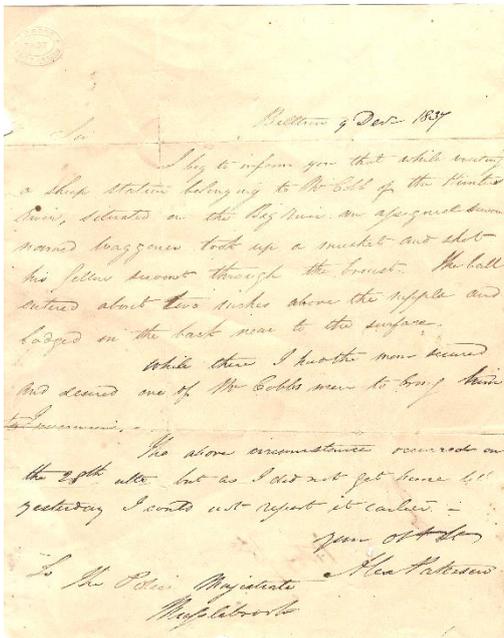


## Old Letter

While engaged in indexing new material into the Society's Research Index Eve Ellis came across what is possibly one of the earliest letters in our collection. With a little help it was deciphered and she typed up an easily readable copy.

The letter from Alex Paterson is shown below together with the printed version

Belltrees 9



December 1837

Sir,

I beg to inform you that while visiting a sheep station belonging to Mr Cobb of the Hunter River, situated on the Big River – an assigned servant named Waggoner, took up a musket and shot his fellow servant through the breast. The ball entered about two inches above the nipple and lodged in the back near to the surface.

While there I had the man secured and desired one of Mr Cobbs men to bring him to Invermein.

The above circumstance occurred on the 28<sup>th</sup> ulto. But as I did not get home till yesterday, I could not report it earlier.

Your Obt. St.  
Alex Paterson

To  
The Police Magistrate  
MUSWELLBROOK



The paper had been folded twice and sealed with red wax when sent. The document did not have any form of stamp but written on it was the cost of 5d.

Our thanks to Eve for her keen eye.

## Speedy Recovery

We all wish Jeanette Yonge a speedy and smooth recovery after her knee replacement. Hope to see you back at the Society soon.