

# 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. 5 October 2022

## Book Launch



On Saturday, 1<sup>st</sup> October the Society was delighted to sponsor the launch of the book *Kildonan & The Café* by Robert James Smith. A large audience almost filled the Library Seminar Rooms as Robert spoke of his research and the writing of the book which traced the history of the family from England, the settlement in Muswellbrook, the establishment of the Café, the war years and the naming of the house which still stands today.



An excellent attendance

Robert launches the book

This book is an important addition also to the Society's collection on the history of Muswellbrook.

**Our Society wishes to thank 2NM981 radio, Power FM, the ABC radio and Memories of Muswellbrook for their help in advertising the event.**

Contact our Secretary, Heather Meissner [mei2@bigpond.com](mailto:mei2@bigpond.com) to purchase the book.

## Another piece of history



Recently Heather Meissner, our secretary, received an email from Michael Brady, from Muswellbrook Shire Council. While working along Muscle Creek he discovered two posts as shown. He asked if the Society had any knowledge of their history. We didn't so on Saturday morning Garry Meissner, Ted George and I set out to investigate. We eventually spotted them from near the old railway roundhouse site across Muscle Creek. While there we also discovered another pair of posts just through the fence from where we were standing. We were really no wiser.

On returning to the Society's room we found Heather had the photo on the computer screen. With her were Denise Reynolds and Margaret Dolahenty. They had immediately identified the posts as the remains of a swinging bridge that had crossed Muscle Creek and on which they had played when young. Margaret was also able to supply the attached photo which shows Pauline Dolahenty (now Coleman) seated below portion of the bridge. I spoke to Bill Spicer about the bridge and he conducted some research and provided the following information.



Pauline Dolahenty mid 1940s

From Muswellbrook Chronicle,

Friday 9 October 1931, permission was granted to the Golf Club to erect the bridge.

On 19 October 1945 Council wished to purchase the bridge which was not being used at the time.

On 9 May 1950 tenders were called to demolish the bridge.

One description gave the location as 'between Railway Roundhouse and Golf Clubhouse.'

## 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>

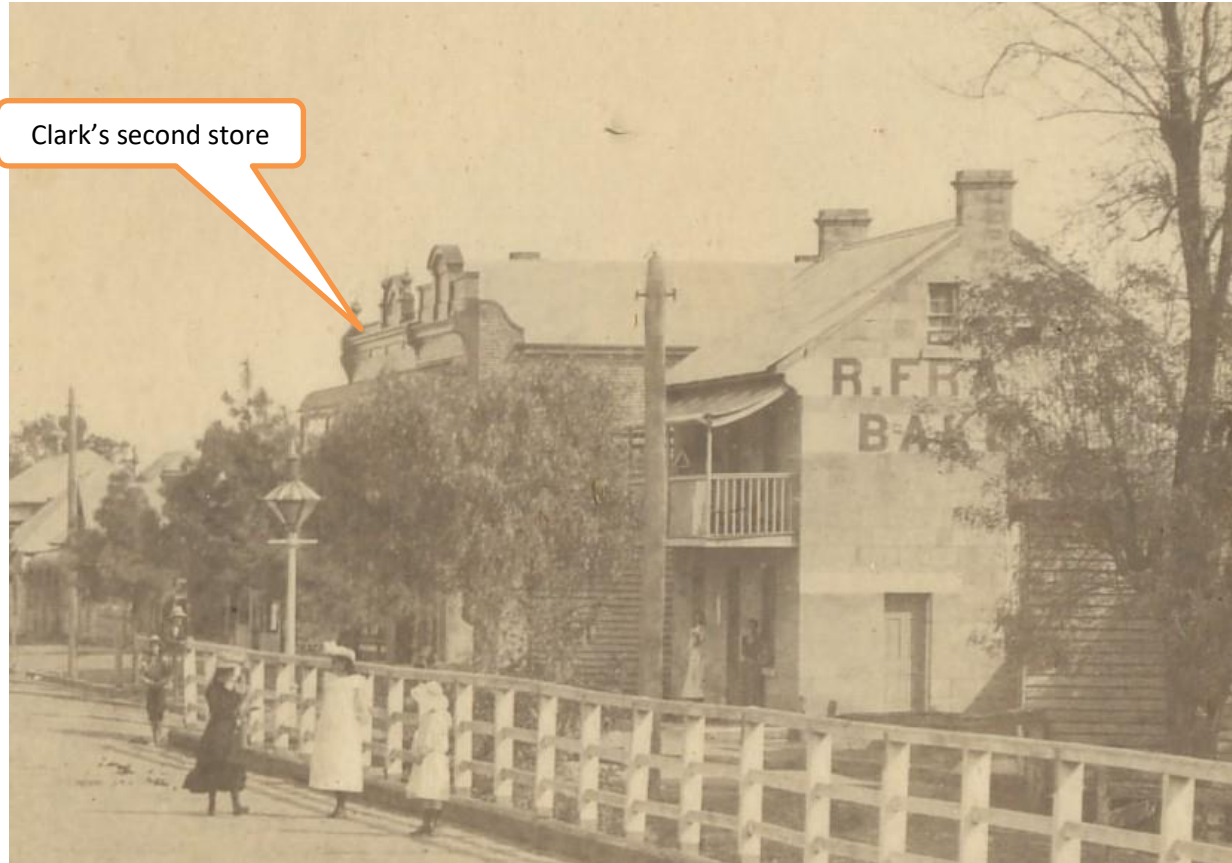
## Clark's Second Store

This store was in Sydney Street Muswellbrook. It was west of the building referred to in the Muswellbrook Heritage Town Walk as 'The Former Barber Shop'.

In an article published in *The Muswellbrook Chronicle* on Saturday 9 December 1911 and attributed to Edwin Howell, B.A. etc a description of the building is recorded:

*'With the energy and determination that all who know Mr Clark credit him with, very soon "a change came over the spirit of the dream," for ironmongery and tinware stocks were added to the humdrum grocery and a system of coupons whereby the thrifty housewife gains were established. Of a very enterprising disposition, our subject soon commenced to blend a tea which he sold at 1/5 per lb. adding an artistic cup and saucer to every packet of the tea.*

Cropped from MSL&FHS photo 0071.11



*With growing popularity, two years ago he opened a drapery and millinery business on premises<sup>1</sup> opposite the old established grocery shop which is one of the landmarks of Muswellbrook. These shops occupy a frontage of 40 feet to Sydney Street and possess two large show windows of plate glass, the left hand one being decked with millinery trimmed hats, silk blousing and summer skirtings which must engender a feeling of covetousness in those seeing them are not in a position to annex what appeals to their fancy. The other window is dressed with men's, women's, and children's clothing and requisites. The upper floor of the shop is devoted to a generous display of women's hats trimmed in all conceivable manners and fashions and so marked and ticketed that no intending purchaser need go empty handed away. One other of the rooms is stocked with crockery of all descriptions, qualities and prices, and the remaining room is given over to the tailoring department.*

The building was located on land described as lot 1 section 2 and measured 42 ½ feet frontage to Sydney Street.

The building was one of two buildings housing the stores of J T Clark. The other store was situated on the southern side of Sydney Street, directly opposite, and was the store occupied by Mr Malcolm Campbell from 1862 to 1870. Mr Clark ceased to operate the stores in 1915.

Thanks to Bill Spicer for this article

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<sup>1</sup> Building on lot 1, section 2 measuring 42 ½ feet.

Try my Cup Tea, at 1/5, with cup and saucer, 6lbs sugar, 1 tea cup and saucer ; the lot for 2 10.

**THE ONLY STORE THAT GIVES COUPONS.**

**Bargains in all Departments.**

**JOHN T. CLARK.**

**SYDNEY STREET, MUSWELLBROOK**

Advertisement Muswellbrook Chronicle



This photo shows Clark's store to the left of the building known as the barber's shop on the north western side of Sydney Street. It was cropped from a photo of traffic stopped while work was carried out near the Subway. This photo together with the previous one of the swinging bridge shows that sometimes what is in the background of a photo is also important. If anyone has a better photo of the store the Society would appreciate a copy to add to our collection.

## **Baerami Mishap.**

### **Boiler Explosion — Loss of Life**

On Thursday 10th. inst. word was brought to town of a terrible boiler explosion at Mr. Thos. Hungerford's flour mill at Baerami, near Denman. The news brought maintained that "some" men were killed, and others half dead; but thanks to Providence, it did not turn out so badly. As it is I am sorry to say one man, named Charles Hamilton, met an untimely end. He had been engaged in Muswellbrook, a week previously, to drive the engine, but it appears, from the evidence that he did not understand the work, and the second day at the engine he let the boiler get almost empty of water. The top of the engine got red hot, and of course, a fresh supply could not be added and no one was present to advise him he quietly waited till Messrs. Thos. and Robert Hungerford came to the mill. The latter of these gentlemen bade him "draw the fire" which he commenced to do; both Mr. Hungerfords went round the back of the engine and they hardly got there when the explosion took place. Thos. Hungerford was badly scalded on body, face and arms; Robert received nasty scalds on the hand and a man named Mount, who was present, was scalded rather severely on face and hands. I now give some of the evidence taken at the enquiry.

Thomas Epps Wilson stated: I am a duly qualified medical practitioner, residing and practicing at Merriwa; on 3rd instant I saw deceased, about 11 o'clock p.m.; he was then lying dead in a house on Mr. Hungerford's premises at "Baerami"; I examined the body, and found deceased had been dead some hours; the entire surface of the body was covered with deep scald wounds; there was also a fracture of all the ribs on the left side, and also contusions and lacerations of the scalp. Cause of death, shock from the above injuries. I saw the position of the boiler, also position in which deceased's body was found after explosion of said boiler. From the post mortem examination, I have no doubt the death was caused by the explosion. The injuries found on the body are as if caused by hot water or steam. Deceased appeared to be about 42 years of age.

Robert Hungerford stated: "I am the manager at Thos. Hungerford's mill at Baerami; I knew deceased, Charles Hamilton, whose body now lies at the mill. About half past 9 a.m. on the morning of the 3rd inst. I went to the mill. T. Mount, Thomas Hungerford (my brother), John Buckley jnr. and deceased were present; I had just returned from breakfast, and noticed that the top of the boiler was smoking; I turned the steam valve and found only dry steam escaped, showing that the water in the boiler was very low; I then ordered deceased to draw the fire, which he commenced to do, and my brother and I went round the back of the engine where a man named Mount was working, and immediately afterwards the explosion took place; I was standing four yards from the engine at the time and received some scalds on my left side; my brother was also severely scalded on the body, face and arms and Mount scalded on the face and hands; as soon as possible after the explosion I made my way out of the mill and went round to where the deceased had been standing; I saw him lying on his back, and groaning, about 10 yards from the firebox of the engine; I assisted to carry deceased into the shed where he was laid down; from the position where deceased was found, I have no doubt he was blown there by the force of the steam. The body presented a blackened and scalded appearance from head to foot; medical assistance was sent for at once; deceased died about two hours after the accident happened and was conscious, most of the time suffering great pain. Deceased had been in my brother's employ for about a week, but had been only driving the engine for two days, he did not understand his work; I examined the engine after the explosion and found one of the plates burst in, had the deceased understood his work the accident would not have happened, the deceased worked solely from my instructions; the engine was in thorough repair, having in the last week been overhauled by the maker and put in working order; before leaving the mill for breakfast I told deceased to watch the indicator and see that the water did not disappear; had he followed my instructions the explosion would not have happened."

Robert Bloomfield Hungerford stated; " I am general manager of my father's station, Baerami; I knew the deceased Charles Hamilton; I employed him on the 24th ult. to drive an engine described by me; he stated at the time he was competent from experience gained during a two year experience gained during a two year service as fireman on a steamer in the navy and it was on his representation that I employed him. His first employment was to assist the engineer in cleaning and repairing the engine; his employment as engine driver commenced on the morning of the 2nd. Inst. I was at the mill when the deceased drew my attention to the fact that the boiler contained more water than was necessary as shown by the indicator; I then told him to disconnect the hose that supplied the engine with water till the water in the boiler lowered to its proper level; after giving these instructions I left the mill; about half past 9 a.m. I was informed that an explosion of the boiler had occurred at the mill; I immediately went to the mill and found that the deceased had been scalded all over the body; I assisted to place deceased on a bed and applied remedies after which I went for medical assistance; on my return I found deceased dead; I recently had the boiler thoroughly overhauled by the maker who informed me the boiler was in good working order".

Three others gave testamentary evidence which tallied somewhat with the above. Edward White, Esq. J.P. who was the magistrate in attendance, found the deceased, Charles Hamilton, came to his death on 3rd. inst. through injuries received from an explosion of a steam engine boiler at Mr. Thomas Hungerford's flour mill at Baerami on 3rd. Inst.; no blame can be attached to any person but the deceased himself."

This steam engine in question seems to be an unlucky one. When it was being drawn across a bridge at Muswellbrook (I believe) it ran out of its course and jammed a man against the side railing, which nearly cost the man his death. Another time when the same engine was being drawn across the Goulburn River it got bogged. Steam was put on thinking to shift it and the end blew out and drove Mr. W. Dawson 6 yards against a soft sand bank, but besides a few scratches, escaped serious injury and last but not least, the above accident which has turned out fatal. The latest news respecting Thos. Hungerford Esq.'s state is satisfactory and I hope to be able to report before long on the convalescence of all the sufferers.<sup>2</sup>

Thanks to Ian Ellis for supplying this article

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Bev Gill

The Society sends their condolences to member Terry Gill & family on the sad passing of his Mother,  
Beverley (Bev)Gill. R.I.P. Bev

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<sup>2</sup> The Maitland Mercury Saturday 12 February 1881.