

# 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 2023

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## Elected Officials for 2023/2024

President	Lionel Ahearn	Vice President	Helen Ellis
Secretary	Heather Meissner	Treasurer	Rosemary Logue
Publicity Officers	Helen Ellis and Heather Meissner		
Research Committee Coordinator	Garry Meissner		
Assistant Researchers	Eve Ellis, Mal Rothe, Margaret Dolahenty, Ted George, Lionel Ahearn Rob Tickle on pre 1900 research		
Heritage Officer Coordinator	Garry Meissner with Rob Tickle as consultant		
Newsletter Editor	Lionel Ahearn		
Committee Members	Garry Meissner, Eve Ellis, Margaret Dolahenty, Ted George, Rosemary Logue		
Publication Consultant	Rob Tickle on books published by our Society		
Patrons	Mayor Steve Reynolds, Local State M P Dave Layzell & Tony McTaggart		

Public Officer                      Mal Rothe (Non elected position)

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### Happy Birthday Eve Ellis

Congratulations to Eve Ellis who celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday mid-August 2023. From all the members.



### Book Launch

Our sincere thanks to Kellie Scholes for launching the two latest Society publications on Saturday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September. They were *Little Bits of History – Volume 4* by Lionel Ahearn and *Gas Street Lamps* by Bill Spicer. Both books are available from the Society



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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>

## President's Report

Another year has passed with members again working hard to make our Society a success. Each Saturday morning we have many members drop in to enjoy the company and to help with research requests. A few members also turn up each Wednesday morning to help keep our records up to date. The work done by Eve Ellis, Lynda Neumann and Helen Milwain continually improves our records and adds to our databases. Our thanks also to members who continue to provide resources.

Through the year we have been able to launch a number of books. In October 2022 the Society sponsored the launch of the book *Kildonan and the Café* by Robert Smith. Copies are still available at the Society. In April we launched *The Other Four Corners* by Bill Spicer and *Little Bits of History – Volume 3* by myself. Each of these mornings was a great success and continued the tradition of recording local history which might otherwise have been lost. We also assisted with the printing of *The History of Muswellbrook Workers Club – 1952 to 2022* by Dennis Sheehan.

The Society has now replaced our main photocopier and the previous one has been moved down to the Society room at a cost of just over \$8000.00. Hopefully we are set for another seven or eight years. We are also beginning to receive donated material on USB sticks and this will probably increase in the future as more material is stored digitally. Our digital Family Tree is now approaching 25 000 names and has been valuable even to help with overseas enquiries.

Our executive continues to work tirelessly to keep the Society functioning. Heather Meissner, our Secretary's constant attention and dedication to running the Society, is invaluable. Thanks also to Garry Meissner, our chief Research Officer, who does so many more things as well. The purchasing of tea and coffee, biscuits, the vacuuming, the obtaining of stationery and numerous other small jobs should not go unnoticed.

Recently members of the Society were invited to visit the Broomfield property by Ngaire Baker, External Relations Manager, Mount Pleasant Operation. We had an enjoyable morning tea and were able to view and photograph the property buildings before they are finally removed. As it warms up we hope to again organise visits to more places of interest. Bring your thoughts to our meeting.

My special thanks to Bill Spicer who takes the time to visit with me to help with many tasks. His advice and knowledge helps me with many projects especially *Little Bits of History* and the Society Newsletters. Also thanks to Rob Tickle who checks and advises on publications as well as providing research information particularly from the pre 1900 period.

Thank you also to Rosemary Logue who took on the position of Treasurer this year and kept us fully informed and up to date. There are so many more members who have contributed and to all of you I say a big thank you on behalf of the whole Society.

Lionel Ahearn                      President

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### THRASHING {THRESHING} MACHINE

The inhabitants of the Upper Hunter are in great want of a portable thrashing machine, for in the present scarcity of labor it is extremely tedious to thrash out the grain by hand. It has been calculated that within thirty miles of Muswell Brook £700 might be earned this season. We throw this out as a hint well deserving the attention of any industrious man with a small capital. In fact we may, as a general rule, say to immigrants of all descriptions, get out of Sydney as soon as you possibly can; in Sydney you are not wanted, but in the interior, it hardly matters in what direction you go, you are sure of being able to obtain profitable employment.

*The Sydney Herald* Monday 23 December 1839

## Visit to Broomfield Property



Photo of Society members, neighbours and MACH Energy staff.

An invitation was extended to the members of the Society by Ngaire Baker on behalf of MACH Energy Mount Pleasant Operation to join them for morning tea at “Broomfield Station” on 20<sup>th</sup> July 2023 to look at the homestead and the surrounding sheds. A very interesting and enjoyable morning was had by all including the morning tea supplied by MACH Energy and a number of members.



The above shed was once used to house the horse drawn coaches and a small museum

I was particularly interested in the very large slab timber that can be seen in the accompanying photo. This timber would be of considerable age and the size and conditioner of the slabs indicates the durability of Australian hardwood timber. Also it is an indication of what was available in the district in early times.

Many years ago a member of the Upper Hunter Woodturners Inc used similar slabs to construct a large grandfather clock. The timber was resawn and the colour was magnificent.

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### New Members: -

We welcome two new members to the Society

Ms Carol Morgan, Tuncurry. NSW 2428

Joy Cumming, Chapel Hill. Brisbane. Qld



## 2023 and 1857

The condition of our roads today are the subject of much criticism with crowded traffic, numerous potholes, insufficient lanes and speeding vehicles. To those complainants, spare a thought for travellers of yesteryear.

THE NORTHERN ROADS. To the Editor of the Empire.

Sir-Having lately returned from a visit up a portion of the Great Northern Road, I hasten to lay before your readers an account of their present state, in the hope that the attention of the Government may be arrested thereby, and some efforts made by which this great thoroughfare may be made passable.

From Black Creek to Singleton there is a slight improvement; but as the mail passed through several paddocks I had not an opportunity of personally inspecting them, but from what I could glean it would not be safe to pass through the usual thoroughfare. Black Creek itself is in a miserable state to pass through; its sides precipitous and dangerous. A stone bridge is in course of erection, but when it will be finished no one can say.

Over the Hunter at Singleton a good bridge is absolutely necessary, as the stoppage to traffic when the river is up is becoming every day more serious, especially during the prevalence of the heavy floods with which the country has lately been visited. I believe, to an enterprising company, who would undertake the erection of a substantial bridge, it would be a profitable investment.

From Singleton to Muswellbrook the road is slightly better, owing to a harder soil; still some of the culverts very much need repairing, having been damaged by the incessant rains. The entrance to Glennie's Creek, also needs looking to.

From Muswellbrook to Scone you have to pass through the Hunter at a place called Aberdeen, often rendered impassable through floods. The banks on the Scone side are much washed away, and dangerous for vehicles to get out or in. A young man was lately drowned there by being washed off his horse; had there been a bridge or a punt in the place many valuable lives would no doubt have been spared. No doubt many more will yet meet with untimely deaths at this same place unless some measures are adopted: in fact, any other Government but ours would long ere this had the country in a safe state for traffic. But no. We seem to go along in the same jog-trot way that we have through the last half century, and "semper eadem" may well be written on the escutcheon of our adopted country.

From Scone to Murrurundi the road is a complete bog, and the shaking you receive is equal to any electrifying machine; however, it may be good for persons who are troubled with spinal complaints. Between Maitland and Murrurundi there must be at least from 100 to 150 heavily loaded teams, some of which have been six or eight weeks on the road, who cannot reach their destination, from the state of the roads and the absence of bridges. However the mail contractor has been enabled to carry on is a mystery to many, and though he has used every exertion to fulfil his contract, he has been mulcted for fines, & c., something like £278 I hear, which sum I think ought to be remitted to him considering the unusual weather he has had to contend against; and I am not alone in my opinion.

Trusting this long letter will have some effect on the part of the Government in leading them to make some increased effort towards rendering the roads passable.

I remain, Sir, your obedient servant. VIATOR

*The Empire Sydney* Friday 11 September 1857

Research and comments Bill Spicer. August 2023



### Jenny Wall

Condolences from the Society to Jeff Wolfgang & family on the passing of his wife & member, Jenny Wall - RIP Jenny.

### Paul Perkins

Members of the Society send their deepest sympathy to Judy and family on the passing of Paul Perkins, her husband, on 30<sup>th</sup> August. – RIP Paul

