

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. 5 October 2023

ACCIDENTS AT MUSWELLBROOK

Some interesting articles were brought to my attention which concerned the difficulties involved in crossing waterways in the days before bridges were installed. The first two articles were researched by Ted George and the third was part of a longer article by Bill Spicer. My thanks to both of them

On Tuesday, Benjamin Burns, a shepherd in the employ of Mr. T. S. Hall, was drowned, while attempting to cross Sandy Creek when it was flooded in consequence of the heavy rains. He desired to cross on account of a flock of sheep, which was in the charge of his daughter on the opposite side, as he feared that she might be damp and cold, and suffering from the wet. Had he waited an hour as he was advised to do, for the storm was breaking, the creek would have been easily fordable without danger. But he was impelled by natural affection, and a desire to serve the interests of his master, and he would not be persuaded. He got half across and was carried away and drowned. He leaves a large family, and his wife is near her confinement.

Maitland Mercury, 27 July 1869

LUCKY ESCAPE-FROM DROWNING. - INCIDENT AT McCULLY'S GAP.

While endeavouring to cross a flooded creek in a horse-drawn cart at McCully 's Gap on Tuesday last, two brothers, Messrs Max and Hunter Budden, had a narrow escape from drowning.

It is understood that when they were half way across the traffic culvert on the bed of the creek, the horse became frightened and wheeled around, thus running the cart over the edge of the culvert, and the swift volume of water washed the cart and horse several yards downstream before being caught on a rock. Just as the cart was about to turn over one of the brothers, Max, jumped clear of the cart, but Hunter Budden was not so fortunate. He became entangled in the reins and the cart rolled over several times before he was released by his brother and another youth, Athol Wilson. The young man suffered from shock, but otherwise was uninjured. The cart was wrecked.

Muswellbrook Chronicle 15th June 1945, page 2

McCULLY'S CROSSING MUSWELLBROOK

A young man, named William Coupland, residing at Overton and employed on Mr. Blunt's traction engine, had a very narrow escape from drowning on Saturday afternoon. It appears that on his way home from town he drove round by Ford Street with the intention of crossing the river near McCully's.

McCully's crossing Hunter River near Ford Street
Muswellbrook c1913. MSL&FH Society photo 0468.02



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 The Society also has a web presence thanks to Darrin Khan and Lionel Ahearn at <http://www.mbkhistorical.org>

While driving through the water his hat blew off, and in his efforts to recover it he drove into deep water, with the result that horse and vehicle went under. Coupland then, it is said, got on to the horse's back and subsequently seized the animal by the head. Encumbered with the harness and vehicle and the man, the horse went under and was drowned. Coupland by this time was nearly exhausted and had it not been for the timely arrival of Mr. F. Bates would probably have shared the fate of the horse. Mr. Bates threw the handle of his whip to Coupland, retaining hold of the lash, and the drowning man grasped it and was hauled out of the water in a very exhausted state. First aid was promptly rendered, and then the patient was taken to the Hospital, and after receiving attention from the medical officer and nurse was able to proceed to his home. Although there is a very deep hole where the accident occurred, with ordinary care the crossing is not a dangerous one, except when there is a slight rise in the river.

The narrow escape which he experienced will not readily be forgotten by Coupland. It is said that some 15 or 16 years ago a somewhat similar accident, resulting in the drowning of a horse, occurred at the same place. We almost omitted to mention that the sulky and horse were pulled out of the water by Messrs. A Gardner and Ab. Smith shortly after the accident.



Traction engine pulling multiple ploughs. MSL&FH Society photo 0502.5

Reproduced from article *Muswellbrook Chronicle* Wednesday 2 October 1907

Donated Photos

Recently the Society was donated a number of great photos by Joyann Swann. They were of Campbell's stores in Muswellbrook and Scone. While we had some of them in our collection these were in any cases larger and clearer. The photo below was unknown to us until the fantastic memory of Helen Ellis, one of our long serving Life Members came to the rescue. She remembered seeing it in a book titled *Scone Olympia Theatre -from rink to theatre* by Heather Ashford. It was titled *The First "Pull Together" Reunion of Staff of M Campbell & Co. Ltd, Scone 13 May 1930.* The Olympia Theatre stood at the junction of Kelly Street and Main Street in southern Scone. In later years it was a service station and is now occupied by Scone Toyota.



"Pull Together" dinner at Olympia Theatre, Scone 1930

From the above book a photo of the Olympia Theatre as it stood in the 1950s.

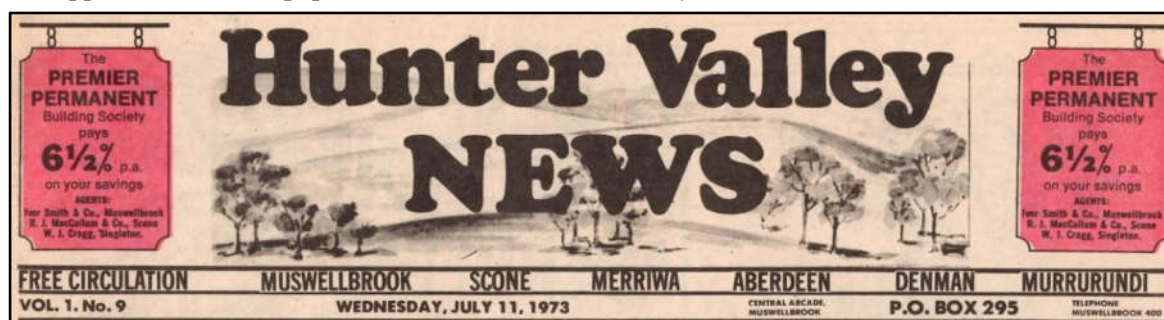


As shown earlier in this newsletter they are a valuable addition to our collection and add to our knowledge. The Society's collection continues to grow and we now have over 12 000 photos filed which include many hard copies and in the last few years many digital copies. We are also happy to scan photos for the collection if people wish to retain the originals. I believe our oldest photo so far is from 1851.

Hunter Valley News - Providing our local news for half a century. (By Bill Spicer)

The final edition of the *Hunter Valley News* was published on Wednesday 26 July 2023. This ended a news service which lasted just over 50 years. The free newspaper was published weekly and distributed throughout the Upper Hunter. The paper contained a mixture of news items, photographs and advertising.

The *Hunter Valley News* was founded by Wayne Logue in 1973. Volume 1 No 1 was issued on 16 May 1973. In June 1974, Upper Hunter Newspapers took over the *Hunter Valley News*.¹



Vol 1 No 9², dated 11 July 1973, was published by Wayne Arthur Logue for the Muswellbrook Newspaper Company, Central Arcade, Muswellbrook, and printed by The Tamworth Newspaper Co. Ltd., Brisbane Street Tamworth. This volume contained 16 pages and contained a good balance of news, photographs and advertisements.

'The Hunter Valley News has moved shop'...was the caption in an advertisement in the 'News' on Wednesday 2 January 1974. 'Don't look for us in the Central Arcade....our offices are now situated in a converted house at 89 Bridge Street Muswellbrook. That's next to the Plaza Motel.....'

A report in the Chronicle on 11 June 1974 has the headline; '*Chronicle*' buys Valley 'News'

An exchange of contracts on Friday afternoon finalised the acquisition of the 'Hunter Valley News' by the 'Muswellbrook Chronicle'. The first issue of the 'Hunter Valley News' under new management will appear this week. With the sale of the assets and goodwill of the 'News' to the 'Chronicle', the managing director of Barrington Publication, Mr Garry Burke has purchased a share holding in Upper Hunter Newspapers Pty. Ltd. and will sit on that company's board of directors.....

The consolidation of the newspapers in the Upper Hunter will lead to increased efficiency and economies necessary to meet spiralling costs and the threat posed by the presence of metropolitan newspaper interests in every Hunter Valley town



¹ From Muscle Brook to Muswellbrook

² Hunter Valley Newspaper kindly loaned by Muswellbrook Shire Local and Family History Society.

except Muswellbrook. The commercial printing interests of the 'News' will be absorbed into the 'Chronicle'. Photo right shows Muswellbrook Chronicle building in Bridge Street showing newspaper names on awning, - Mid 1980s³

The masthead of the *Hunter Valley News* on Wednesday 19 February 2014 includes 'proudly serving the Upper Hunter since 1972'. The paper is home delivered free, has a circulation of 18,170 and published weekly. It is delivered in Muswellbrook on Wednesdays.

The Hunter Valley News website⁴ states; The Hunter Valley News is a free publication.

Its largest townships are Muswellbrook, Singleton, Scone, Denman and Aberdeen. The region's main industries are coal mining, electricity generation, dairy, viticulture, beef and Lucerne production.

The primary tourist attractions are the historical townships, the wineries and two of the finest horse racing tracks in NSW, at Muswellbrook and Scone.

In March 2017 the 'News' was available, free, at business and visitor outlets in Muswellbrook, Denman and Scone.

In April 2020 it was revealed 'ACM has announced that its nondaily titles will close for the moment. These titles include...Muswellbrook Chronicle and Hunter Valley News.'⁵

'Hunter Valley News set to take a break' was the headline for a story in the *News* on Wednesday 8 April 2020: The Hunter Valley News will not go to print on April 15 and 22. Stories will continue to be posted online over that fortnight and the regular schedule will resume following those dates.

Hunter Valley New returns in print

After a break of thirteen months, a print edition of the Hunter Valley News appeared on Wednesday 5 May 2021. The front page has a big thank you - Yes, we're back. And delighted to be telling the stories of the Upper Hunter in print again. From Muswellbrook to Merriwa, to Scone, from Denman to Aberdeen and all points in between, we are proud to tell your stories. To the many loyal readers and subscribers who sent us messages of support during the suspension of the print edition, *thank you*.

On page 4 of the same edition is a story entitled 'How you can help by supporting the Hunter Valley News' The article states, in part: As you know, production of the newspaper temporarily ceased in April last year. That decision was not taken lightly but was forced upon us by the economic impact of government measures put in place to control the coronavirus pandemic.

An advertisement on 19 May 2021 p26 displayed ways producers of the *News* can assist the public.

The new editions of the 'News' are 16 pages in colour with similar stories and items those additions prior to the shutdown. Page 24 of the edition lists various locations where papers are available.

Electronic versions of the *Hunter Valley News* are available for viewing on the following website: eeditionaustcommunitymedia.com.au/publications/HVNE

In the final edition of the *News* readers were advised 'Through the *Singleton Argus* we will continue to cover stories that matter on the Hunter Valley; p5



Valerie May Ellis

Condolences from the Society to Ian Ellis and family on the passing of his wife & member.

R. I. P. Valerie

New Members

The Society welcomes two new members, Courtney Collins, Kalang NSW and Pamela Beatie, Buxton NSW

³ Muswellbrook Shire Local and Family History Society photo 2275-41

⁴ <http://www.huntervalleynews.net.au/about-us/> Accessed 22 February 2014

⁵ Newsagencyblog.com.au 15 April 2020. Mark Fletcher