

# 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. 6 December 2023

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## OFFICIAL OPENING OF DENMAN & DISTRICT HERITAGE VILLAGE



Photo from official invitation

The above building was officially opened with Jeff Wolfgang and young members of his family cutting the ribbon before a large gathering on 24 November 2023. Numerous members of our Society made the trip to Denman and stayed to view the wonderful array of items already in place and to enjoy a marvellous afternoon tea.



Cutting the ribbon. L Ahearn photos

Jeff's vast knowledge of the hundreds of items is astounding. They are however still only a small part of his lifelong collection. Many of the items are from the early large properties which dominated the district in earlier times.

Jeff standing before a large wool press which was used in the days when sheep dominated the agricultural industry of the district. The building also owes its completion to the generous donations from the many mines of the district and local volunteers.



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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>

## Poetry

While doing some research recently I came across a file in which there were some pieces of poetry written by locals. The one about the *Beer Truck Crash* I first heard when recited by Kerry McIntosh at a Society Function and was written by Bill Yates. *The Brook When We Were Kids* I had heard in pieces over time. Here they are in full.

### MUSWELLBROOK BEER TRUCK CRASH

#### (Beer Bludgers of The Brook

T'was the Spring of '76' an excellent vintage year,  
That the truck rolled at Eatons's Pub and flooded the town with beer.  
To the truckie it was do or die, creditors at his heels,  
He'd set his face to Queensland on his mortgaged set of wheels.

Loaded to the gunwales, way over the plimsoll line,  
Until he zeroed in on Eaton's all was going fine.  
Thirty tons of KB lager all in the biggest cans,  
Beer enough to quench the thirst of a million footie fans.

He'd dodged the inspectors and missed the Highway Patrol,  
But his dice was ready loaded and he selected for the role  
of Muswellbrook's great benefactor, a Santa Claus of sorts,  
As he tooted his juggernaut along, lost in random thoughts.

I'll clear my debts and buy me truck and have a bit to spare,  
But the fates looked on with knowing smile for he was almost there.  
To that sloped abomination, that apology for a street,  
Nemesis was approaching and here the twain would meet.

The trailer tilted slightly, he gave the steering wheel a twitch,  
All hell broke loose as with a shriek she went sideways to the ditch.  
Gone now the dreams of freedom, the healing of his woes,  
As midst the noise of popping cans, beer fumes assaulted his nose.

The word went out, an accident, the whole town was agog.  
It wasn't blood or oil stains the magic word was grog.  
They assembled in the hundreds, then some began to mutter,  
The drivers right, the truck is stuffed but just look in the gutter.

In amber pools the beer it lay then converging to a stream,  
It trickled through the gratings, a dypso's dying dream.  
A snivelling kid that started it, he pinched a random can.  
Let's at 'em someone yelled and then the rush began.

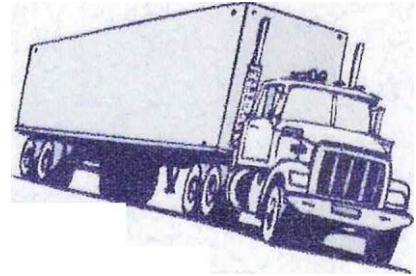
Some grabbed them by the armful, others by the case.  
The rights and wrongs weren't considered, it all became a race.  
To salvage the golden nectar and all worked with a will,  
There were boxes, barrows, car boots and garbage bins to fill.

The bar was clear in Eatons, many an untouched glass.  
Their owner outside drinking cans and pissing on the grass.  
The police patrol truck arrived, some order to restore?  
Restore my arse, you must be mad, we're coming back for more!

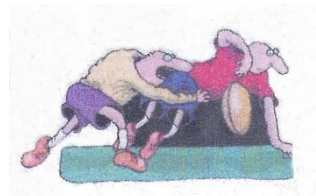
The Long arm of the law with casual practiced ease  
Carefully removed the cans in ones and twos and threes,  
And stocked them in their cars, the paddy wagon too.  
Don't touch unbroken boxes was the cry and then a storm of cardboard flew

So easy just to grab a box and with a handy twist,  
It soon became a broken case its contents not to be missed.  
Frantic now the action, the load was going fast,  
Men and women, kids and dogs all keen to get the last.

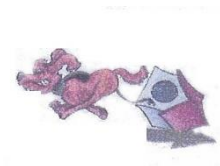
So the empty truck lay in the dust a great primeval beast  
While all around the people stood, vultures at a feast.  
That evening at the pictures kids with leering smiles,  
Spent the intermission rolling empties down the aisles.



Came the Sunday morning and a game of league in force,  
Patrons wondered at the players as they weaved a drunken course.  
Some hollowed "it's a stew" while others yelled "you beaut,"  
And scattered round the benchers were the "Skins of the stolen fruit".



The Local dogs had joined the throng of drinkers at the "well".  
Some couldn't lift their legs to piss and lost their sense of smell.  
One angry cur, til now a craven canine clown,  
Filled up on Tooths good brown ale and took on half the town.



We've had our share of highway wrecks, loads scattered in the tar,  
There's been Twisties, Sweet Corn, Rinso and Hoadley Peanut bars.  
But the sweetest crash of all, though much remains untold,  
Was the day the thirty tonner flipped and spilled the cold golds.

Life is such a gamble each man his values keep,  
Some are here as shepherds, and some are just the sheep.  
When St Peter scans the faces and writes the names down in his book,  
He'll Sort Out all the bastards that pinched the beer cans at the Brook.

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## THE BROOK WHEN WE WERE KIDS

We bought the broken biscuits at Campbells corner store,  
The bread at the subway, near homes that had two floors,  
John Foley had a big shop, with lots of things to sell,  
Hornery sold the petrol, garage that pumped out Shell,  
The Powell's had the hotel, Allan's the drapery,  
Smith dealt in leather, he was the saddlery,  
McGuinness had the lolly shop, next to Mr Hing,  
A floor made of tar, dipped when you walked in,  
Cousins was the jeweller, a man of renown,  
Owned a dark green Ford, Mayor of the town,  
Broadbent had the newsagent, known as the papershop,  
Not far from the banks, where people banked the lot.  
Flemings had the ladies store, across the Chronicle,  
McClintock was in charge, his first name which was Phil,  
Key White and the Serhans, brought fashions into line,  
Serhans still ablating, the boys still doing fine.

Then there was the cafe owners, how could you forgettee,  
Coroneo, the Cretans and of course Cassamatti,  
The dashery was Dolly's the chemist run by Wall,  
They also had the Plaza, the flicks with the front row stall.

There were many other shops when we were just a squirt,  
The Farrells and the Thompsons, and Wally Stewart,  
There was Snowy Garlic, a builder in the town,  
The Hutchies ran the markets, Roy Wilkie lived on luck,  
McGahan ran the barber shop, McRitchie had the pub,  
McClintoch printed newspapers, McCoy ran a club.  
Some of the business men and MC's of the town,  
The days of Shillings and Pennies, the Bobs and the Pounds,  
So if you come up now, and really have a look,  
It's changed a hundred times or more, but it's still old Muswellbrook.

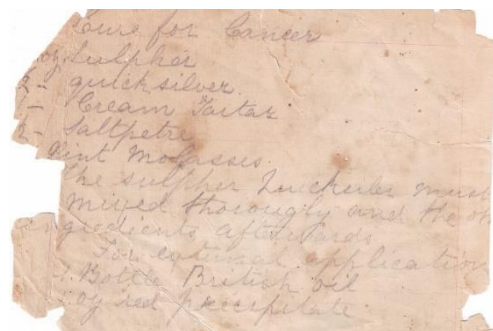
Written by John Allan, known as Joey, born on 15 December, 1939 –  
a tribute to his home town.

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## Home remedy

While doing some clearing out of old recipes Helen Ellis came upon the recipe below.

### Cure for Cancer



? oz of Sulphur (oz = ounce)  
2 oz quicksilver (mercury)  
1 oz Cream of Tartar  
1 pint molasses  
The Sulphur and quicksilver must be mixed thoroughly and the other ingredients afterwards. For external application 1 bottle British Oil, 1 oz lead precipitate.

Desperate measures indeed.

### Editor's note

When growing up the main medicines in our medicine cupboard were a bottle of mercurochrome, a bottle of iodine and a bottle of castor oil. Rarely were we without bright red knees.



## Donations

**Received from:** - John Swift, Muswellbrook-A group photo of M Campbell's (*Muswellbrook Store*) staff 1928  
Margaret Dolahenty, Muswellbrook – A small Noritake dish with three legs & small plate - was a souvenir of Muswellbrook-

Ian Ellis, Muswellbrook – A copy of the late Val Ellis's eulogy

Rob Tickle, Beechwood. – Information of burials/possible burials in the Merton Cemetery, copies of certificates & Mount Pleasant Study:-Where possible human burials are located.

Mach Energy – Three Studies on Negoa Homestead.

Trish Campbell, (wife of William Campbell) – A checked travelling dress worn by Mrs Malcom Campbell.

## A "Love" Story

Some years ago, possibly seventy-eight, three young girls visited Orwell Maternity Hospital in Brook Street Muswellbrook on their way to St James' School. Two, Dorothy and Margaret, were from a large family of eleven. The other, Mary, was an only child. They were great friends.

They politely asked the Sister on duty if they could "order a baby" for their friend's mother? Their mother had just had twin boys so they had lots of babies, brothers and sisters. Their friend Mary did not have any. They explained that they had asked their mother if she would give just one of the new babies to Mrs Hirons. Surprisingly their mother was not obliging.

Knowing their mother's babies came from the Orwell Hospital they thought it was a good idea to order one for their friend. When the Sister heard their story she consulted with other nurses, the Matron and Doctor who listened with delight. The girls waited quietly until the sister returned to explain to them that they were not able to help at this stage.

Sister said the other staff suggested that the best idea would be to ask Santa Claus if he could help. However, they should realise it was not always possible for Santa to deliver all requests. For some years this - and many prayers – were their only option.

The only child became very much a part of the wonderful large family. Mary Power nee Hirons, Dorothy and Margaret Dolahenty remained real and true friends all their lives.

Mary died on 10 September 2023. Dorothy and Margaret attended her funeral at Wallsend where this story formed part of her eulogy.

- a wonderful true love story.



Photo 2943.01 Orwell Hospital when still operating c1947 Courtesy of Colleen & Des Thompson