

UPPER HUNTER MUSEUM of RURAL LIFE Inc
(& Aberdeen Local Studies Group)
P.O. Box 140. Aberdeen, NSW, 2336.

NEWSLETTER October, 2016

DISPLAY CABINET FOR ABERDEEN LIBRARY

During the coming week the **Aberdeen Local Studies Group** (ALSG) will take delivery of a large display cabinet that is to be installed in the Aberdeen Library. The purchase of the showcase has been funded by the Upper Hunter Museum of Rural Life Inc and partially by a successful Cultural Activity Grant from the Upper Hunter Shire Council.

With the purchase of a museum quality showcase, which can be securely locked, it will now be possible for the ALSG to safely mount displays of donated items from their collection or of items that are on a temporary short term loan.

On the back page we are reprinting Part 1 of another interesting newspaper article from the pen of local historian, Mr. William Bridge.

The article begins: *Mr. William Bridge, of Scone and formerly of Muswellbrook, has started what should result as an interesting series of articles dealing with the early days of farming in the Upper Hunter. The first of the series which appears in last Friday's issue of the Scone Advocate reads:- (continued page 2)*

For anyone interested these articles can be found at Trove - The National Library of Australia on the internet:

<http://trove.nla.gov.au>

Follow the link to [Digitised Newspapers] and search the relevant newspapers & subjects.

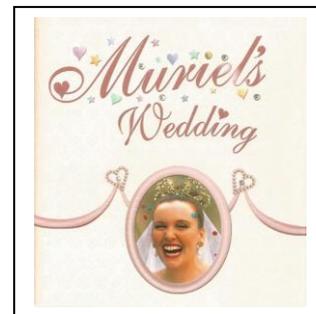
Thank you to all those who support our functions and generously donate to our monthly raffle. Also much appreciation goes to the volunteers that work tirelessly to make these function a success.

This month we would like to take this opportunity to especially thank Mr. Lee Fong for his regular generosity and his gifts of freshly grown vegetables to the raffle.

Next Luncheon & Movie

Tuesday, 8th November, 2016

“ MURIEL'S WEDDING ”



Starring Toni Collette, Bill Hunter & Rachel Griffiths

DVD, Colour, 105 min, 1994 [M]

Bookings: Daphne 65438356

Next meeting UHMRL -

Wednesday, 26th October at 4 pm

Aberdeen Library .

New member & volunteers always welcome.

Next scanning afternoon for the
Aberdeen Local Study Group -

Friday, 28th October,

2pm - 4.30pm at the Aberdeen Library.

Upper Hunter Museum of Rural Life Inc. raising funds to establish a Museum and Cultural Centre in Aberdeen.

www.aberdeenmuseum.org.au

Email: uhmrl@skymesh.com.au

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No. 1. - **THE FARMING DAYS** -
BEFORE AND AFTER THE ADVENT OF MACHINERY
(By William Bridge).

The writer probes his store-house of memories and recalls the farming days, removed some 60 and even 70 years from to-day. Machines were still to emanate from the brain of the inventive genius and scientific farming had not even entered the visions of the dreamer. The tiller of the soil was aided by the most crude and primitive instruments, in the limited collection of which the hoe was an outstanding means of fracturing the soil. Of course this scribe does not claim that farming had its advent in the country at such a time that would synchronise with his boyhood days. Wheat was sown in the district over a century ago, and it is a well-known fact that a good class of tobacco was successfully raised here about the same time. There is documentary evidence to prove this. To further stress this point, an excerpt from the records of Mr. Henry Dangar, who was Assistant Surveyor of Crown Lands in the Colony in 1822, will bear repetition. It deals with one of Mr. Dangar's trips, through the district, and runs: "*From Dartbrook, crossing the Ridge, where is here low and easy of access by the present route, to the farms of Messrs. Forsyth and Miller, you get into the vales of Kuwangawa, Warlaghn (presumably aborigines' name for Warland), and Lamorran. In the former of these valleys, the selectors have just mentioned have selected their farms and were prosecuting their improvements with much perseverance. They fixed themselves in this secluded position with a view to procuring a sale for grain through neighbours who, it was expected, would soon settle about and beyond them. In this they were disappointed by this part of the country, being to the northward of General Darling's line of demarcation, consequently no immigrants are allowed to establish themselves there*". The Mr. (W.) Forsyth mentioned held Cliffdale in the early twenties, and for some considerable number of years later; the Mr. Miller being the father of the late Mr. Matthew Miller, formerly of Belmore, Scone, and one of the oldest and best known identities of the old town. The line of demarcation referred to, which frustrated the efforts of the enterprising pair, who doubtless were numbered among the very first farmers to break the soil of these parts, was brought about because of the menacing attitude of the blacks, who were offering more than a passive resistance to the penetration of the country by would-be settlers. From the foregoing lines, one may visualise the period prior to the time when the great North-west gave of its golden wealth, and prior to settlement having extended, say, beyond Warland's Range, of the Great Dividing Range, between Wingen and Blandford. If he has digressed somewhat from his subject, the author has certainly introduced a phase which will be read with much interest. Three decades later, and at a period well within his mental picturisation, the old days on historic Wollombi, then the leading wheat-growing centre of the State, float before his vision. He vividly calls to mind the wooden ploughs, with pieces of tin tacked to the rough mould-boards as a preventive from the earth adhering thereto. It was not at all infrequent to have breakages to the beam of the plough. At such times a cocked sapling would almost invariably act as a substitute to the damaged unit. About this time one James Bourne came to the succour of the farming' community by turning out an iron plough. The implement certainly allowed room for vast improvement, but because of the solid workmanship

put into it, a big demand was created from the outset and the maker was very soon on the highway to an affluent position. Farms on an average ranged from 20 to 70 acres, the latter area being regarded as one of big proportions. To place such an acreage under cultivation with a single-furrow plough was a stupendous task, out no greater than that involved when harvesting operations fell due. Of course, they were the days of the reaper, and as an incentive to spurring the men on, it was not uncommon for the farmers to place an adequate supply of rum on tap. Naturally this was overdone at times, with the result that the men were incapable of carrying on, and with a scant labour market available, employers often found themselves in a quandary, and losses frequently followed. Men took a great pride in their work, and like the shearers of later years, were ever looking for records. Many young women were experts at the work, and some of them could easily hold their own with the best of the sterner sex. The performances or the champion reapers were referred to just as the racing deeds of the mighty Abercorn, and then Carbine, and of Windbag by the present generation, and an enviable man was the champion. Reaping was hard work and with no 8 hour day then in vogue, the long day in the hot sun often devolved itself into a competition which was virtually the survival of the fittest, more so when a gang was largely made up, as many of them were, of deserters from ships. A day's work was usually from daylight till dark, when stiffened backs and necks would be the rule rather than the exception. A man named McCabe was credited with putting in eight acres of wheat with a hoe, and he was rewarded with an excellent crop. The popular varieties of grain sown were 'Golden Drop' and 'White Lamis.' There was another known as 'Beardy,' but it did not find favour because of its being very difficult to work. Late frosts often played havoc with the crops, but this militating factor was to no small extent counteracted by pressing the native population, then most numerous, into service. Boys would be set off in pairs on the ends of long ropes, and racing up and down the paddock by this means would dislodge the frost from the filing wheat before it thawed in the heat. On Segenhoe, in this district, the writer first saw this process used, and that it was a success, the fact that it was soon adopted in many other parts of the State speaks for itself. Harvesting, operations over, no time was lost in commencing threshing. This phase would, in fact, often be sandwiched with the harvesting, should a suitable day intervene. A tarpaulin would be spread, and the wheat would be held head-high and precipitated to the ground covering. The wind would do the rest, namely, separate the chaff from the grain. It was a most irksome process, which was shortly to be revolutionised thanks to the placing on the market of a machine manufactured by a man named Brindle. It was the first to be introduced to the State, and was known as a 'beater' machine, worked either by bullocks or horses. It worked on the circular principle of many plants in vogue on farms even to this day. Descendants of the inventor are in the Denman and Merriwa districts, at the present time, and one is carrying on business in the machinery line at Aberdeen. A couple of years back, the writers was in conversation with a son, an aged man, at Muswellbrook, and referring to the old machine turned out by his father, was somewhat astonished when apprised that part of it was still in use in the Denman district, being a unit of an old chaff-cutting plant.