



UPPER HUNTER MUSEUM of RURAL LIFE Inc

P.O. Box 140. Aberdeen, NSW, 2336.

NEWSLETTER

September 2016

Spring is here and the days will soon be warmer. We have had some lovely rain without the flooding that others are having. It is a good time to go on a bus tour and do some gardening. It is also a good time to take a walk or ride in and around your home town and appreciate what a beautiful place it is. We all can do something to help our small town. Plant some flowers, take some photos, join a group, or write a story of your memories and a family history. The Local Studies Group at the Library can help you scan photos or even how to find your family tree. Or just call in for a chat & a cuppa.



Aberdeen Golden Oldies
Tuesday 11th October 2016
'Royal Wedding'



**Bookings: Daphne 6543 8356 or
Jan 6543 7150**

Next Meeting UHMRL

**Wednesday, 28th September, 2016
4pm at Aberdeen Library.**

**New members and volunteers always
welcome.**

**Next scanning afternoon for the
Aberdeen Local Study Group
Friday, 30th September, 2016
2pm - 4.30pm at Aberdeen Library.**

We will be there to scan your photos or you
can have a look through the collection of
Aberdeen memories we have collected so far.

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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History Week at the Aberdeen Library

Theme: "Neighbours"

The Aberdeen Local Study Group have taken the opportunity of History Week to display a selection of images of local bridges - Bridges are instrumental in uniting neighbours from local communities and distant places.

Thank you to Kevin Taylor who supplied many of the photographs.

The river ford at Aberdeen was often in flood and considered a very dangerous crossing. Neighbours and travellers were regularly isolated on separate sides of the river.

Below are a sample of newspaper article from the Aberdeen correspondent relating to the need for a bridge at Aberdeen.

The River at Aberdeen. - We were informed that the river here was on Thursday week so high that the mailman swam his coach and four horses across the ford, and the current was so strong that it carried the vehicle several rods down the stream. Coachee however landed his nags safely on the other side, cheered by 50 or 60 spectators. The mail bags were firmly secured across the top of the coach, and consequently were not wetted. We think the coachman was running a great risk by the venture.

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Saturday - 4th September, 1852.

A preliminary meeting was held on the evening of Thursday last (Feb 24th), Mr. J.N. Mackenzie in the chair, to consider the advisability of calling a public meeting for the purpose of petitioning Government to erect a bridge over the Hunter at Aberdeen. After a considerable amount of discussion, in which it was shown the number of lives lost through attempting to cross at the time of a freshes, and that the crossing is getting more dangerous after each succeeding flood, owing to the large stones which some years ago had been placed there, having been washed away as the gravel below them had been carted away when the railway bridge was in course of construction.

A resolution was put to the meeting and carried unanimously.

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Thursday - 2nd March, 1876.

Two wooden low-level bridges were constructed over the Hunter River at Aberdeen in 1877 and 1887. Unfortunately both of these bridges were only here for a short time as they were unable to withstand the forces of regular flood waters. A misfortune befell the neighbourhood on Saturday morning last, which will take some time to remedy - I refer to the loss of our low level bridge. Although only fit for a place on some blind gully or straggling creek, and unworthy of being the means of crossing a stream like the Hunter, still during the last two or three months, when the water was often a foot or two above its usual level, it was very convenient; but one expected it would stand, even if the river only rose half-bank high and therefore it was nothing strange to hear of it being washed away. It seemed a waste of public money putting such a temporary structure there at all, and it is to be hoped that the next one will be a more substantial character and not liable to be washed away by the first fresh. The crossing place in the river, which was dangerous at any time, seem to be now worse than ever; and from the appearance of it now it will be weeks, and perhaps months, before it will be safe for any vehicle to cross and traffic will be entirely suspended, unless some fresh crossing is made.

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Thursday - 14th August, 1879

It is now some eight or nine months since the bridge over the Hunter here was washed away by flood and at the time reports said that we would have a new one at once. But we seem to be as far away from a new one, after nine months, as

we were then. As we have been through a rather dry summer, we have not felt our loss deeply: but as we are now entering winter, which may be a wet one we are likely to be greatly inconvenienced by our loss. I wonder where our member is, and what he is doing: it cannot be that he has forgotten us: and, if not, surely he is not neglecting us. We trust ere long we may have a good bridge: not a failure as the last proved. [*ere = before*]

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Tuesday- 20th April, 1880.

The Aberdeen Bridge -Will we get it? Its urgent necessity, its cost, the terrible state of the crossing, and where's the maintenance man? are the burning questions of the district at present, thanks to our member and the influence of the press.

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Saturday - 17th November, 1888.

The much-needed bridge over the Hunter here is much talked about, and surprise is expressed that the authorities that be, do not see the urgent necessity of its speedy erection.

Accidents are constantly occurring to vehicles, and more loses of life will undoubtedly be the consequence of the apathy, negligence and dangerous delay in not having this matter attended to.

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Saturday - 2nd February, 1889.

The days of low level wooden bridges have passed. A couple of decades ago there was no bridge spanning the river at Aberdeen, the main and only street, of which was then pretty well always occupied by wool teams and the ideal swagmen, but later on a paternal Government opened its heart and supplied the good people of the neighbourhood which failed to withstand the pressure of water with which the hunter in its flooded anger assaulted it. Timber again was brought into requisition and once more the delighted populace of Aberdeen had the pleasure of seeing their vaunted bridge careering down seawards on the murky stream. The fate of the two wooden bridges taught the Government wisdom, for just now there is in course of construction at Aberdeen, one of the most substantial iron bridges in the colony. It is at the old historical crossing place and although not progressed sufficiently to give an idea of its dimensions, a glance at the plans...satisfied us that the Aberdeen bridge will be a structure which has come to stay... and considerably above all flood levels.... The main bridge will consist of two wrought iron continuous lattice girders. It will form three spans..... The structure will be timber decked.....

Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Adviser
Saturday - 14th November, 1891

On the 26th July, 1893, the first high level bridge over the Hunter River at Aberdeen was opened and named the "Fitzgerald Bridge" - Mr. Robert Fitzgerald, MLC, had worked hard tirelessly to secure the bridge for the Aberdeen community. With the construction of a third bridge, the original bridge still stands today and is retained for the use of pedestrians and cyclists.