

# THE MUSE

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PO Box 217, Mudgee, NSW, 2850 Website: [www.mudgeemuseum.com](http://www.mudgeemuseum.com)

President: John Broadley 02.6372 3365 Email: [jbr71056@bigpond.net.au](mailto:jbr71056@bigpond.net.au)

Acting Editor: Fay Wells

Secretary: Pauline Bassingthwaight 02.6372 3078

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As the Colonial Inn Museum will be celebrating their 50th anniversary in May this year we thought it would be appropriate to give a short background into the history of the building.

The West End Hotel built c1855 was one of thirty inns which flourished in Mudgee in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Now it is the Colonial Inn Museum, maintained by a small, but active, membership of the Mudgee Historical Society.

Mudgee has a deep historical background – it is the second oldest town over the Blue Mountains – but it has only been in more recent years that a concerted effort has been made to record its past.

In 1963 the Mudgee Rotary Club adopted as its project for the year, the formation of an Historical Society and Museum. The Mudgee Municipal Council called a public meeting, the result of which was the formation of the Society in 1964.

The guest speaker at the inaugural meeting was Mr. A. E. Bax, President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, whose forebears played their part in the early development of the Mudgee district.

The old two storey building, pictured above, was selected as the Colonial Inn Museum after a long investigation for a suitable site.

The building was purchased in 1966 by the Mudgee Historical Society and it is the intention of the Society to build up a picture of the past, which at present is in danger of being lost or destroyed. The building was one of the thirty odd inns which flourished in Mudgee during the latter part of last century, catering for the many travellers and their horses and bullock teams.

The block of land is a portion of the grant (995 acres) to George Cox who with his brother Henry, their servants and stock, were the first settlers in the district in February 1822.

On November 22, 1853 George Cox sold this block to John Brooks for £5.00. John Brooks resold it to George McQuiggan on November, 13 1857, for £460.00.

George McQuiggan opened it as a hotel, and it passed through various owners and licence holders until closed by the Licensing Authorities in 1923. Mr. Albert Gentle was the last licensee.

On 14<sup>th</sup> April 1927 Mr. Gentle sold the property to Mrs. Rose May Bowen wife of Samuel Bowen who converted it into six flats.

The original bar is still there, lined with bottles and the cellar is just as it was when the inn was built.

## OPEN DAY

### 50 Years at the Colonial Inn Museum

The Museum will be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

on

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> May 2014

from 1.00 pm to 4.30 p.m.

- There will be a display of photographs of Mudgee CBD, as it was years ago.
- Books on Sale
- Researchers will be on hand to advise how to research your family history.
- Information stall for Eurunderee School (now being restored by a group of keen enthusiasts)
- Entry free with free afternoon tea and celebration cake.
- The National Trust of New South Wales, Gulgong Mudgee Rylstone Branch will be joining us to celebrate our heritage.

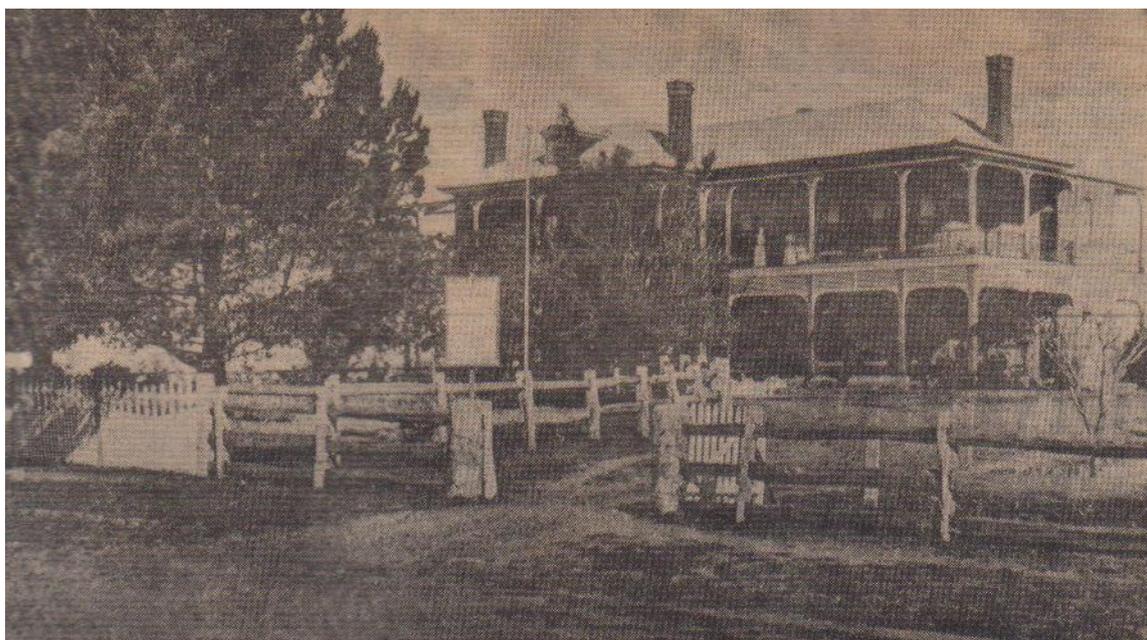
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**DON'T FORGET GARAGE SALE ON SATURDAY 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH  
AT 8.00 AM**

**If you have any items you would like to donate to the sale please leave them at the Museum by Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> or before.**

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**Our best wishes to John Broadley who is on the sick list at present and receiving treatment in Orange. We wish him a speedy recovery.**



## **EARLY HISTORY OF MUDGEE HOSPITAL**

Photo believed to be taken c.1890

A small slab hut close to the river at the end of Cox Street was Mudgee's first Hospital.

It was erected to overcome the difficulty of transporting patients to Bathurst or awaiting the arrival of a medical man.

It was used from 1840 until December 1842 when Dr King started a private hospital in Mortimer Street, opposite the Presbyterian Church. This served its purpose until it also proved too small for the number patients requiring hospital treatment.

At a meeting of Mudgee citizens held at Naughton's Inn on April, 2 1852, £200 (\$400) was raised to build a new hospital on the south west corner of Mortimer and Perry Streets.

The two acre site was granted by Governor Gipps and a 12 bed hospital was built, incorporating a main ward, two small wards, four verandah rooms and a two room kitchen. Unfortunately the records of this hospital were destroyed by a fire in 1870 but a few notes remain from old newspaper files.

The hospital appears to have been well conducted by an energetic committee.

Dr Cutting was elected as medical officer in March 1858 replacing Dr. McDonald. Shortly after his appointment Dr. Cutting vaccinated the children of the town against small pox.

In 1858, tenders were called for a three rail two meter high fence, a verandah, a mortuary and a brick shed with a shingle roof as additions to this hospital.

At the annual general meeting of subscribers in January 1860, the profit reported for the previous year was £105 (\$210) after all debts were paid.

The Government Treasury held funds collected by impounding officers for use by various hospitals in the colony and the Mudgee Committee estimated that the funds due to it were £400 (\$800) and the Committee Treasurer was instructed to write to the Government for this money.

The balance sheet at December 31, 1860 showed a surplus of just over £106 and it was decided to replace the hospital lighting with kerosene lamps instead of candles. Steady use was made of the hospital until the early 1870's when the matron reported the average occupancy rate was 12 to 14 patients.

This pressure on the hospital's facilities could not continue and the committee applied to the Government for approval to sell the property and build elsewhere. Approval was granted and the government dedicated two acres of land fronting Nicholson Street in February 1874.

Plans for a 30 bed hospital were drawn up and it was built by Silas Winter at a cost of £3,150. The foundation stone was laid on November 18, 1874 by Mrs. G H Cox and the building was opened in December 1875 by the Mayoress, Mrs. G Davidson.

An infectious diseases ward was built on the eastern side of the hospital after financial assistance came from the Country Women's Association, followed by nurses' quarters of the western side.

The medical report for the year 1899 stated that the number of cases during the year was 189, the mortality rate was 11.1 and there was a complete lack of Typhoid and Diphtheria cases

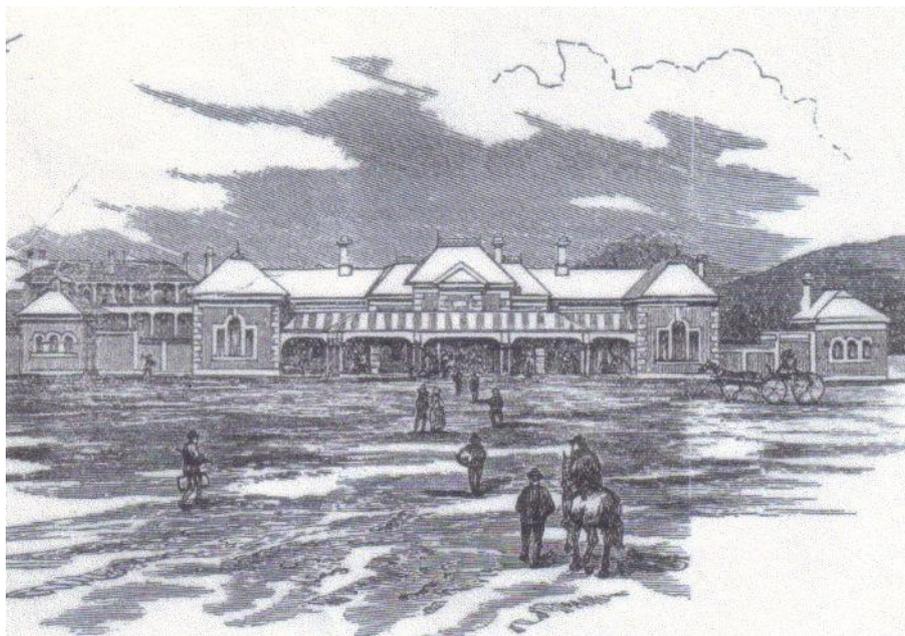
Further land was given to the hospital over the ensuing years two acres in 1877, one acre in 1886 and 4 ½ acres in 1902. This completed land to the hospital in the whole block bounded by Church Street, Nicholson Street, Lewis Street and Mears Street. Part of Nicholson Street was later closed and the land added to the hospital grounds.

The hospital continued to serve the district until 1955 when the old hospital was demolished and a new ninety six bed hospital was built facing Mears Street.

The hospital is now part of the Macquarie Health Service, based in Dubbo.



Warwick Spies and his helpers getting ready to install the reconditioned engine into the Packard Ambulance.



## MUDGEE RAILWAY STATION

with acknowledgements to Mudgee Guardian 1894

Mudgee was a very old town before the Government of the country could be convinced that a railway was only the right thing.

However, some nine years ago the railway was completed, and amidst much ceremony and great rejoicing a distinguished company assembled to see the line officially opened. The line joins the Great Western service at Wallerawang, 85 miles from Mudgee, and 105 miles from the metropolis. The railway itself has always been regarded as only one section of a trunk line which should eventually extend northward to the Barwon, or north east to Wellington, providing in this the latter connection a straighter line for the carriage to Sydney of heavy traffic of the far west.

The railway stands in this position now – the line is carried through 60 miles of the worst country for a railway in the land, over mountains where engineering difficulties and expense are unrewarded by a fair traffic, and therefore Mudgee has to supply trade enough herself to make the line profitable, or have the standing discredit of owning a non-paying railway line.

The railway was carried through barren country, and just as it got in the rich land, where it was likely to make trade for itself, the engineers and Parliament cried enough. Every section the line would be extended now would mean enough business to pay expenses of that particular section and give, perhaps a little surplus to wipe out the deficiency of the rest of the line.

Our railway station is a commodious one, and is capable of accommodating all the business likely to be done for some time, either in passenger, goods, or stock traffic. The passenger station, as will be seen from our illustration, is built upon the lines general in the newer station throughout the colony, and being of good brick, is likely to last for many years.

The platform is long enough to accommodate two ordinary trains, the stationmaster's office, waiting rooms, ticket and parcels offices and the lamp room and other conveniences. Mr. H J Addison is at present in charge, and proves a most capable, courteous and genial officer. The goods

sheds are roomy, and there is a great length of platform for general loading, with a crane to lift 6 tons on the eastern end.

A very large quantity of wool reaches Sydney via Mudgee, and the wool season is always a busy time with the officials. One day in November no less than 750 bales were received, loaded, and despatched by the night train, and between the beginning of the season and December about 20,000 bales were handled. Large consignments of live stock are despatched from Mudgee, ample and convenient yards being provided for loading purposes. The engine shed is a fine large structure, and a turntable is laid down in the yard.



Clydesdale horses showing off their brasses

## HORSE BRASSES

Among the delightful fields of collecting, there is the most interesting one of searching for old brass amulets which are or were used for the decoration of horse harness gear, especially for shire and parade horses. They became especially popular in England from the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century until their general decline alongside the use of the heavy horse, and remain a collector's item today. There are thousands of different designs in existence.

The earliest types are of plain, circular or crescent shapes. The most popular size is 3 x 3 ½ inches of flat brass with a hanger by which means the brass is threaded onto a horse harness strap known as a Martingale. In England many of these items of harness found their way into country public houses as the era of the heavy horse declined and are still associated today as a pub decoration.

By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century heavy horses were decorated with brasses of all kinds and sizes. During this era working horse parades were popular throughout the British Isles and prizes or merit awards were given, some by the Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA). Horse brasses were highly prized by the "carters" who decorated their horses with them. Horse brass subjects include advertising, royalty commemoration, and in later years, souvenir brasses for places and events, many of which are still being made and used today.

There is a great deal of die-hard, unfounded myths surrounding these decorations such as the ancient belief in the power of the amulets to ward off the “evil eye”. These superstitions date back to the “dark ages”. Such myths include their origin as talismanic symbols being brought back to England by knights returning from the crusades, or in later years, by migrating Romany, although no evidence has ever been offered in support of these theories other than conjecture.

Collecting horse brasses for their own sake other than as decorations for harness seems to have commenced around the mid 1890’s, during which time it became a highly popular pastime amongst the upper and middle classes. Indeed, the collecting of these humble brasses became especially popular amongst academics.

Most collectors agree that cast brasses were the first to appear on the scene in the British Isles. The earliest types were probably made locally by smiths or other skilled artisans.

Stamped brasses on heavy horse harness appeared on the scene around 1880, with a small number occurring perhaps a decade or so earlier and it is highly likely that the process developed from one that was already established in the manufacture of carriage harness trappings and military insignia. Due to serious considerations of the sheer weight of cast harness decorations carried by working horses (first raised by the early animal welfare movements in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century) it is thought the first stamped brasses were made as a lighter, (and cheaper) alternative to cast brasses being later exported throughout the British Empire(including Australia). Unlike their cast cousins stamped brasses were not made in moulds, but pressed out of rolled sheet brass approximately 1/16th in thickness.

The production of both cast and stamped brasses has continued since the demise of the working horse but their manufacture is mainly centred on the souvenir trade, and other specialist manufacturers who provide for the heavy horse world who still breed and show the various breeds.



Display of Horse Brasses

**Anyone who would like to receive their “Muse” via Email please let us know at the Museum.**

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**This is just a friendly reminder that subscriptions fell due in July so if you have not yet paid would you mind doing so?**