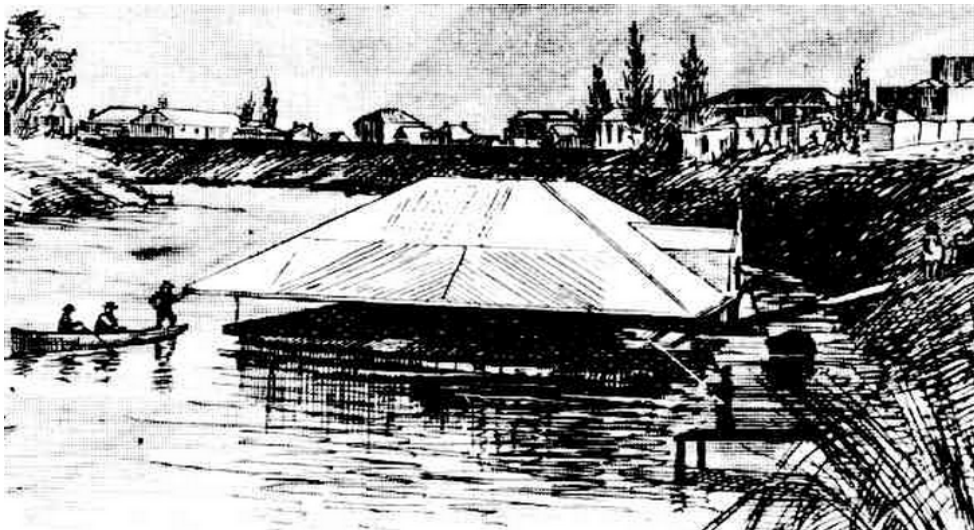


*Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

# **Bulletin of Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.**

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Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society and  
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*The Aims of the Society are to  
Discover, Record, Preserve, Advise on and Teach the History of Maitland and the District*

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

**Cover:** The West Maitland Floating Baths as depicted in the Illustrated Sydney News,  
8 August 1889

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**Lecture meeting** is held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum  
for lectures, talks and presentations

**Business meeting** is held on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm

Meetings are held at the Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street Maitland

Membership fees : \$15 (single) and \$20 (double / family)

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## The Maitland Branch of the C. W. A. in World War II

*Lisa Thomas*

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Readers may recall that the Maitland CWA article was printed in the November 2015 edition of the Historical Society Bulletin, with that article being authored by **Lisa Thomas** – apologies for not including Lisa's name at the time.

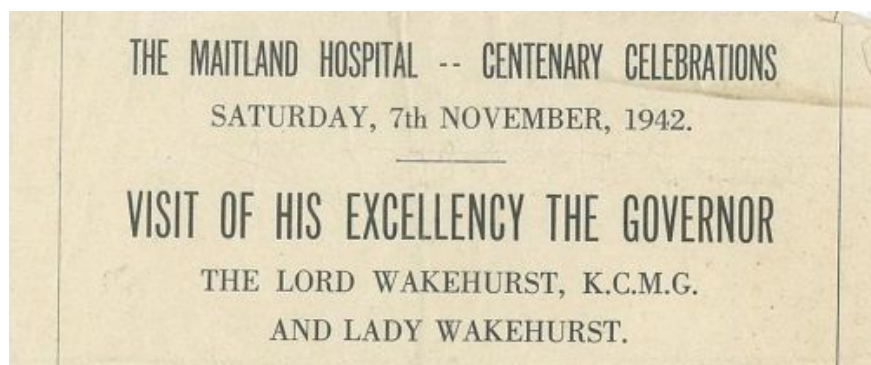
I was also unable to squeeze in the following photograph of Lady Margaret Wakehurst, who was scheduled to officially open the CWA building on 22 February 1941. Lady Wakehurst was the wife of John Loder, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Wakehurst, who was the Governor of New South Wales. However, Lady Wakehurst was unable to be in Maitland on that day, and so, in her place, Moree-born Brigadier Fritz Peter Max Solling officially opened the Rotary-CWA Service to Soldiers Building.



Lady Wakehurst did visit the Bulwer Street hall three days after the official opening. It was recorded that she planted the first in a row of trees. Presumably this was a jacaranda, as the 1950s Branch minutes note the presence of jacarandas at the rear of the building. Lady Wakehurst regularly travelled throughout New South Wales in aid of the war effort, and she frequently donned khaki when visiting the troops.

This was not Lady Wakehurst's only visit to Maitland, as the Sydney Morning Herald reported on 9 November 1942 that:

*His Excellency the Governor and Lady Wakehurst, attended by Lieutenant-Colonel R. O. Wynne, visited West Maitland on Saturday. His Excellency unveiled a tablet commemorating the centenary of the Maitland Hospital, and opened the new out-patients' department.*



Judy Nicholson, Bulletin Editor

## **West Maitland Floating Baths : an historical study**

*Peter Bond - Endeavour Rowing Club*

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In the early 1800s, the fledgling settlement of West Maitland (now known as Maitland) relied upon wells, bores and buckets from the river for its water supply. Towards the end of the century, water tanks for rain water run-off provided homes with a greater capacity but it was not until 1887 when the Walka Water Works started to pump treated water to Maitland and Newcastle, that homes in West Maitland had a reliable and plentiful water supply.

Under such conditions of supply, water was too valuable a resource for most homes to regularly fill tubs for bathing. Washing in the river was an obvious option but, at the time, the law excluded bathing in waters exposed to public view between 6 am and 8pm. Segregated bathing was acceptable in enclosed bath houses shielded from public view for which floating baths provided an ideal venue.

In October 1838, a floating bath for ladies was opened on Sydney Harbour at Woolloomooloo Bay followed one month later by a floating bath for men moored off the Domain. These first baths demonstrated one of the less desirable characteristics of floating baths - their vulnerability to the weather. In December 1843, the ladies baths were completely destroyed by a heavy southerly gale.

Floating baths were opened throughout the colonies with baths variously located at Corio Bay, Ipswich, Melbourne, Brisbane, Launceston, Maryborough, Newcastle, Bourke and Echuca. All were susceptible to floods with those on the Brisbane River being particularly vulnerable. Floating baths on the Brisbane River were swept away by floods in 1857, 1863, 1864, and 1879. The baths at Maryborough faced a slightly different threat with high tides overcoming the moorings and washing them out to sea several times in 1870.

### **The First Floating Baths**

Maitland first gained the benefit of a floating bath in 1869 when, in January, civil engineers Messrs Bell and Franklin, wrote a letter to West Maitland Borough Council stating that they intended to construct a floating bath and asking permission to moor it alongside the Town Reserve. Francis Bell was responsible for much of the railway construction from Newcastle to Maitland and was the builder of the original Belmore Bridge. The plans submitted to the council were for a 45ft x 14ft flat bottomed punt on which twenty eight dressing rooms, 3ft wide were to be built back to back. The roof over the dressing rooms was to extend to either side beyond the limits of the punt and down towards the water giving two covered bathing areas of 45ft x 14ft "completely sheltered from view". The baths were to be "provided with all the requisites of a first class bathing establishment".<sup>1</sup>

On 21st January 1869, the floating bath 'Water Lily'<sup>2</sup> was moored off the reserve at the rear of the Cross Keys Inn and by 26<sup>th</sup> was open to the public. Bathing for the two sexes was totally segregated with hours for gentlemen being for three hours in the morning 6 to 9 am and three hours in the afternoon 5 to 8 pm. Bathing was reserved for the ladies between 9am and 5 pm. A single ticket cost 6 pence and a quarterly ticket could be purchased for £1.<sup>3</sup>

The baths were well patronized and co-owner Franklin was to later commend them as a worthwhile investment, stating that they had cleared 10% during the time of their use.<sup>4</sup>

After one year of operation, the baths were the scene of a tragedy when 11 year old Annie Webber lost her footing and was carried by the current beyond the baths into open water where she drowned despite the efforts of the caretaker Mrs Pettigrew and a boy playing nearby who tried to save her.<sup>5</sup>

1870 was a volatile year on the Hunter River with floods in April and again in May that the floating baths successfully rode out. However, they eventually succumbed to high water at the beginning of November, sinking at their moorings opposite to the reserve with only a small portion of the roof visible.<sup>6</sup> Later in November the river flooded again, with the rush of water lifting the baths from the bottom of the river and breaking them up with the debris scattered downriver.<sup>7</sup> The first period of floating baths in Maitland had met an untimely end.

### **The Maitland Floating Baths Company**

The need for public baths was still strongly felt in Maitland and on 8-7-1879, a meeting was held in the West Maitland Council Chambers at which a company was formed for the provision of a floating bath. Mr E P Capper who had called the meeting, had earlier met with Mr Franklin of the previous baths who had voiced his support and had recommended an engineer, Mr Norman Selfe of Sydney who drew up preliminary plans. Shares in the company were moderately priced at 10 shillings to encourage as many local people to share in what was seen to be a public asset. Most of the people at the meeting took up shares in the new company in the interest of cleanliness, health and the desirability of providing a safe venue where children could learn to swim.<sup>8</sup>

At the third meeting of the company held on 28-7-1879, eight hundred of the one thousand shares had been sold and the plans prepared by Mr Selfe were tabled. "The Chairman read the following general description of the baths :- "The bathing-house is supported on two pontoons each 24 feet long by 6 feet wide, by 4 feet 6 inches deep, and spaced 12 feet apart. The intermediate space is enclosed at the ends and bottom with a grating of wood, and provided with a tackle for regulating the depth of the water. The joist or deck beams of the hull or pontoon project 3 feet 6 inches from the outside of the pontoons, and with the connecting girders are floored over, forming a platform all round the bath. On this deck or platform are twenty dressing rooms, twelve opening inwards and eight outwards, the whole of the dressing rooms and platform being roofed with galvanized corrugated iron. Outside of this, rafters are covered with lattice work extending a distance of 12 feet from the sides and ends of the pontoons, and terminating at a height of 4 feet from the water line, the total space covered by the baths being 48 feet span. From the fascia at the outer edge of the rafters a fringe of suitable material can be hung to secure privacy for the bathers who do not swim outside. The central well or bath has no roof shown, but a light roof can be easily put on at any time if it should be wanted. Steps are provided both on the inside and outside for bathers to ascend from the water""<sup>9</sup>

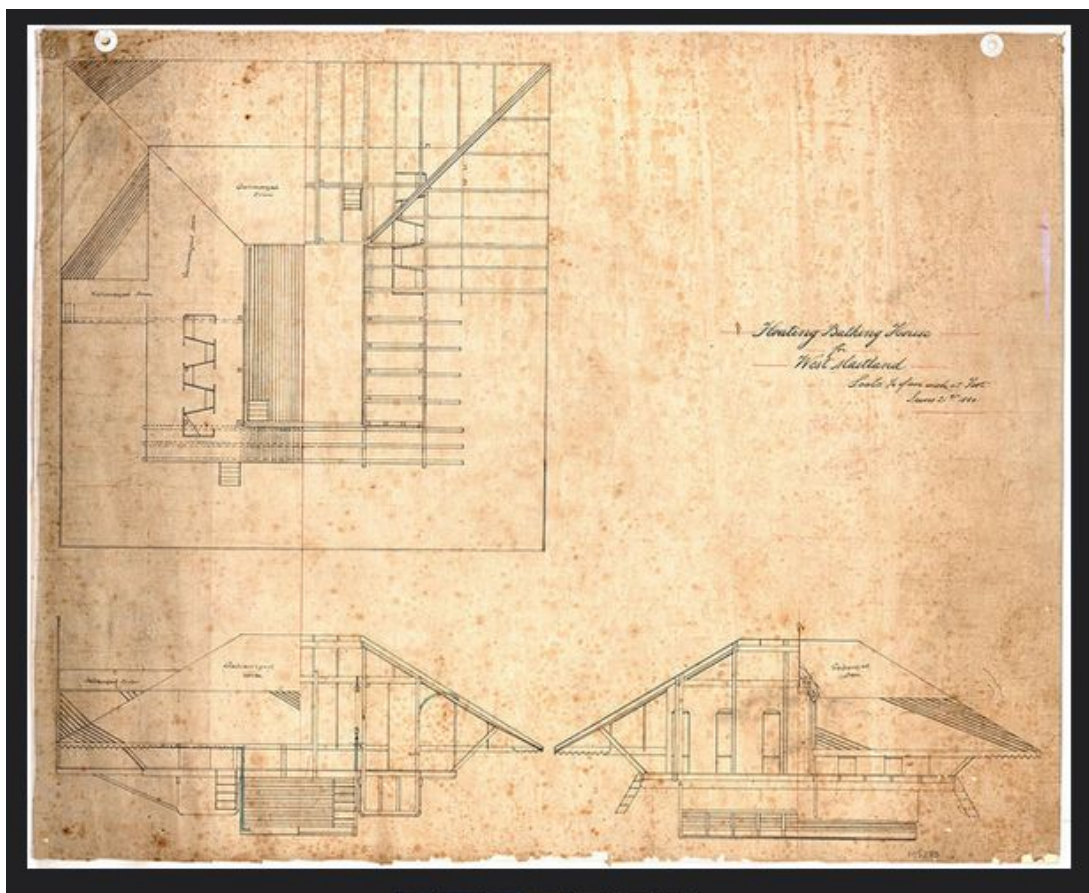
At a company meeting in October, all of the shares had still not been sold and there were not sufficient funds available to begin construction. It was resolved to hand the money so far subscribed to the Borough Council for the council to carry out the work, to manage the baths and to issue



debentures at five percent interest to the shareholders who would be reimbursed after three years.<sup>10</sup> In November, Council agreed to the proposition and accepted a tender from Messrs Orr and Barnsly of £350 for the erection of the floating baths.<sup>11</sup>

The legality of this arrangement was questioned in a letter to the editor of the Maitland Mercury on 29-11-1879 that stated "...the Council has no legal power or authority to borrow any money for municipal purposes without the sanction of the Governor..."<sup>12</sup> The application was withdrawn by the Company who announced they would carry out the work themselves. As there were still insufficient funds, the money at hand was invested and the construction of the baths was deferred.<sup>13</sup> Messrs Orr and Barnsly claimed £45 compensation for the loss of the contract of which they were paid £25, jointly provided by the council and the company.<sup>14</sup>

In May 1880, Mr Selfe as consulting engineer called for "tenders for the construction of a Pontoon Bath at West Maitland."<sup>15</sup> The contract was taken up by the Newcastle firm of Callan Bros who built the two hulls at their yard in Stockton then towed them upriver to complete the fitting out on site in Maitland.<sup>16</sup>



*The final version of the plans for the "West Maitland Floating Bathing House" drawn by Mr Norman Selfe<sup>17</sup>*

On 16-10-1880, the baths were announced as open to the public at a cost of 3 pence for a single ticket, £1 for a half year ticket and £2/5/- for a half year family ticket. The baths were situated at the end of Odd St, the lower end of which had been enclosed by a fence with access to the baths

provided through a gate and down a set of steps.<sup>18</sup> When the street was first fenced off, a resident from the opposite side of the river had objected to the obstruction of his access to the street from the river and the fence and steps were relocated.

The Maitland Mercury gave an excellent description of the baths to their reading public :

“The baths are constructed upon two pontoons, the floor extending all round them, and the roof in the same way, with a kind of batten verandah extending downwards from the roof. The total roof thus covers the water 48 feet square, and swimmer will be able to swim all round it, or nearly 200 feet, without going from under cover. The roof of the dressing rooms and pontoons is of galvanized iron, but where it extends as a verandah over the water is of open battens, affording light and coolness. It comes down to within about four feet of the water, and a calico curtain is run round the edge, reaching within a few inches of the water.” “The centre portion of the baths is devoted to the use of children and other non-swimmers. The space between the pontoons has been fitted with what we might call a cage, the ends and bottom of which are open battens, through which the water has free course. This cage is hung on pulleys at each corner, and it can be lifted right out of the water, or lowered to admit the water to any depth up to 5 feet 6 inches.” “On two sides steps lead down into this water; and also on the outer sides access is gained by steps from the river outside to the outer part of the baths. The dressing-rooms open – twelve in the centre, and eight to the outer part of the baths. The roof over the centre part has been left open, but is to be covered with a curtain, so that when the sun is overhead bathers may be shaded.”<sup>19</sup>

The baths enjoyed much popularity in its first season, but also saw its first drowning on 19-12-1880. William Horton, a 32 year old coachman employed by Northumberland Coach Factory could not swim. He had gone to the baths to wash and after lathering himself with soap, went into the river on the outside edge of the baths despite having been cautioned not to go into deep water. Horton was known to have developed the habit of swinging from rope to rope around the outside of the baths and a companion stated that he had “the extraordinary impression that if he fell and got into difficulties he could creep out on to the shore on his hands and feet, although below the surface ...”. Horton’s body was recovered from mud on the bottom of between fourteen and fifteen feet of water.<sup>20</sup>

At the first annual general meeting of the Maitland Floating Baths Company in September 1881, the shareholders “had some reason to feel satisfied with what had been done.” Although no dividend was to be paid, the income from ticket sales of £132/6/9 “was sufficient to show them that the baths were capable of paying a good return..” The income statement included £428/5/- from shares sold to 137 shareholders and a £70 loan from Messrs Capper and Sons to make up for the shortfall in share sales. Included in expenditures were £388 to Callan Bros for the construction of the baths and £25 to Norman Selfe for the plans with the baths and fittings being valued at £512/17/6. The directors were happy with the company’s progress.<sup>21</sup>

One year after the first drowning, 27 year old James Stanislaus, a manager in Cohen and Co’s store met a similar fate. Stanislaus could swim, but had recently broken his leg and was testing to see if it was strong enough. He successfully demonstrated his swimming ability to the caretaker Mr Carlson but within 5 minutes was in trouble and drowned.<sup>22</sup>

At the second annual general meeting of the baths company, ticket sales had declined with income reduced to £80/8/6. To encourage patronage, the cost of season tickets was reduced by 50% for the following season.<sup>23</sup> Unfortunately, this move did not remedy the situation and by the third annual general meeting in 1883, the income from ticket sales had fallen to £55/8/-. At the same time, the original deficit of £70 had grown to a liability of £107/19/7 and it was felt that continued operation would increase the debt. The recommendation of the annual report was "that either the baths be sold, or the shareholders decide as to the best course of paying the existing liability to the bank.." A comment in discussion by Mr Gillies was "Now was a good time to dispose of them; there was a boat club in existence, and they might possibly be customers". However, it was resolved "That the baths be not sold, but an effort be made to obtain from the shareholders the amount necessary to liquidate all claims and that the baths be continued for another season at a different part of the river, viz, at the foot of Free Church St..." ".. and in the event of that sum not being forthcoming within three weeks, the baths be sold by auction.." <sup>24</sup>

The directors were unable to raise the amount of money required and in May 1883 the baths were put up for auction. The baths were bought by the fledgling Maitland Amateur Rowing Club for £125 which enabled the company to repay the bank and leave a small surplus in their account. Although the baths as a speculation had not been a success, many of the directors felt that that they had provided a valuable service to the "health and cleanliness" of the community with several stating that their families had directly benefitted through their children learning to swim and noting that no youths had drowned in the river since the time of the establishment of the baths.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Floating Baths and the Rowing Club**

Maitland Rowing Club had been formed at a public meeting in February 1883. The club had intended to write to the Town Council for permission to erect a boatshed on the Reserve but at that time the floating baths had been offered for sale. The rowing club bought the baths with the intention of adapting them for use as a boatshed. The club borrowed the purchase price of £125 from the bank with several members volunteering as guarantors.<sup>25</sup>

The club decided to keep the baths functioning as a public facility, employing a caretaker at 30 shillings per week to attend to the safety of swimmers and to maintain the boats. The baths were opened to the public at the beginning of October with prices set at 3 pence for a single ticket, £1/1/- for a season ticket and £2/2/- for a family season ticket. The baths paid their way during the rowing club's first season of management with takings of £65/4/6<sup>26</sup> and in April 1884 the club resolved to pay off £25 of the debt plus the interest to the bank.<sup>27</sup>

The baths were at all times vulnerable to variations in river conditions and in August 1884 "special acknowledgements were made by the club to certain townsmen for securing the floating baths ... during the late floods."<sup>28</sup>

In September 1884, the baths were host to a high profile visitor, William Beach the professional sculling champion of the world. Beach, an Australian, had defeated the reigning champion Edward Hanlan of Canada on the Parramatta River in August. Beach arrived in Maitland to attend the Northern Jockey Club race meeting and was invited to inspect the rowing club's boats and shed. Beach rowed a demonstration on the river in a borrowed wager boat (outrigger single scull) "...his



appearance from beneath the awning of the boatshed being the signal for great cheering from the crowd..” After returning, he was toasted with champagne in the cradle of the baths and awarded life membership of Maitland Rowing Club.<sup>29</sup>



*William Beach : Champion of the World. Beach won the title on 16 August 1884 and successfully defended it six times until he retired undefeated in November 1887.*

The takings of the baths during the rowing club’s second season of management fell to £38/8/3 which did not cover the expenses of the caretaker although a new man had been employed at the reduced rate of 25 shillings per week. However, the club had other sources of income through subscriptions to rowing membership and considered itself to be in a “very good position.”<sup>30</sup>

At the 1886 annual general meeting of the Maitland Rowing Club, it was reported that the baths had been thoroughly cleaned, painted and tarred, the cradle had been strengthened with iron knees and new ropes had been fitted to the blocks used to raise and lower it. The minutes recorded that the club was in possession of “a good supply of gear for removing the baths in time of danger..”, freshes in the river having necessitated the moving of the baths several times in the preceding months. Income from the baths had fallen since the previous AGM and it was decided to reduce the cost of season tickets by 30% in an effort to encourage public support.<sup>31</sup>

In May 1887 it was decided to float the rowing club, the baths and the club’s other general property into a company to be known as the Maitland Rowing and Bathing Company in order that the gentlemen who had stood as guarantors at the time of the club’s foundation would be relieved of that burden. The twenty £5 shares were immediately taken up by members of the club. At the time, the club was considered to be in an “exceedingly prosperous condition” with the assets being in “first class order” and the members “hardworking active men” who would maintain the success of the club.<sup>32</sup>

In July 1887 it was decided that “every season ticket holder will be taught the art of plain and ornamental swimming and diving by the best professors in the northern district.” It was stated that “the thanks of the community are due to those gentlemen who have struggled so hard to keep the

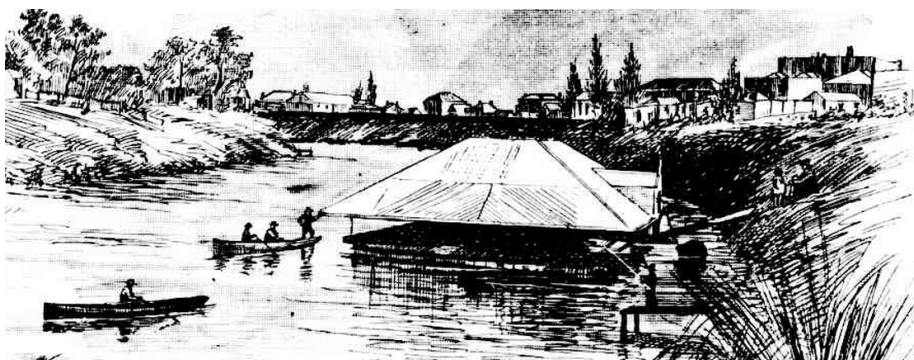
floating baths in Maitland, for hundreds of our youth owe their swimming capabilities to the presence of the floating baths in our midst..”<sup>33</sup>

Following “heavy and almost continuous rain over two or three days” in late December 1887 “the baths connected with the Maitland Rowing Club, in which were the club’s boats, broke away from their moorings ... and floated rapidly down river”. Club members manned flood boats and set off after the baths which were brought to a stop by a suspension bridge that stretched across the river. Here, the baths took on water until they were almost entirely underwater.<sup>34</sup> The club members secured the baths and when the water had subsided, returned them to the end of Odd St early in January 1888 after they had been cleaned and repaired. At a special meeting in February 1888, Mr Thomas Fountain, the land owner where the baths had come to rest, was presented with a silver-plated cruet containing 8 cut glass bottles for the service he had rendered in rescuing the baths, working hard and lending ropes, chains and other requisites to expedite the work in getting the baths back to their former position.<sup>35</sup>

Although the original Floating Baths Company had set aside the middle of the day for the exclusive use of ladies, in October 1885 it had been observed that “The fair sex are debarred altogether from the enjoyment of a swimming place.” Presumably, the rowing club being exclusively a club for men, had reserved use of the baths for men only. This was overcome to some extent in February 1888 when it was resolved that “Tuesday in each week, between the hours of nine and twelve, be set apart for the use of ladies.” It was decided to engage Mrs Carlson (the caretaker’s wife) as caretaker of the baths while in use by ladies...”<sup>36</sup>

In March 1888, the fortunes of the floating baths were on the rise “showing rapid signs of increased popularity” being “well patronized by the public who find them very useful.”<sup>37</sup>

On 15th August 1888, the floating baths had another high profile visitor although this time the outcome was disastrous. The touring English football team had come to Maitland to play a Northern Districts team. The English captain, 28 year old Robert Seddon “procured an outrigger at the Maitland Rowing Club Baths and went for a pull on the river.” Seddon did not have the skill required to control the boat and, shortly after starting out, he fell from the boat and was drowned.<sup>38</sup>



At the 1889 annual general meeting in May, it was reported that the finances were “in a better position than they have ever been.” The bathing during the past season has been well patronized with ticket sales of £60, an increase on the previous year’s receipts, while £39 had been paid in wages to the caretaker.<sup>39</sup>

With the fortunes of the Maitland Rowing and Bathing Company on the increase and the floating baths a well established public facility, it all came to a disastrous end on 20-6-1890. The 'Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser' of the following day reported that the baths "had shifted from the place where they had been located, and that the greater portion of the structure was under water, the top only being visible."<sup>40</sup> The damage to the baths and the resulting financial loss to the rowing club were terminal for both and the floating baths and the club's boats were sold at auction on 19-7-1890. The auction took place at the rear of the residence of Mr John Mayo at Pitnacree where the baths lay submerged on the river bed.<sup>41</sup>

The final act in the saga of Maitland's floating baths came in February 1893 when a public meeting was convened to close the accounts of the floating baths. The remaining balance of £9/14/2 in the baths account was divided equally between the Maitland Hospital and Maitland Benevolent Society.<sup>42</sup>

The loss of the floating baths was keenly felt by the Maitland community who were to be without a public baths for 50 years until the King George V Memorial Pool was opened in Maitland Park in 1940.

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## A Church at (East) Maitland

*Kevin Short*

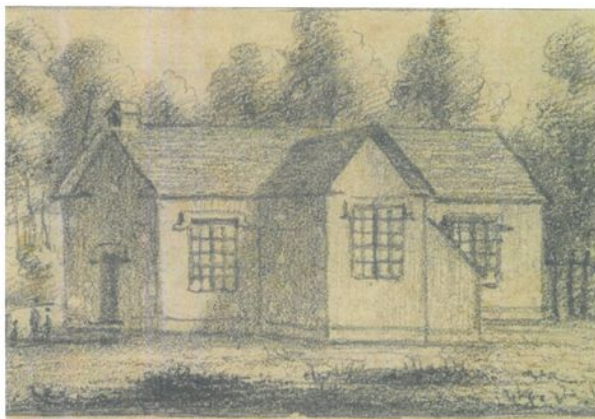
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In 1829, Governor Darling instructed his Surveyor General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, to survey the township of Maitland on the hills east of Wallis Plains. Mitchell in turn instructed his assistant, George Boyle White to physically carry out the task. Whilst there were already some dwellings on the eastern side of Wallis Creek, this date, officially at least, more or less marks the beginning of East Maitland.

Between 1821 and the establishment of (East) Maitland Parish in 1834, the Revs' Middleton, Wilkinson and Wilton were respectively appointed to the Hunter's River chaplaincy but were all domiciled at Newcastle although after his resignation in 1827, Middleton was living on his property at Hinton. In 1827 George Brooks was appointed Catechist at Maitland but his appointment was short-lived, his replacement being Lt John Wood in 1829.

Wood laboured faithfully for 5 years and it is interesting to note that his grant of 40 acres, adjacent to Mount Dee and Fishery Creek, was named St. Peter's. Whilst there is no evidence to suggest that this influenced the naming of the later Church to be built in the Parish of East Maitland, it is an interesting coincidence?

In early 1829 the colonial authorities decided to build a schoolhouse at Wallis Plains (East Maitland), a project completed in early December of the same year. Before completion, Archdeacon Scott issued a licence '*enabling the School House at Maitland to be used for the celebration of Divine Service, the Rite of Baptism, the administration of the Lord's Supper, the solemnization of Marriages, and for burials.*' With a fortnight of Scott's licence being issued, Lt Wood had requested of the Trustees of Clergy and Church Lands Corporation to '*... send a Bell for our new Church.*'



The School (Church) building was substantial, being 41 feet (12.5 metres) long by 20 feet (6.1 metres) high and 13 feet (4 metres) high, made of brick with a sturdy roof and capable of seating 100 persons. It was erected on Stockade Hill, on the south western corner where Park and Brisbane Streets intersect and was initially known as '*the Chapel*' although was later referred to as '*the Cedars*', presumably after it had ceased to be used as either a Church or School, remembering of

course that the new Schoolhouse, now the Parish Hall, was erected and in use by the mid 1840's. The adjacent pencil sketch, dated 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1838 is attributed to George Rusden's daughter Amelia.

The Rev George Keylock Rusden was appointed to (East) Maitland in July, 1834. There being no suitable residence, he and his family lived, until such time as a suitable residence could be built, at Rathluba. Almost immediately, Rusden was appealing to the relevant authorities that a suitable



Church for the increasing population be built. That the Roman Catholics had already erected a small stone chapel (St Joseph's) with stone from 'his' quarry was not doubt an irritation.

The competitive divide between Wallis Plains (West Maitland) and the government town of East Maitland, even in the 1830's, was fierce and competitive. Rusden, in an 1835 letter to the Archdeacon of Australia, WG Broughton, summarised the position "*... the ancient dispute respecting the proper spot for the Township was revived: opposition to the spot chosen by his Excellency for the erection of the Church has been declared by the larger population on the NW side of Wallis Creek, and followed by a Subscription for one on their side amounting to £590: that in the Township (East Maitland) does not yet reach £300 ....*". Eventually it was decided that churches would be built in both places and whilst we will concentrate on the East Maitland Church, the original churches of St Peter and St Mary the Virgin were built in tandem with a priest (Rev Stack) appointed to the new parish in 1838.

Rusden requested of the authorities that a quantity stone from the quarry adjacent to the Glebe be reserved "*.... so that the new Church might spring from the same handsome materials as the Catholic Chapel ....*" Whilst land had been reserved on Stockade Hill and later "*...near the Catholic Chapel ...*" for a Church, it wasn't until 1836 that His Excellency approved the two and a half acres fronting Newcastle Street and bounded by Banks and William Streets, the greater part of which remains today as our property at East Maitland.

The foundation stone for the new Church of St Peter was laid on 20<sup>th</sup> March, 1838 by Bishop Broughton. The Church, designed by James Hume had sufficiently progressed that by "*... July, 1838, the first instalment of the expense had been paid and that the second was due in a fortnight.*" Hume was described as a Scottish ... '*carpenter, a Presbyterian and quite ignorant of Church architecture ...*' That Hume was responsible for the design of 8 Anglican and at least 5 Presbyterian churches said more about the lack of church architects available than any architectural talent. Even then the Church at East Maitland was described as the most modest of Hume's designs.

Unfortunately, the original plans of the old St Peter's have been lost but it has been possible to derive the measurements from a scale plan drawn by ET Blackett in 1875 as part of the design of the 'new' St Peter's. The building was internally 76 feet long and 30 wide and was more or less situated on the spot now occupied by the Ministry Centre.



Progress was slow and at the end of 1839 Broughton lamented that his churches at East and West Maitland were still in an unfinished state but finally, on 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1840 a "*... licence under the Episcopal Seal was granted for the celebration of divine service in the New Church at East Maitland...*". Finally, on St Peter's Day, 29<sup>th</sup> June, 1843 Bishop Broughton consecrated the Church of St Peter at East Maitland, St Mary's at (West) Maitland being consecrated the previous day.



Even then, Broughton's description was far from glowing when he described St Peter's in the following words; "*St Peter's is a stone edifice, with square headed windows, and flat ceiling; without tower, porch, chancel, or any external sign to denote the sacred purposes to which it is appropriated...*".

In 1877, renowned local architect, JW Pender, produced detailed plans to repair the Church and add a Chancel but his recommendation was that a new Church be built. Such was the fate of the 'old' St Peter's and after the opening of the 'new' Church on 29<sup>th</sup> September, 1886, it stood derelict until demolition at the end of 1890.

References:     **A History of St Peter's, East Maitland** .... James Wadell (1996)  
                  **A 'Short' History of Maitland** .... Maitland & District Historical Society (2014)

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## Who? What? Where? People of 19<sup>th</sup> Century High Street, Maitland

**By Val Rudkin, 2015**

The stories contained in this book are an attempt to paint a picture of the development of High Street's commercial centre by looking at

Who?   The people who opened their business on High Street

What?   The nature of that business

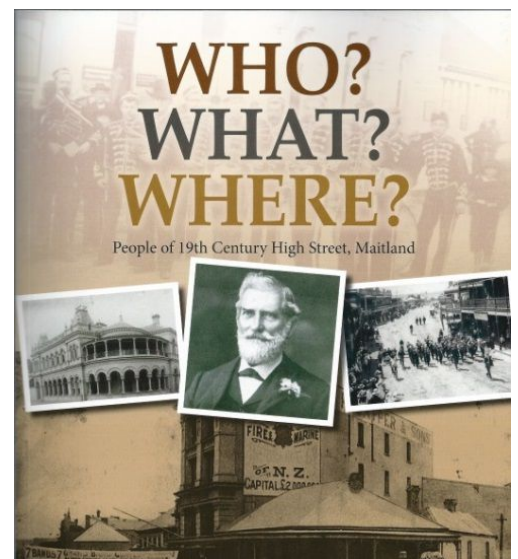
Where?   The location on High Street

High Street begins at Wallis Creek Bridge and ends on Campbell's Hill. With the building of the Great Northern Railway it was bisected by a rail crossing adjacent to the High Street Station. This is where the main business district began.

This is not a complete history, and with the ever changing face of business on High Street, there are still many more stories to be told.

This is an Historical Society publication, written by Val Rudkin, with all proceeds directed to the Historical Society.

Available from the Maitland and District Historical Society, or at McDonalds Bookstore, High St.                   \$25.00 ( + \$8:50 postage if required)



## The state of the roads!

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The first thing which strikes the traveler after leaving Maitland is the abominable - no milder word is expressive enough - state of that portion of the road from the Spreadeagle public-house to the corner of the fencing on the right-hand side, where a bye road leads off to Anambah, Rosebrook, and other places. The road here is certainly disgraceful, and requires immediate attention at the hands of the authorities.

To give an idea of what it is like, I may mention that there are several holes two feet and more in depth, and into which if a vehicle, going at only a moderate pace, was to go, a smash of some kind must be the result ...

One thing, I think, is very clear - viz , that the Government, so long as they keep toll bars on the road ought to expend money enough upon it to at least allow of vehicles travelling it without danger of accident, the money at the gates is collected ostensibly for the repair of the road, and it is unfair to the gate-keepers, who lease the toll bars under the belief that the road will be repaired, and also to the public that no such repairs should be effected.

A small beginning, I should mention here, is now being made to mend that portion of the road above referred to, near the Spread Eagle, and also to say 1000 yards of gravel near Falkiners place, higher up, above Belford. But these repairs are only trifling and not a hundredth part of what is actually and urgently required, nor is there likely to be much more done so long as the customary grant is withheld, as it has been for the last two years.

**The Maitland Mercury & Hunter River General Advertiser, Thursday 31 August 1865**

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Maitland council rejects call for compensation for pothole damage to cars.

A Thornton resident has labelled Maitland City Council "grossly unfair" for not compensating drivers for damage to their vehicles caused by potholes.

Michael Burg is one of a number of residents who has approached the council for financial compensation after a run in with one of the city's potholes. His son Christopher was driving along Weakleys Drive at Thornton when his new ute landed in a large pothole earlier in the month.

"I had seen the pothole there before and it still hadn't been fixed."

**Maitland Mercury, Thursday 21 January 2016**

## Photographers of Maitland, 1845-1900

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This new website, created by Judy Nicholson, provides details about photographers who worked in Maitland between 1845 and ca. 1900.

Some of Maitland's photographers remained for only days, while others stayed permanently, setting up business and becoming part of the local community.

Meet photographers such as Elijah Hart, Morris Moss, Henry Beaufoy Merlin and Ernest Cameron (your family may have been photographed by Cameron, 305 High Street).

<http://www.photographersofmaitland.org/>



## Diary Dates 2016

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Meetings are held at the Historical Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street  
Rooms are also open each Wednesday and Saturday, 10am to 3pm.

### March

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup>                      Guest speaker 5.30pm

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup>      **Annual General Meeting**      5.30pm

The Annual General Meeting provides a fantastic opportunity to be more involved with your Historical Society! 😊

*Bulletin Editor wanted* – after 5 years I'm taking a break so it's your chance to become a media mogul!

*Judy*



**Victoria Bridge**  
**Spanning Wallis Creek,**  
**Maitland**  
**Linking East and West Maitland**