



Souvenir ❖ ❖

... of the ...

Maitland Flood.

1913.



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Brief Synopsis of the 1913 Flood.



Rain began on the Tuesday of the preceding week, and continued for several days, being very heavy all along the Hunter Valley. There had been a fresh in the river a week or so before this heavy downpour, and much of the low-lying portions of the district were inundated. Owing to this, the river began to rise almost immediately at Maitland. On Thursday night, word was received from Singleton that the river had attained a height of 47 feet there, and the inhabitants of the lower parts of Maitland began to prepare for the worst. The water rose quickly on Thursday night, and early on Friday morning, May 16th, had reached 36 feet, and was still rising. The official record says 36 feet 6 inches as the height of the flood, but there are many who claim that the water reached a higher point than that. It is difficult to say, however, as the gauge was washed away. Early on Friday morning, the water began to pour into High Street, through a laneway near the Hustlers, as well as through several shops in the vicinity. It rushed down the street at a great rate, and soon had the lower portion submerged.

It also began to trickle over the embankment near the Belmore Bridge, at the rear of Marsh's stables, but, luckily, was discovered in time, and blocked by sand-bags. At about 6.15 a.m., the river overflowed the bank at Oakhampton, and the fire bell was rung to warn those living in the direction the water was travelling. Considerable damage was wrought at Oakhampton. From Hall's Creek to Moylan's, a distance of



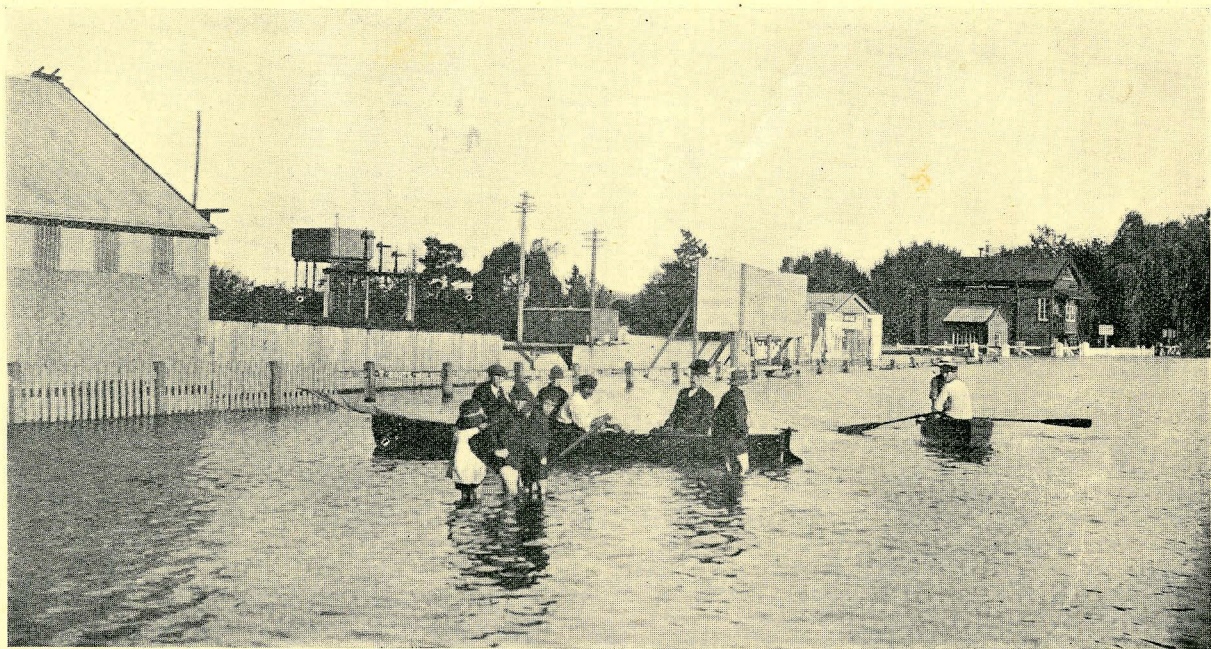
over a quarter of a mile, was a scene of desolation and destruction, far worse than that occasioned by the memorable 1893 flood. A number of houses were wrecked, some quite beyond repairs. A brick house, the residence of Mr. Hannan, was washed completely away, as were many out-houses and fences which stood in the path of the raging torrent. At some parts of the road the water was 8 or 9 feet deep.

Cummins' dam, a little further up the river than Oakhampton, broke during the day, and a big volume of water rushed towards the railway line, which it wrecked just north of West Maitland Station. The breaking of the dam and the embankment relieved the river considerably, and it began to fall; slowly at first, but rapidly later on. The water continued to rise down South Maitland way, and soon was over the platforms to a depth of about 18 inches. A train left for Newcastle on Friday morning, but proceeded as far as Tarro only. That was the last train that left West Maitland Station for a week. The water began to fall between Maitland and Morpeth, and on Sunday a train was run from High Street to that place, the passengers being conveyed to Newcastle by boat from there. On Tuesday morning railway communication was restored between High Street Station and Newcastle, and the following Friday it was extended to West Maitland Station. All the trains from the North terminated at Farley, and those from the South at High Street, the passengers and mails being transhipped. It is stated that this is the biggest transshipping scheme yet attempted by the railway authorities.

The line at West Maitland Station was damaged to an alarming extent, 300 men working night and day, Sunday as well, in order to restore direct railway communication with the North. A great deal of the lower portions of the town remained under water for some time.

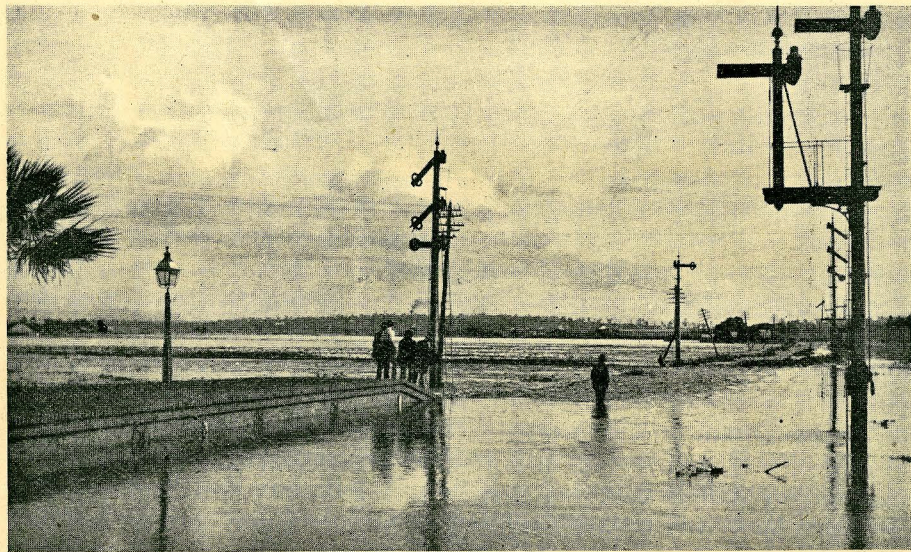
This flood differed in many respects from the much-talked-of '93, being more disastrous. It rose slowly, and stayed stationary for a long time; not so the '93, which rose and fell quickly.

Many parts of the district are still under water, as this little memento is being printed, and it is impossible to say at the present time exactly how much damage was really done. Fortunately, there was only one death occasioned by the flood—that of Mr. Egan, of Morpeth, who was washed out of a sulky. Had the water broken over at Oakhampton at night, the loss of life would, doubtless, have been great.



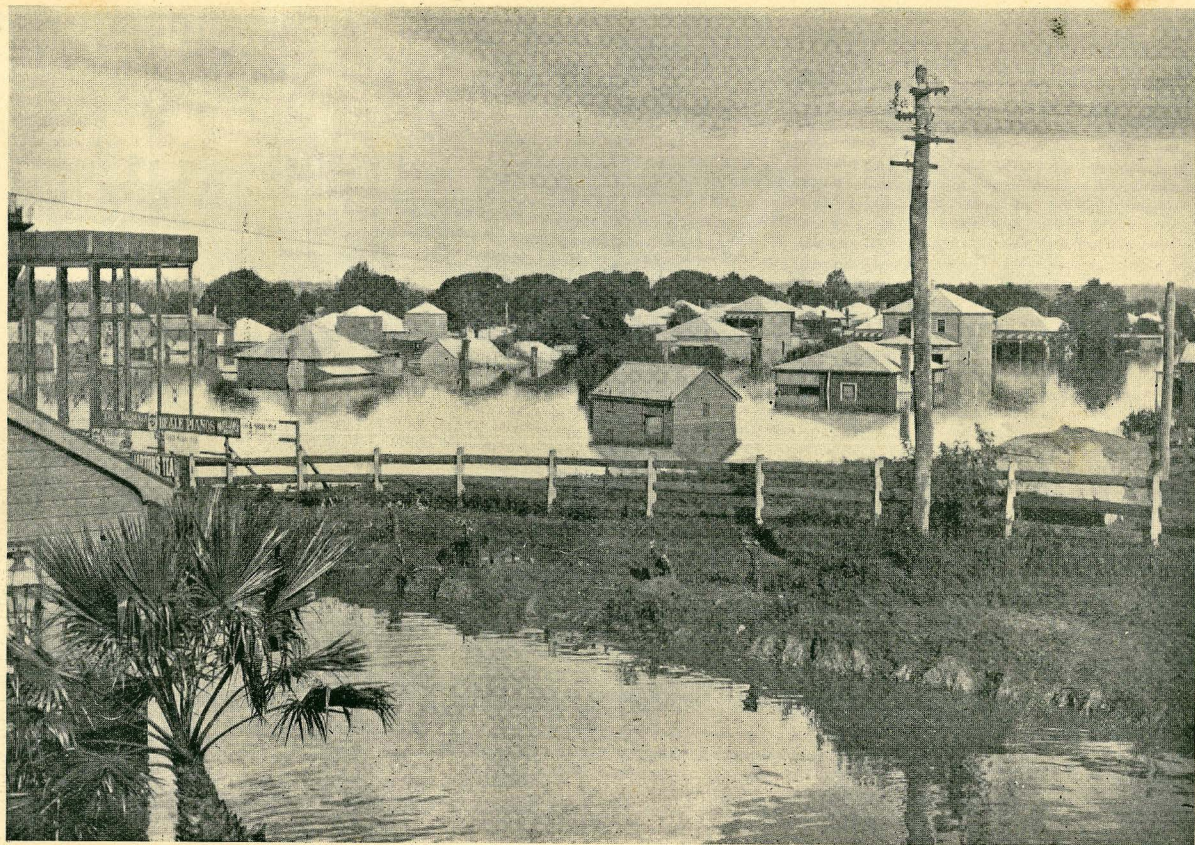
Elgin Street, West Maitland.

(Photo Frewin).



The water rising on to the Platforms of West Maitland Station on Friday morning. The railway line here was wrecked. 300 men worked day and night to restore communication with the North after the water had fallen sufficiently.

(Photo Porter).



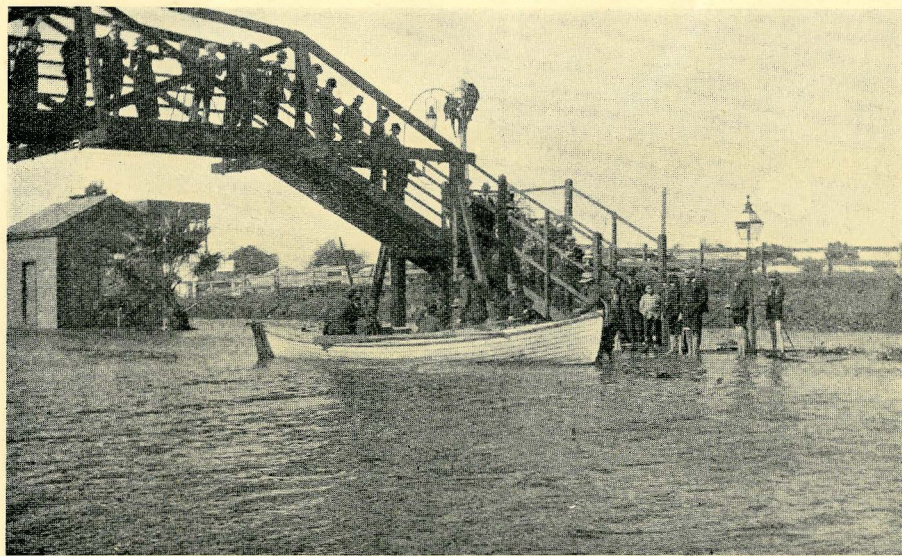
South Maitland, A good deal of damage was done in this quarter.

(Photo Porter).



The Goods Yard, West Maitland, looking towards the Town Hall.

(Photo Porter).



Motor Boat, taking passengers aboard for East Greta at West Maitland
Railway Station.

(Photo Porter).



Victoria Street, West Maitland, Dominican Convent on the left.

(Photo Frewin).



West Maitland Railway Station. The water was 18 inches deep on the platforms.

(Photo Porter).



Motor Boat leaving West Maitland for East Greta with passengers. All the available boats were brought into use, and did a roaring trade.

(Photo Porter).



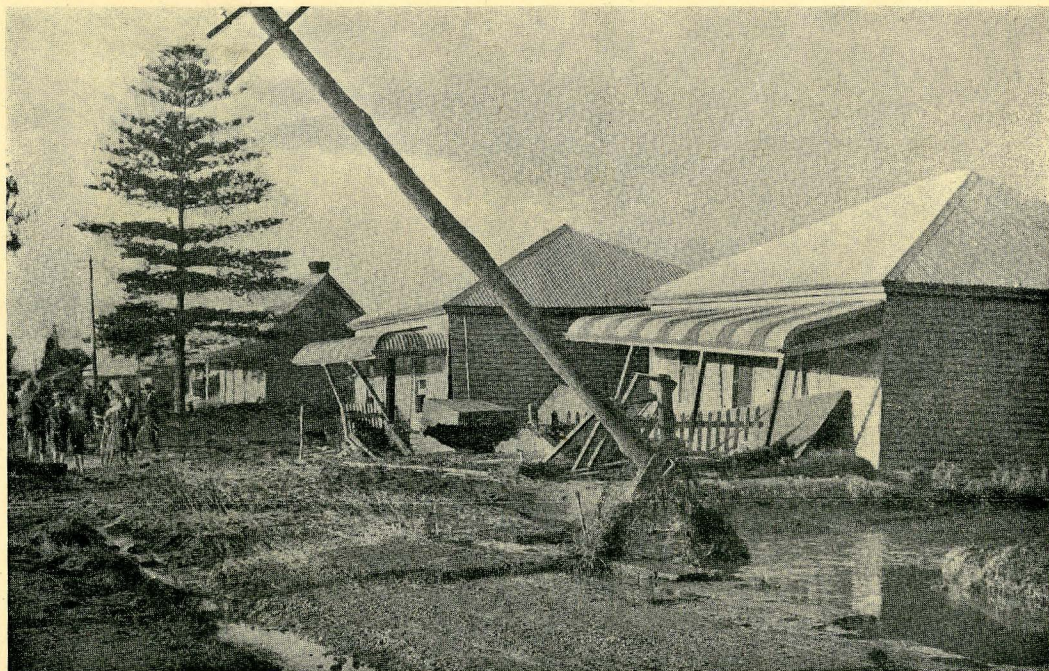
Belmore Bridge, at 10.30 on Friday morning, May 16th, 1913. The water 36ft. 6in. above summer level, and rushing at the rate of over 17 miles an hour.

(Photo Porter).



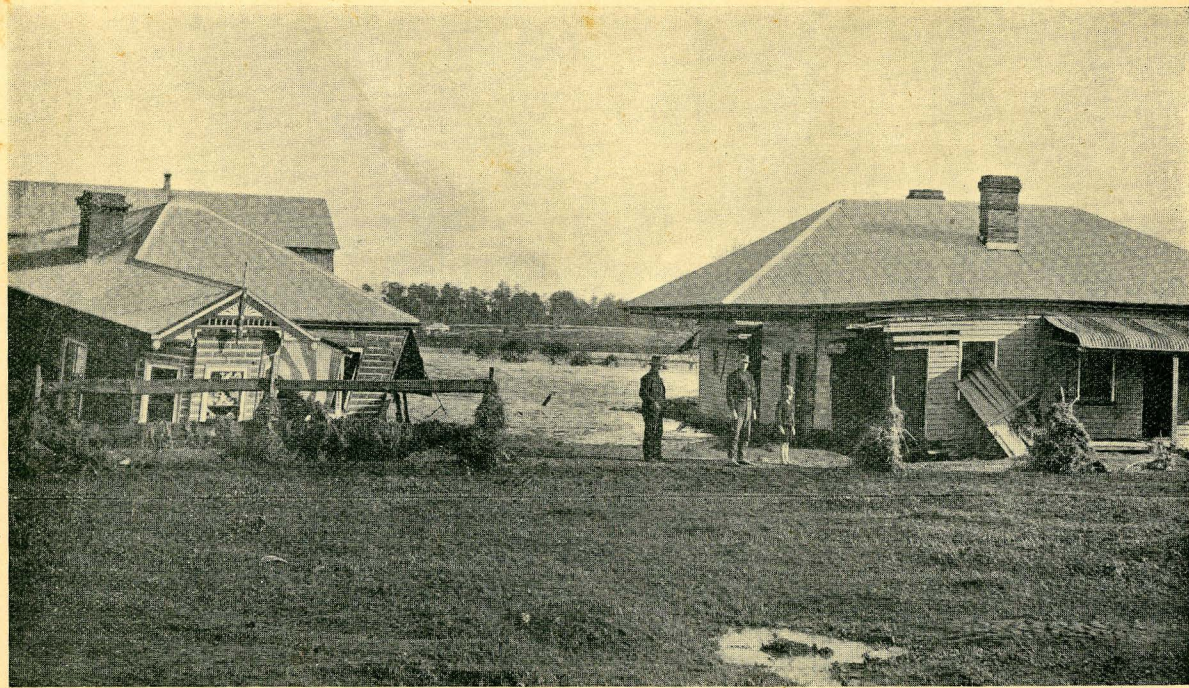
West Maitland Platforms when the flood was at its highest.

(Photo Porter).



Two houses on the Oakhampton Road. The one on the left originally stood about where the centre one now stands, and the centre one was washed some distance, and placed where it now stands. A brick cottage, the home of Mr. Hannan, was completely washed away from this spot.

(Photo, C. E. Weston).



Two wrecked Cottages on the Oakhampton Road. The one on the left was the home of Mr. Burgess.
These caught the full fury of the water. (Photo Porter).



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