

CAPTAIN WESTON'S BUGGY ACCIDENT

These days the news is full of motor accidents, but more than a hundred years ago the young fellows were being killed by horses instead. Then as now, not even the solid citizens were immune from accidents, but few modern accidents could contain so much excitement and still end as happily as this one, described in the Illawarra Mercury of 2nd July, 1887 under the heading:

ACCIDENT TO CAPTAIN WESTON

"Captain Weston of Albion Park suffered an injury on Thursday by a buggy accident. He was driving down Crown-street in Wollongong shortly after noon, and something caused the horse to shy near the Town Hall, and just as the animal made a dash forward a dog rushed at him, causing him to increase his speed despite all the expert driver could do towards holding him. Very quickly the animal succeeded in getting into quite a bolting pace, finding which, the Captain steered him straight down the street to the green instead of attempting the Corrimal-street route turns. On reaching the Green, however, a violent jolt of the vehicle over a rut jerked the driver clean off his seat on to the ground, the horse meanwhile careering madly about, until he faced Barella-street. On seeing an opening in that direction he tore away up the street with the buggy at a rate that was a caution to onlookers to keep clear of his course. Reaching Church-street, below the Commercial Hotel, he turned up to Crown-street, and getting that far he made homeward bound "tracks", much to the consternation of very considerable numbers of people who made way for him, as if he were a runaway tiger. Onward he dashed at the same furious rate, until about half way between the town and the crossroads the buggy attached to him collided with Mr. Alick Osborne's bread-cart, the result being that he and the vehicle there parted company, only a piece of timber hanging on to the torn harness. Away he still sped in that rig-out as far as Cobbler's Hill, where he was overtaken and captured by Mr. W. Swan. Captain Weston quickly picked himself up,

and with others who rushed to his assistance proceeded to the Queen's Hotel, where Dr. Lee on examining him found that one of his shoulders was dislocated, in addition to his being scratched and bruised to some extent. The dislocation having been adjusted, the gallant Captain was soon afterwards driven home to Albion Park by Mr. M. S. Moriarty. Remarkable to relate, this is the eighteenth instance of fracture or dislocation of bones that he has suffered, from time to time, in connection with horses. A better horseman than Captain Weston there is not in Australia, and it will also be seen that he is also a scarred hero in that line."

Frank's note: Having personally experienced a bolting horse in a sulky accident from which I emerged with two broken arms and a splintered jaw, my sympathy is with the gallant Captain rather than the horse. Such accidents were not confined to the males of the species either. For example, Lady Fitz Roy, wife of the Governor, was killed at Parramatta on 7/12/1847 in a runaway carriage; and my great-grandfather's sister Matilda Musgrave was killed in a sulky accident, presumably here in Wollongong, on 27/03/1846, both victims of bolting horses.