

The End of the Bungaree Police Station

This information was gleaned and put together by the students and teachers of the Bungaree Primary School from newspaper articles, including the coroner's report. This was done as part of a unit conducted in 2015

Date of crash was Saturday, March 27 at 2am, 1976.

The name of truck company was Brown and Mitchell. It operated a Melbourne to Adelaide service. The truck was driving east towards Melbourne. The truck was unregistered and uninsured. The driver's name was William Holloway. Mark Holloway was a passenger.

The truck collided head-on with a Holden sedan. The car driver, Michael Walsh, 18, was driving west, towards Ballarat. Earlier that night he had visited two hotels in Ballarat, and then went to a party in Clayton Street where he had some more beer. He was driving home after dropping a girl (Helen Desailly) from the party home in Bungaree (she lived in the house next to the school). He was intending to go home to Brown Hill the back way through Pootilla, which was the way he drove out. But he missed the turn off. He had his high beam on and was on the north side of the road, which means he was on the wrong side of the road. He was still looking for the turn-off when the truck struck him. He escaped with serious injuries, including a broken shoulder, cuts and knee injuries. He had an alcohol reading of 0.170. He was fined \$150 and had his licence cancelled for 6 months.

The truck swerved to miss the car when the truck driver realised the car was on the wrong side of the road. He swerved, but they still collided. The front, left wheel of the truck drove over the car and nearly flipped the truck onto its side. The truck then veered into the station residence. It smashed through a fence and plunged 10 metres into the house.

Three bedrooms were wrecked and two bedrooms were badly damaged.

Constable Dermott Bevern was in Police Station, and had been asleep. He had children, including a son called Mark, who was pinned under the truck with a compound fracture. His wife's name is Thelma, 48, had shoulder and neck injuries. She was in a back bedroom. Catherine was a daughter, 17, who fractured her cheekbone as she was in a back bedroom and was trapped under

a wardrobe. The other kids are Mark, 16 and Tom Elliott, 17. They were not injured and were in a front bedroom. Brett, 12, was in a bedroom next to the office as was not injured. He is in one of the photos.

He had two visitors. Tom Elliott, 76, was his father-in-law, who was in a front bedroom. He sustained serious spinal, chest and shoulder injuries, as well as heart and lung. He was taken to Ballarat Base, and then transferred to the Austin hospital. He died five days later in the Austin hospital in Melbourne on April 1 of heart and lung complications, at 3:30am. He was found in pile of rubble.

Tom Elliott had a son, aged 39, (Tom junior) who was trapped under the truck for an hour and a half with a broken leg. He was carried by the truck through at least one wall, and was found at the back of the house lying on a mattress, which had saved him.

A policeman attending the scene of the accident was Sergeant K J Williams.

Graeme Hodge, owner of the truck, sold his livestock truck later that year.