



NEWSLETTER

March 2013

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

# MUSEUM

Cnr Stuart & Myocum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: FRIDAY 10 AM – 12 PM

MARKET DAY (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) 9 AM-1 PM

## Depression Defaults

In Apr32 the *Presbyterian Young People's Club* morphed into the *Mullumbimby Presbyterian Fellowship Association* and echoed Mr Marx in declaring that *There is an ideal Communism which is quite in harmony with Christianity. One of its ideals as expressed in the words "from each according to his ability; to each according to his need"...*, was a slogan to warm their parents' Country Party hearts.



Presbyterian Fellow Travellers Association 1932

Back Row L to R: J. Sheather, Stan Stephens, Allan Venn, Fred Graydon, Tom Graydon, Gordon Weaver, Garry Lancaster, George Boles, Ron Roberts.

2nd Rear: Mal Muirhead, Don McLennan, Harold Anderson, Rev Bert Wotherspoon, Arthur Snow, Mrs Wotherspoon, Bert Myerson, Nev Gibson, Bob Reddacliff, Mavis McCowan, Joyce Muirhead, Clarrie Blanch.

3rd Row: Lilly McKenzie, Jean McCowan, Gladys Reddacliff, Nora Graydon, Phylis King, Julia Graydon, Edna Gibson, Ally McLennan, Kath James.

Front Row: Eleanor Young, Daph Fenwick, Mercia Biddle, Olive Blanch, Nell McCowan, Myra Biddle, Jean McLeod.

Two weeks later the Star reported that *The dole list grows larger with each succeeding week in Mullumbimby. Last week it was 125; the week before 118, which was probably the prompt in Jun32 for the Salvos to step up activity in providing warm coverings for the winter, for those who, through economic stress, cannot afford to buy them...*, while their main customers at this time could be found under Federation Bridge and in the sheds at the recreation ground and swimming pool.

At the same time the Council got an Unemployment Relief Grant which *will provide employment for 16 men and for the purpose married men only have been selected.... Of the works now in progress £610 is involved. The Commonwealth Employment Council has made £443 available for the payment of wages on the understanding that the Council supplied all plant and materials at a cost of not less than £167, and has stated on what works the Council MUST spend the money.... The Council is prepared to go still further to help the less fortunate in our midst by probably subsidising further grants, in return for which it does*

*expect the gratitude and loyal co-operation of those whom it is striving to benefit....*

*Ald Arnold said a lot of criticism was being made as to the way in which the money is being spent. The Mayor is entitled to expect the co-operation of the public. Ald Starr said that the people who were doing all the criticism were those who think it too much trouble to come forward once in three years to record their vote. Out of nine hundred on the roll, only a little over three hundred recorded their vote at the last municipal election. Nor did the armchair critics at the 17Jul32 AGM of St Thomas' Anglican Church at Brunswick Heads display goodwill towards the Shire in its choice of relief works: Brunswick residents do not think that £500 just spent in relief of unemployment was expended as well as it might have been....*

The Shire was being pushed by the Mullumites to make the road to Uki its major unemployment relief undertaking in 'A' Riding. *Some seventy people attended a meeting in the School of Arts Committee Room on Monday night (15Aug32) to hear Mayor **Latter** say ...it was one of the pet projects of the old Mullumbimby Progress Association some thirty years ago.... President **Banner** of the Byron Shire recounted how year by year Byron Shire had advocated the work being done.... They were really starting off again to bring about the amalgamation of the two shires on broad lines.... Mr R.J. **Maxwell**, President of Toolond Progress Association, Tom **Mott**, a resident of Upper Main Arm for the last 10yrs, old hand R.W. **Thompson**, and many others spoke, resulting in a resolution moved by Fred **Frost** that "this meeting support Byron Shire in its application to the Main Roads Board for the sum of £3500 to open up the road to the boundary of Byron Shire... and negotiate with Tweed."*

However, in Oct32 the Shire switched priorities to a bridge over the Brunswick, and President Banner and Engineer Smith left by Tuesday's boat to interview the Minister for Public Works. *Council had been notified that the Minister would be prepared to recommend to the Unemployment Relief Council that a grant be made for the work (half free, and half at 4 per cent repayable in 20 years), provided 90 per cent was spent on engaging unemployed, and the work was by contract. Fourteen tenders had been received.... Council decided to recommend that the tender of J. Hurll and Co., for £2156 for steel construction, and that of Balgue Construction Co for £4925 for erections, be accepted.*

But they got a knock back on design and funding when *The Department of Public Works wrote to the Council last Monday (5Dec32) offering £1500 grant and £1500 loan at 3 per cent for an £8000 concrete bridge, provided the council found the balance.... Cr Snow described it as a Christmas "knock out" and not the Christmas Gift as was anticipated. Begging to the Unemployment Relief Council was not an option as the work could not be done economically by day labor as it was of such nature that experienced men would have to be employed.... A discussion followed regarding relief for unemployed over Christmas, the Councillors expressing a desire to assist the unemployed, and it was decided to apply for a grant and Mr Budd will be asked to press for consideration in view of the fact that last year the council did not receive a grant.*

By 1933 the Depression's peak had passed and the Government began freeing up the purse strings, Budd MLA advising the Shire in Jan33 that the Unemployment Relief Council could spare £3000 (half grant, half loan), and in Feb33 that the Department of Local Government will throw £8000 at them for the bridge, half grant and half loan over 20yrs at 3% interest, which they accepted with alacrity as the old punt was in urgent need of hospitalisation. *The money is made available for the relief of unemployment, but the council has authority to have the work carried out by contract, although 90 per cent of the employment must be obtained through the nearest unemployment bureau....The work will occupy about 12 months and give employment to about 20 or 30 men....*

In Mar33 they called tenders for *The bridge, which ...will be a six span concrete structure and be a very handsome design...*, and in Apr33 the Sydney firm of Monier won the job with a bid of £5255/4/8. *The low tender price only went to show the changed times we were passing through.... The result of the tenders called for this particular work went to prove that councils could not estimate truly the cost of any big work....* By Jul33 the job was well under way, including the 'Hainsville to Ferry Road' upon which the excess money was being spent.

At this time too, the efforts of Les **Lindsay** of Main Arm and Cr **Banner** of Wilson's Creek in pursuing the Uki Road scheme had resulted in a visit by Mr Vincent, the Minister for Mines and Forests. In Jul33 he, accompanied by Budd MLA, Mayor **Latter**, Ald **Bridgland**, Secretary **Mott** of the Toolond Prog Assoc, Tom Rummery of the Forestry Department at Goonengerry, Dave **Hollingworth** of the local mill, and a host of others, *inspected the Forest Reserve between Upper Main Arm and Uki with the view of deciding the suitability of the Reserve for settlement.... Mr T. Mott strongly supported the proposal and submitted figures to substantiate his claim that the land inspected that day was worth considerably more under settlement than being retained as a Forest Reserve....* In Aug33 Mr Vincent said he would approve the revocation of the Forest Reserve *...on condition the councils concerned construct the road to connect Main Arm and Uki roads in order to give the settlers on this land access...*, which prompted the PPU to petition the respective councils to get on with it asap.

The next grand plan for soaking up the free money being bandied around was provision of a water supply for Mullum, although the Anglican Rev Rowlands attempted to keep people focused on the unemployment part of the equation: *Today in Australia there were men walking the roads who a few years ago occupied honourable and skilled positions. There is the hopelessness of youth, and instanced how thousands of boys and girls were leaving school every year with nothing to do. In a short time the army of youth will become a charge upon, and a menace to the community. We read lately of hunger marches in England, he added. The crowds were controlled by soldiers with fixed bayonets.... We all*

## Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by and for the members of the BVHS

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Public Officer: Susan Tsicalas

### All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

\*Please leave material with Sarah or Liz  
Tues Wed Thur 10 am - 2 pm.  
Or email to:  
bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au

**NEXT MEETING**  
**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013**  
**1.00 pm**  
**See you there!**

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Wednesday 3rd April 2013.

**MUSEUM HOURS**  
**Friday 10am - 12pm**  
**Market Saturday 9am - 1pm**

BVHS Newsletter is produced by NORTEC Work Experience Participants and BVHS Inc.



*know something of the troublous times through which Germany has passed since the war and last week we read of a setting up of a Dictatorship. There is trouble in Ireland and we do not know how it will affect the British Empire. Even in Australia we have had our troubles also (although Mullum was spared the 'Dole Questionnaire' riots), and many evidences of disloyalty... There is gross immorality in our city and county towns. There is not only the laxity of youth, but the infidelity of married people. Too often the church is used as a cloak for sin, but marriage does not cover up that sin.... Now, I would draw your attention to our Lords predictions of His coming..., which were much the same as those preached in the Gospel Tents at Bruns over Christmas.*

### The Water Scheme

*In Jul33 The Department of Public Works has submitted to the Mullumbimby Municipal Council a draft proposal for the installation of a water supply at an estimated cost of £15,000. The scheme provided for a gravitation supply from the present weir, which impounds water for the hydro-electric undertaking.... Ald **Bryant**: I am going to vote against it every time, both here and at the referendum. The town cannot pay for it. If we had industries here it would be different.... But the Mullum Star was happy with The firm stand adopted by the Mayor ...in exercising his casting vote to allow the ratepayers to vote on the question.... It is difficult to understand the attitude of half of the aldermen in refusing to allow the ratepayers the right to say whether they desire a Water Supply..., but we hasten to compliment Ald **Latter** and his two colleagues (**Bridgland** and **Slogrove**) on their impartial attitude towards the people of this Municipality....*

*The following week Mayor **Latter** continued the hard-sell with a letter to the property owners, ratepayers and citizens.... It is my unenviable lot to have the reign of Government through the two worst years of the depression. Yet this depression offers our citizens an opportunity that ordinary years and average times would never present, and this generation will never see again.... There are many homes in this town that do not possess a bath..., whilst a shower would be within the reach of all once water is laid on.... The large sum of money paid in steady wages in this town at this time, is of more value to us now than at ordinary times, while the personnel of your present council constitute sober, steady, cautious men, who possess no extravagant ideas, but men who demand value for money..., and cheap money will not be available for long. The proposal to be submitted to the ratepayers is to borrow £17,000 at 3 per cent, repayment in forty years....*

*He followed up with a public meeting a week later, proposing to pay for it all by imposition of Rates at 1d in the £ on the UCV subject to a minimum of £1 per vacant block, so the 285 occupied and 162 unoccupied blocks of various categories would yield £1031/7/4 per annum. Countering his arguments was 'the block of three' (Bryant, Starr, Arnold) in the harmonious Council. Ald **Starr** expressed his disappointment at such a small meeting. He considered that more should have been present, particularly the young people. He did not think that the aldermen should be asked to carry responsibility of important matters, and contended that the ratepayers should attend such public meetings and give the aldermen a guide as to their requirements. He opposed the water scheme and considered that the aldermen in favour of it were like the child whose eyes were too big for its stomach..., and he was supported by Labor man Ernest Hollis **Neath** and layman George **Pullinger**.*

On 27Jul33 the Mullum Star, in the last editorial before the poll, continued

the high-pressure salesmanship. It is hard to understand the disloyalty of many Mullumbimby Citizens towards their own town and district.... Those saner thinking people who attended the public meeting... were shocked to hear remarks of certain individuals who openly decried the ability of this town to withstand the burdens of its present or future obligations.... The discourteous reception which he (the Mayor) received from a section of the audience was unworthy of any community.... But in spite of a few discourteous outbursts, such as "the town has gone to blazes," etc., we find that it is almost as difficult to get a suitable empty house in Mullumbimby at the present time as it was during the boom years. This means that Mullumbimby has held its own, despite the difficult period we are passing through.... Half of the money is being lent to Mullumbimby by the Government at a low rate of interest, the other half is given to us as AN ABSOLUTE GIFT, so that we can do our part to put the unemployed into employment. Our unemployed cannot all "grow vegetables and sell them" so some other method of employment must be found....

Alas, it was all in vain. There are about 300 ratepayers on the roll and the total votes polled were 135, giving a majority against the scheme of 35 (87 v. 48). Mayor **Latter** ...referred to the fact that mostly aged people had voted, and also that less than half the ratepayers had exercised the privilege. He respected the views of those who had voted against the scheme, but deplored the apathy of those who took such little interest in their own affairs to refrain from voting at all....

Peter Tsicalas

## MUSEUM NEWS



### REMINDERS

**Membership fees are now due for 2013**

Please see the form below.

**Monthly meeting** – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at 1.00pm

**Acquisition meeting** – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 1.00pm



### Mullumbimby High School

The Year 9 students with a history elective visited the school this week to begin exploring how history is constructed. It was delightful to work with these students.

Thanks to Lorrie for organising it with the Year 9 History teacher.

Left: In the shed discovering the uses of some of the items

Right: In the school room after a discussion on research sources.



## RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP 2013

Annual Membership Fees	Payment Options	
Adults \$15 Students \$5 Printed mailed copy of newsletter \$5 p.a.	<i>Cheque/postal order payable to</i> The Secretary Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc PO Box 378 Mullumbimby 2482	<i>Direct deposit</i> Bank: Westpac BSB: 032 583 A/C: 201192 Include your name/s

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