



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

# MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

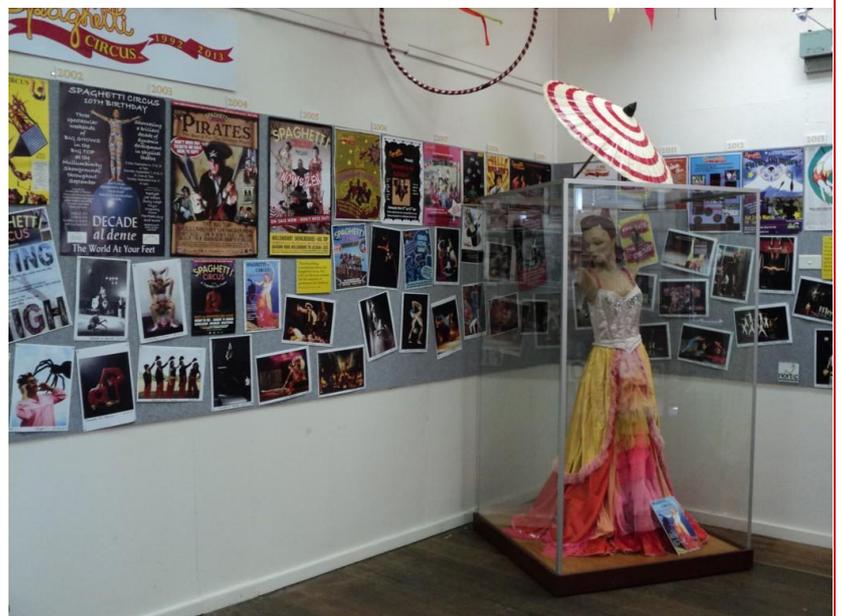
October 2013

Cnr Stuart & Myokum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: FRIDAY 10 AM – 12 PM

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

## MUSEUM NEWS



Spaghetti Circus was the feature of the September market both inside and outside the museum, providing lots of colour and fun. Come and see the exhibition which will be in the museum for the remainder of the year. Special thanks to Nortec participants for setting up the display. Great job!

**FOR SALE: T-Shirts \$20** each as modelled by our president, Stephen. Available from the museum in all sizes.



### REMINDERS:

**Monthly meetings:** 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month at 1.00 pm

**Accession meetings:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month at 1.00 pm

**Market meetings:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday of the month at 1.00 pm



**UPDATE:** The cruise on the Richmond River advertised in the last newsletter has been postponed to **19<sup>th</sup> October 2013**. If you are interested bookings can be made at the Ballina Visitor Information Office 1800 777 666 or the Wardell Post Office 66 834 101.

## Anzac Revival

*Mullumbimby must surely be sunk deep in the slough of apathy, and lost all sense of gratitude, remembrance, and civic obligation to have ignored so completely, as it did on Tuesday, any observance of Armistice Day. Those who resided in the town that day twelve years ago, when the news came through that hostilities had ceased, and an armistice declared, could not help contrasting the momentous occasion with that of November 11, 1930. How joyous the church bells clanged and the entire population gathering in front of the Post Office gave vent to their pent up feelings in divers ways.... Motor horns hooted as cars rushed madly round and round the town, laden even to the running boards, with over-wrought flappers aboard madly clanging kerosene tins and otherwise making a din.... and it was vowed that the occasion would NEVER be forgotten.... it seemed to be by common accord that THE DAY, be it said to Mullumbimby's shame, was ignored....*

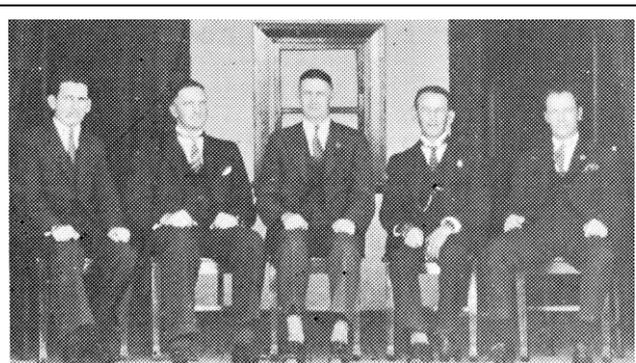
That editorial was possibly the work of Norm **Rollo** if not proprietor Mrs Cameron, one or the other wielding the over-the-top-pen at the following Anzac Day: *The men of Anzac! For them will there ever be a fair remembrance and a tender pride. We in our little hour may pause awhile to do them reverence. Nothing was in their hearts but love of country, the pure flame of patriotism that will shine down the centuries with undiminished splendor. They, the fine flower of our race transmitted us on that fateful April day into a nation. Linked in a unison of spirit, they marched breast forward, counting not the cost that comes from reckless valour.... "What wonder if their glory liveth when all dissemblers have passed away..., and segued into a pep talk on current history:*

*Selfishness, greed, tyranny and injustice against which our men fought have the upper hand today. These things are reflected in our Governments. There has been talk of repudiation. Was that the spirit of the Anzacs? They regarded their sacrifices as their duty.... We are in danger of being overwhelmed by a worse evil than that from which our soldiers delivered us. We need to beware of the enemy in our midst - Communism.... Once again the clarion call comes to us to honour our dead....*

By the time of the Annual Reunion of Nov32 there had been a big re-build in RSL strength, with over 100 Diggers attending, including 6 'camped on the road', but at the AGM in Feb33 Secretary Rollo reported that *There are 23 financial members on the books. Attendance at meetings was poor... and some lapsed through want of a quorum....* At Mullum's following Jubilee Celebrations of Jun33, the Souvenir Booklet records that the RSL had been revived in 1927 with a membership of 26, although *...it fell so badly in 1932 that determined effort to hold the fort was begun at the annual re-union on 12th November, 1932. The present membership of the sub-branch is 47....* But despite a recruiting drive, by the AGM of Feb34 Secretary **Rollo** was lamenting that *...it is hard to understand why so many of our fast diminishing numbers do not join....*

Nevertheless, he did report a growth in membership to 54, which included the 10 who were taken on strength when the Billinudgel branch folded. But due lack of money they figured *...that assistance could be no longer afforded Diggers on the road.* (Billinudgel was re-formed in Oct34 with 20 members, 8 of whom depleted the Mullum branch.)

At the Mullum AGM of Jan35 Treasurer Flanagan's report disclosed *the League has expended an amount of £28/12/2 on sustenance to Diggers on the track and in need of food, and the like, during the year. The following officers were elected for the ensuing term: President Mr A.W. (Gus) **Rollo**; vice-Presidents Messrs C.K. **Sheard** (re-elected) and A. **Bartlett**; Hon Sec., Mr W. **Mackay**; Treasurer, Mr W. **Flanagan** (re-elected); Vigilance committee, Messrs Sheard, Bartlett and McGowan (re-elected); auditors, Messrs G. Lindsay and C.S. Inch; Officer in charge of sustenance, Mr A. **McCowan**.*



School of Arts and RSL Executives, 1933

L to R: N. Stewart, W.E. Evans (respective Sec and Pres, School of Arts), C.K. Sheard, R.N. Rollo, A.H. Bartlett (respective Pres, Sec and Tres, RSL)

## Anzac Vigilance

Allan McDonald ('Digger') **McCowan** was foundation Chairman of the RSL's Vigilance Committee in mid 1934, formed to ensure returned soldiers got first preference in any jobs going. His first major intervention in employment affairs occurred in May35 when Mullum Council received 30 applications for the Bangalow-based position of 'Linesman-Mechanic' and gave the nod to a 30yr old non-returnee from Millthorpe. But in this case Council was able to convince the Returned Soldiers and Sailors Employment Board that there was no qualified alternative, which emboldened the

Aldermen to support other Councils in expressing frustration with the Act.

At an RSL meeting in Jun35 the returnees moved that we view *with concern... Council's decision to have the 'Preference Clause' removed from the Statute Book and that of absolute preference to unionists substituted.... "What beats me," declared Mr Rollo, "is that the matter was passed (by the Council) without discussion; just a formal matter!...*

The Council folded and rescinded its decision, but not without a bit of face saving. Ald **Starr**...*knew of many returned soldiers' organisations who were against the recent amendment... as it was depriving the children of deceased diggers an opportunity to obtain employment. Ald Bryant: It seems funny that this council can pass a resolution and an outside body can come along and cause us to alter it....* However, 6mths later they turned around and supported the Local Government Association in having the Act amended because of its *unjust and unfair conditions..., making it practically a closed reserve for Returned Soldiers to the detriment of men who were unable to go to the Great War....*

Three weeks later (25Mar36) an RSL deputation confronted Council, Secretary **Mackay** trying the shaming approach in saying *that when these men went to the war they were promised that they would be looked after....* The position of the young men *is nothing compared with the inconvenience, suffering and risks taken by the diggers.... Mr Rollo... realised that the young men of to-day had "the wind up"..., but they ...had plenty of time to learn a profession or get a position, and they have not had the disadvantage of four years of hell....* President **Flanagan** said *...the sub-branch was the custodian of the Act in this town and... we'll police it. But this time the council was resolute, and while it sympathised with all that ...it would allow the previous decision to stand.*

At the AGM in Jan36 Secretary **Mackay** said *Sustenance... to unemployed "cobbers" on the track of £26/15/- is the greatest amount paid out in 12 months as far as our records show.... No less than 129 diggers were assisted... by our 80-strong membership. Ward's Emporium manager Bill Flanagan was re-elected President, W.H.P. Mackay was re-elected secretary, past president A.W. Rollo became a vice-president along with the Rev P.F. Tilghman (ordained an Anglican minister in the USA and became the son-in-law of Byron Bay pioneer Fred Wareham), while C.S. Inch became the new treasurer and past president Dr A.S. Coburn was anointed patron.*

The Billinudgel branch was also suffering a bit of hip pocket fatigue in assistance to ex-comrades on the track. In Feb36 President **Flowers** *introduced the subject of rations to travelling Diggers.... It had been found that immediately their 'assistance fund' became known, diggers from Cape York to Tasmania knew of it and the League was inundated with requests for assistance.... The League should look after local cases and allow travellers to pass on..., while travelling diggers who required assistance should be compelled to do two to three hours work before assistance was given....*



William Henry Flowers Jr, 1933

In Jun36 Mullum initiated the formation of a local District Council to better handle track ration administration, as well as *to give a loud mouthpiece to the sub-branches as a whole....* Alas, the alliance of the Bangalow, Billinudgel, Burringbar, Byron and Mullum sub-branches collapsed a month later when Byron *decided in view of the fact there would be little, if any, benefits accruing from the expenses incurred, it would not affiliate with the newly-constituted Council of Sub-Branches in the Bangalow-Burringbar Area. The decision has caused a mild shock in sub-branch circles....*

In Aug36 anonymous 'Digger' offered his solution to the money problem: *War relics should be scrapped and commercialised, and the proceeds utilized, with a Government subsidy, to buy track rations for men who upheld the prestige of the Empire. The writer, who is a digger, would like to draw the attention of the President of the Byron bay Returned Soldiers' Sub-branch and the President of the Beautifying Association to the "war relic" in the Railway park, Byron bay, which "Dobbin" uses as a curry-comb. They are not in keeping with the ideals of the league....They are simply a reminder of somebody's quintessence of stupidity.... They are an absolute eye-sore to the public. (So what happened to the ones at Mullum, Billinudgel and Durrumble, installed at the instigation of the RSL after WW1?)*

Mullumbimby (along with Burringbar, Byron Bay, Cudgen, Murbah and Tweed Heads) had been removed from the list of State sponsored track ration relief centres in Aug32, but in Dec36 the Government announced that *certain towns have been selected for the issue of rations to men on the track.... The towns are so placed as to allow the person to travel from one to the other in one week..., so the RSL will now be able to spend their funds in other forms of relief....* Again alas and alack, the local police were never formally advised that they were back on the approved list so the RSL continued to pick up the tab.

In the meantime the RSL had found other distractions to occupy its time and money. In Aug36 Mrs **McClintock** vacated the rent-free War Widow's Cottage in Gordon Street after a residency of 10yrs, generating a controversy over ownership

## Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by  
and for the members of the  
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Market Co-ordinators:  
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### 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 7th November**  
**2013 1.00 pm**  
**See you there!**

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> November  
2013.

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

BVHS Newsletter is produced  
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Participants and BVHS Inc.

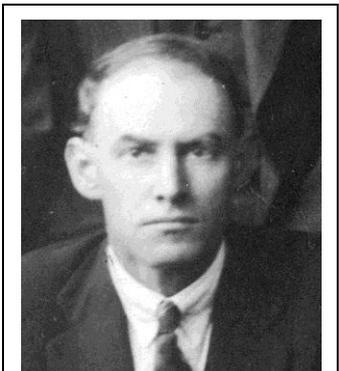


of the place. There were no trustees and neither the Land's Department (which had granted 'permissible occupancy') nor the Repatriation Department wanted to know about it. In the end a community meeting decided that the Council should become trustees and the RSL allocate the tenant. By the end of Mar37 however, the RSL was still unable to find a tenant to accept gratis accommodation, so the Council advertised the place and *accepted a tenant at a rental of 12/6d per week* after considering *several applications*.

By the AGM of Jan38 and the election of A. **McKee** as the new President, the goings-on in Europe and talk of another war were bringing the RSL back into its prominent post WW1 position. As early as Feb36 they had debated whether to *foster a unit of the 41st Battalion which is at present being reorganised on the North Coast.... A voice: Why doesn't Australia bring about compulsory military training? Like a match to kindling wood, the question raised a storm of indignant protest....*

On 18Jan39 70 recruits turned up for *the first parade of the newly-formed Mullumbimby unit of the 41st...* at the Drill hall. *During past years Mullumbimby has boasted a well-schooled unit of the Light Horse and at the present time in spite of the recruiting for the 41st battalion, an effort is being made to establish a unit of the regiment in Mullumbimby again.* Former members Messrs Sam Masterson (Burringbar), Sid **Vallance** and E.A. Gray are the organisers and state that 16 people have signified their intention to sign up.

Two weeks later the Star editorialised that the recruiting response *for the 41st battalion has exceeded expectations.... At last night's parade there was another large batch of recruits and the total number now sworn in is 95...*, while Major Masterson and Lieuts Vallance and Coleman got an attendance of 23 at their parade for the 15th Light Horse. By Feb39 *the total enlistment has reached the 160 mark and Advice has been received in Mullumbimby that no further recruits are to be enrolled...*, which decision *has not been well received locally as there are still a large number of men who desire to join....*



Sidney Vallance 1933  
(son-in-law of W.G. Rollo)

Over Easter serious training got underway when 600 men of the 41st invaded Byron Bay, inclusive of 120 Mullumites attached to the Lismore-based 'A' Company, repelled an enemy landing at Tallow Beach. And on Anzac Day *The procession through the town was the largest peace time demonstration in Mullumbimby....*

It all came to a head on 3Sep39 when those with wirelesses heard Prime Minister Menzies *declare that it was his "melancholy duty" to announce that Australia was at War...*, and two days later the old technologists read the details in the Mullum Star.

At the *most successful re-union yet staged by the Mullum RSL on 28Oct39*, patron Mr H.L. Anthony MHR uttered stirring words on patriotism, while Mr A.H. **Bartlett**, *paid a tribute to the manner in which the young men were enlisting, equalling the spirit shown in 1914.... Dr A.S. Coburn referred to the manner in which the young girls and women were again taking up the work of providing comforts for those who had enlisted....*

Five hundred citizens turned up at the Mullum station on Friday 3Nov39 to farewell the militia to training camp at Maitland, followed on Saturday by a *rousing send-off* to the 2nd AIF to camp at Liverpool. *Scenes were reminiscent of the 1914-1918 days, and as the train drew away from the station the whistle sounded a merry cock-a-doodle-do.*

By Peter Tsicalas