



NEWSLETTER
NOVEMBER 2011

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. MUSEUM

Cnr Stuart & Myocum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482
OPEN: FRIDAY 10 AM – 2 PM
MARKET DAY (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) 10 AM-1 PM

MUSEUM NEWS

THE MONTHLY MARKET

A sub-committee has been formed to formulate our submission to the council re the new draft policy that is about to go on display. We are extremely disappointed that not-for-profit organisations have been deleted from the policy. The sub-committee will also meet to compile our expression of interest when the final policy is released.

THE AUSTRALIA DAY PROJECT

BVHS Inc has offered to host the official Australia Day function on 26th January 2012. It is now Byron Shire Council's policy to rotate the official function each year round the shire – so we will get to host it about every 4 years.

MUSEUMS AUSTRALIA GRANT

We have been offered a beautiful 3m long silky oak/glass display case, which was in "The Old Bakery" in Mullumbimby from the 1930s to the 1970s when Mr Staff acquired it to store his bottle collection. He sold it to a couple at Bangalow who used it to display jewellery. They wanted to send it off to Melbourne to sell but Graeme Chorlton, a Byron Shire local, was determined that it should not leave the area and so purchased it. He has offered it to BVHS Inc at a greatly reduced price and we have applied through Museums Australia for a grant to defray some of the cost. It will be a wonderful addition to the museum.



OPENING TIMES

As of Friday 28th October we began trialling the new opening times of 10.00 am – 2.00 pm Fridays and 10.00 am – 1.00 pm market Saturdays. Your assistance in manning the desk or machinery shed during these times would be much appreciated!!

STOREROOM

Fortunately the asbestos was not major and has been disposed of by a 'qualified handler' so now we are ready to complete the storeroom to museum standards for storing paper, fabrics & photographs.

TRASH & TREASURE STALL REMINDER

This stall is a fund-raising project towards buying the museum a new PHOTOCOPIER (costing at least \$2500 with a trade-in). Please donate things you don't want any more such as books, dvds, records, costume jewellery, household items etc.



REMINDERS



Each month

- 1st Friday – 10.00 am Executive Meeting
- 2nd Friday – 10.00 am Acquisitions Committee
- 3rd Friday – 9.00 am members monthly meeting
- 4th Friday – 10.00 am Training sessions

**Brunswick Valley
Historical Society Inc.
Newsletter**

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

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President: Jennifer Elward

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Stephen Hall

Secretaries:
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Bronwyn Crook

Treasurer: Susan Tsicalas

Assistant Treasurer:
Sarah Newsome

Market Co-ordinator:
Gordon Wright

Newsletter team:
Susan Tsicalas, Liz Walton &
Work Experience Participants

Patron: Frank Mills OAM.

**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

**Friday 18th November 2011
9.00 am See you there!**

*Deadline for agenda items

Thursday 19th November 2011.

MUSEUM HOURS

Friday 10am - 2pm

Market Saturday 10am - 1pm

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



The meaning in Molebunbie

By Peter Tsicalas

It's long been accepted that the indigish word 'Mullumbimby' means "small round hill", generally because journalist/historian Norm Hewitt said so. (In *The Brisbane Courier* of 1Jul1933 he claimed ... *Incidentally, Mullumbimby in the aboriginal dialect means "a small round hill."...*, maybe repeating what he read in C.A. Irish's 1927 paper for the RAHS - '*Names of Railway Stations in NSW, with their meaning and origin*'.) Norm, who made some dubious assertions on Brunswick/Mullum history, doesn't mention which corrupted aboriginal dialect said so. Carrying on the tradition was the oft quoted *Australian Women's Weekly* of 27Apr1966, giving the meaning of various place names throughout Australia, quoting 6 different authorities, stating Mullumbimby means 'small, round hill', but probably copied from the Aug1963 edition of '*Dawn*' - *A Magazine for the Aboriginal People of NSW*'.

The first public airing of 'Mullumbimby' in this formalised spelling was made in the *Northern Star* of 13Aug1881: *Reserved from sale for water supply and camping - Clarence District: No 777 County of Rous, Parish of Brunswick, area about 240 acres. The Crown land within the following boundaries: Commencing at a bloodwood-tree marked broad-arrow over R, close to hut at Mullumbimby Grass; and bounded on part of the west by a line south 10 chains; on the south by a line east 60 chains; on the east by a line north 40 chains; on the north by a line west 60 chains, and on the remainder of the west by a line south 30 chains, to the point of commencement.* Which surveyor did the work and set the spelling in concrete is a mystery, but could have been Thomas Ewing who first mapped-out 'The Village of Brunswick' in 1880 and probably was the culprit who recommended the name 'Mullumbimbi' for one of its streets.

His fellow whitefellas (or *duggerrigai*) weren't so fussed about spelling and used phonetic variations such as 'Molebunbie' (first mentioned by Robert Smith and Robert Webber to advertise their butchery in the *Northern Star* 8Aug1882) and 'Mullembembe' (used by Stan Woodrow 22Dec85 in the first of his reports to the *Clarence and Richmond Examiner*), and all sorts of other variations in between (Millembembie, Mulimbimbi, Mullumbimdi, Mullunby...) until the surveyor's standard gradually gained ascendancy and came into more common usage from about 1886, any remaining dissenters finally routed in 1892 when the Railway Commissioners gave their imprimatur with a big sign at the station.

In her '*Dictionary of Western Bundjalung, including Gdhabal and Tabulam Bundjalung*', the oft quoted Dr Margaret Sharpe of UNE defines 'muli' as 'hill', and 'muli-muli' as 'small hill', while the late, great Ruby Langford Ginidi in her autobiography '*My Bundjalung People*' says the village of Muli Muli (aka Mulli Mulli), the name adopted by the Aboriginal Community near Woodenbong, (mainly of Githabal descent and rejecting inclusion under the Bundjalung umbrella), simply means 'hills'. Conversely, a couple of minjungbal and gidabal (aka githabal/githerbal) dissenters insist that 'small round hill' is correct for 'muli/mulli'. (And knowledgeable developers decided Muli Place was a suitable street name in Baywood Chase, at the base

of the Cooper's Shoot cliff face, and Muli Muli Avenue was appropriate for a street on flat ground at South Golden Beach.)

In her later *'Dictionary of Central Bundjalung, including Bandjalang, Wiyabal, Minyangbal and Ngahnduwal'*, Dr Sharpe leaves out 'muli-muli' and defines 'muli, mulih' as 'small hill', and implies common acceptance throughout Bundjalung Country. Specific to the Minyangbal dialect is 'ngumbiny', which she says means 'house, hut, humpy, gunya, camp'.

Given that the suffix 'umbimby' remain the headache and the 'hut' at 'Mullumbimby Grass was a prominent feature (also used as a reference point in the *Northern Star's* 'Great Flooding Debate' of 1881 – Boyd McCurdy reckoned 9May91 that *...I have seen the water within a foot of the old hut on the hill...*, the hill being 'Doran's Hill' referred to by Mr Anon 13May91 *...old timber getters ...have seen a sheet of water from what is now called Doran's Hill...*), could 'Mullumbimby', corrupted from something like 'mulingumbiny', mean 'hut on small hill'?

[Drawing a longer bow, 'Mullumbimby' may have nothing to do with small hills. The Rev Hugh Livingstone, Presbyterian Minister on the Richmond 1876-86, in his 1892 treatise *'A Short GRAMMAR and VOCABULARY of the DIALECT spoken by the MINYUG PEOPLE of the north-east coast of New South Wales'*, says 'mully' means 'that'; 'the'; 'he (she, it) here'; 'this here', which coupled with Dr Sharpe's 'ngumbiny' simply gives 'the hut' (or something)?]

The answer may lie in the Surveyor-General's files at the State Archives, assuming surveyors Ewing, Anderson, Kelly, et al, explained their recommendations for the various street/place names in a covering letter accompanying their draft maps. So the punch line is: can any Sydney-based member with time on his/her hands check this out?



SW Corner of the Mullumbimby Golf Course (Cnr of Coolamon Scenic Drive & Myocum Road)

Simpson's Town Revisited

By Peter Tsicalas

The *Northern Star* is now on-line and amongst the revelations is that **George Simpson** may have taken the mantle from Marshall as the Brunswick's first permanent white settler, if Alexander Ross of the Clarence is to be believed. Forty three year old Scotsman Ross, accompanied by his 36yr old wife Johanna and a couple of sons and daughters, did a horseback trip from the Clarence in early 1877, finding that *...Ballina is a half dead sort of township, there are many deserted houses, three or four fairly stocked stores, three ordinary public houses, a good public school, and of the churches is a fine imposing building....* Having crossed the river and paid the ferryman 1 shilling for the 1½ hr trip they headed for Cape Byron....

*We now passed this noble and useful cape, and making the beach again we come upon Mr. Jarrett's camp, with a number of men squaring and preparing long spars for launching a vessel that was driven ashore and sold to **Mr. Jarrett** for £20 (the Brilliant, beached 14Jul1876). It is now pulled up from the sea, raised on to a platform, and ready for launching as a new ship. This man exhibits great energy and perseverance in his undertaking. A community of such men would surely prosper and go ahead, which no doubt will be his lot (he died a pauper 1908 Ballina).... We are now refreshed and turn our faces on to a pretty beach of seven miles. Off we scamper, our nags cooling themselves in the briney.... At last we came up to the straight, narrow, and safe entrance, to the Brunswick River. We shaped our course to trace the river, when we presently saw three nice schooners lying quietly alongside a dyke of ballast in shore, with rafts of cedar alongside them. Having a letter of introduction to **Mr. Simpson**, we steered towards a few cottages on a height. There we found the old Scot diving into the news quite happy and contented, I may say alone here these last 20 years. He has told some of his fortunes and misfortunes, and to crown the latter his wife, family and all were lost coming out in an English ship. But though now very old he is going home to inherit considerable property....*

*After a scanty breakfast we consigned the saddles to the care of Capt. Loutitt, of the schooner "Prosper Conlon," who is here loading. Proceeding up the north side of North Creek for several miles, through ridgy country covered with heavy brush interspersed with cedar, we found roads all leading to one main road. We then returned and dined on board of the schooner. Afterwards **Mr. Simpson** took us out in his boat up the main channel. We go where it is navigable for seven miles, drawing about 3 feet. This river goes through flats, and points of bush occasionally.... Saturday morning, after a hasty breakfast, **Mr. Simpson** rowed one of the ladies up the north side of South Creek, Birmingham Mountains, for about four miles. Here are similar cedar scrubs. Returned to dinner, after which we are off up the south side of the South Arm for about three miles, through barren heath, when all at once come on large quantities of square cedar and several huts and teams. Here we enter a most beautiful brush country for miles in front, and each side about fifty feet above the level of the sea.... (does he mean King's Creek?). You can ride to the north of the three arms here and cross them at the head eight miles from the coast, and down the other side, or vice versa, and all the time in a dense thick scrub and all intersected with cedar roads. And there you can start from the Brunswick and go across to Lismore through thirty miles of the very best description of land in New South Wales....*

On Sunday morning we saddled up for returning homewards, and would have crossed the country from the north side of the Brunswick to Casino only we would be out one night. We therefore came along the beach to Byron Head, and struck off for Lismore through forty miles of dense scrub, at midday we lost two hours, having entered a wrong track by which we came back to where we had passed before. However, we got to Lismore about 9 p.m., after about 15 hours in the saddle without anything to eat.... Condensed from the 'Grafton Observer', and something may have been lost in transcription.

But assuming veracity, **George Simpson** turned up in 1857, probably as a cedar getter, perhaps an ex-seaman, remaining in the game until appointed as the pilot/signal master in ~1872. He passed on in 1887, aged 78, and his job inherited by Captain John Greenlees, who retired in 1893 and apparently not replaced.

[As with 'mumumbingi' (whatever), George Simpson's appointment as signal master may feature in State Archive files, probably with a fleshed-out C.V.]