



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

# MUSEUM

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: FRIDAY 10 AM – 12 PM

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

NEWSLETTER

April 2015

## MUSEUM NEWS



### REMINDERS

You need to renew your membership by the end of April to continue receiving our interesting newsletters.

Next meeting: Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May at 2.00pm

Next market: Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> April. Museum open 9-1.

### NORTHERN RIVERS HISTORICAL SOCIETIES ZONE CONFERENCE

The Conference is on Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> May at the Richmond River Historical Society's premises in Lismore starting at 9.30am.

**Chair:** Doug Campbell & Elaine McLean from Kyogle Historical Society

**First Speaker:** Major General J.M. Connolly AO CSC (Ret'd). Topic: The History of the Australian Military

**Second Speaker:** Angela Phippin – RAHS Affiliated Societies Committee, Ryde Local Studies Librarian

Topic: Interactive session: How RAHS can benefit us so far from Sydney.

**Afternoon Session:** Individual Historical Society reports

Morning & Afternoon Tea provided. \$5 for members, \$10 for others

Anyone who is interested in the history of northern NSW is encouraged to attend.

Please advise Penny - [history.ncoastzone@yahoo.com.au](mailto:history.ncoastzone@yahoo.com.au) or 0266 728 223 if attending or if you have any questions.

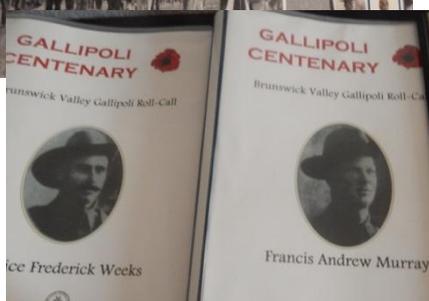
### NEW EXHIBITION

To acknowledge the centenary of Gallipoli the museum is launching an exhibition, *Brunswick Valley Gallipoli Roll-Call*, in which we profile over 30 men who went to Gallipoli and had a connection to the Brunswick. The exhibition will be ready Friday 10<sup>th</sup> but will be launched at the market on 18<sup>th</sup> and then open Wed, Thurs and Fri mornings prior to Anzac Day.

A couple of sneak previews –



Sample profiles



### SCHOOL VISIT

Mullumbimby Public School's Year 1 visited the museum in March. Their theme was 'Occupations in the Community'.

From the top:

(1) Keith Basing, the last station master at Billinudgel, regaled the children with stories of working for the railway.

(2) Dave explained equipment in the shed and the jobs they entailed.

(3) Michael, a friend of Lorrie's, showed cartoons explaining the work of a projectionist.

(4) Rubbings were made from the cattle brand boards and Michael & Brenda informed how and why they were used. Many found their family's brand.

(5) Lorrie and Stephen had the children write and post letters to their friends

**A very successful visit. Thanks to Lorrie for organizing and the cheerful support of our members & visiting speakers.**

## Unification

In Oct79 Mayor **Robinson** took out a half page advert to say *he was amazed and very disappointed at the decision of Byron Shire Council to support the Government's proposal to legislate for the amalgamation of the Mullumbimby, Byron and Tweed areas with Northern Rivers County Council for the future distribution of electricity to those areas.... BY ITS DECISION, BYRON SHIRE COUNCIL HAD DIRECTLY ASSISTED IN A GREAT STEP BACKWARDS FOR THE TWEED/BYRON AREA. It boggles the mind to know that a group of councillors could actually vote against the possible establishment of a locally controlled six million dollar plus business that would be owned by the people of the Tweed/Byron..., staffed by at least 130 resident employees with an annual wage injection of \$1,078,000 in the community. Mullumbimby once had a butter factory, a large sawmill and a brick works; Byron Bay had the headquarters of Norco and all that meant, whaling, as well as large sandmining operations.... These have all disappeared....*

As the Municipality wasn't viable without its Electrical Undertaking, *The Government's plan for the intrusion of NRCC would necessitate only a depot or district office at Mullumbimby and leave the question of headquarters of the reconstituted and enlarged Byron Shire Council still to be decided by a provisional council.... Our plan... involves a Tweed-Byron County Council headquartered at Mullum. TO SAVE ANOTHER LOCAL INDUSTRY FROM CENTRALISATION... pressure your local councillors to protest.*

But 'The County Districts Reconstruction Bill 1979' *was rushed through State parliament on 5Dec79 to ensure amalgamation with NRCC takes place wef 1Jan80. Stan Robinson said "It is going to be a blow to Mullumbimby..., and he was disappointed it did not get the support of Byron Shire.... Grafton was the only winner, gaining an enterprise with an annual turnover of \$6 million.... (The NRCC takeover of Tweed assets was subsequently postponed to 1Jul80). And in the meantime Mullum's power station, housing Five diesel-powered generators... as well as the two original hydro units installed in 1926..., had been included in the register of the National Trust of Australia... thanks to the efforts of Mrs Robyn Gray.*



Stan won the first round in May79 when the Minister for Local Government, Harry Jenkins, deferred a decision on amalgamation. (L to R: Ald Robinson, Shire President Bob Mules, Minister Jenkins, Jack Boyd MLA)

On the Local Government side of the equation, Minister Jenkins, after many ceremonies of the changing-of-the-mind, decreed that an amalgamated council, made up of a president and 10 councillors, was to be elected *on the proportional representation system with no ridings* on 20Sep80 and take over from the two separate councils wef 1Oct80.

### Electioneering

Jockeying for positions on the new council started in Jul80 when a couple of environmentalist rode their hobbyhorses into the showring, leading a parade of many others pushing a range of wheelbarrows. Don **Jones**, president of the Mullumbimby Businessmen's Association, said *The council amalgamation, NRCC takeover of the electricity supply, and local government elections had created uncertainty in the minds of many people..., and many of the candidates are relative newcomers to*

the district where once upon a time it was old familiar family names that governed local affairs.

Mayor **Robinson** then proposed *A seminar to bring together members of 'alternate' and 'mainstream' societies, to be held in Mullumbimby on 30Aug80.... "My biggest difficulty has been to get mainstream society people to come to the seminar.... "I have been concerned about the obvious divisions in the community for some time.... "If the alternates get to know us better they would find we are not the awful sort of people they think we are.... It was important to ask where society was headed and to sit down and try to come up with a better understanding of each other's desire for a full and happy life....*

*More than 100 people who attended the seminar heard Stan say Members of the alternate society should 'get their act together', look back on their successes and failures and assess the possibilities for the future.... Property owners of the alternate lifestyle spoke of the difficulties of becoming self-sufficient following their initial expenditure.... Ald Robinson said it appeared that the alternate society saw dole payments as a government subsidy covering a transitional period of life for those who left the cities for the more uncluttered rural life. Many had found it necessary to take jobs....*

Candidate Langley-Clark said *I attended that meeting..., but the dole-bludging attitude is one I condemn, especially when the latest CES figures for the North Coast area show 54 people for every job vacancy.* Peter **Rowan** of Mullum, running on a joint ticket with Terry **Hudson** of Main Arm, said *Ald Robinson claimed he did not arrange the seminar for political vote-catching purposes.... Many genuine people were able to communicate their feelings at the seminar - so-called 'straights' and 'alternatives'. It is a shame Ald Robinson chose to pointedly refuse to represent those residents at Government level....*

Colin **Scattergood** and Damien **Wilkinson** of Upper Main Arm rebuked **Rowan** for his accusation of an election stunt, stating that they had been working with Mayor **Robinson** on the idea of the seminar for sometime and its timing was mere coincidence. *We have spoken to quite a few people who attended..., and none heard Ald Robinson refuse to take action on the findings of the workshops.... We are not necessarily endorsing Ald Robinson, we are simply contending that Mr Rowan's attack on him was quite unfair and totally unjustified.*

Sixty residents and 20 candidates turned up at a public meeting called by the Mullum Businessmen's Association to argue the shire headquarters question amongst other issues (of which opacity in Council affairs was the main gripe of the new settlers). The candidates *exposed a range of issues concerning them - beach erosion, better value for rates, better communications between the electorate and the council, and greater availability of council information....*

### Final Scores

Ultimately 32 candidates contested the 10 council seats and 6 put their hands up for the president's chair, viz Eric Goyne **Davies** (ex-Mullum mayor, now retired Ocean Shores), Stanley Russel **Robinson**, Peter Martin **Rowan**, Arthur **Todd**, Robert Frederick **Mules**, Terrence John **Hudson**. Stan was also running as a Councillor in 'Group A' with his deputy mayor, Howard Arnold **Timms** (52yr old dental prosthesis maker of Mullum), and Arthur Edward **Sheldon** (Mullum's 59yr old ex-Town Clerk, now with the NRCC).

In 'Group B' were Robert Alan **Wood** (Mullum's electrical engineer until retiring to Ocean Shores 3yrs ago) and Lewis Ronald **Gamble** (45yr old proprietor Bruns Ampol Service Station for last 3yrs). 'Group C' constituted Arthur **Todd** (55yr old Englishman, current Councillor and retiree of Ocean Shores) and Isabel Merle **Siwicki** (nee Lamb, born Bangalow and partner with husband Kon in Bruns newsagency and real estate agency for last 11yrs). 'Group D' was Leslie **Giles** (58yr old current Councillor and farmer of Middle Pocket) and William Ashmore **Sheaffe** (61yr old current Councillor and farmer of Goonengerry). In 'Group E' were Peter Martin **Rowan** (31yr old jack of all and Mullum resident for last 2yrs) and Terrence John **Hudson** (32yr old resident of Main Arm for the last 5yrs). 'Group F' was Robert Frederick **Mules** (current Shire President, ex-banana grower and sawmill proprietor and Bruns resident since 1954) and Cyril Lindsay **James** (58yr old farmer of Nashua and shire councillor since winning a by-election 12mths ago). 'Group G' comprised Joyce Anudhi **Wentworth** (50yr old Ceylon-born resident of Skinners Shoot, ex-daughter-in-law of W.C. Wentworth MHR) and Sarah Louise **Lysaght** (27yr old fashion shop owner of Byron Bay and resident Bangalow for the last 7yrs).

In 'Group H' were Ian Michael **Watterson** (of Byron Bay and current Councillor), Joan Althea **Maughan** (nee Henderson, current Councillor and resident Byron Bay), Rex Stanley **Smith** (of Byron Bay) and Cleve Vaughan Michael **Whitworth** (of Byron Bay). Ungrouped were, William Vincent **Gable** (of Tyagarah), John Warwick **Craven** (of Byron Bay), Kenneth Edwin **Seaton** (of Byron Bay), Elmo John **Donoghue** (PMG retiree of Byron Bay, ex-Councillor and Mullum resident), David William **Mcllraith** (31yr old London-born macadamia grower of Upper Main Arm with 9yrs local residency), Stanley **Sigley** (born and bred 53yr old farmer of Wilsons Creek), Howard Valentine **Francis** (of Byron Bay), Lawrence William **Alderman** (60yr old retired doctor of Byron Bay with 26yrs residency Mullum, Bruns and Byron), Leonard **Chudleigh** (retired civil engineer of Mullum), Patricia Mary **Brown** (deputy president Shire Council and Bangalow resident), Gregory Carl **Hoving** (32yr old retired Navy CPO of Tyagarah with electrical business Mullum), Rhaviley **Langley-Clark** (of Byron Bay) and Leonard John **Bourne** (70yr old retired Town Clerk of Mullum).

It came to pass that Mayor Robinson defeated President Mules for the new presidential chair (3652 to 3374 after preferences), and *Elected to the new council were former aldermen **Robinson** and **Timms**, and former councillors **Bob Mules**, **Patricia Brown**, **Michael Watterson**, **Leslie Giles**, **Cyril James** and **Arthur Todd**. The only new councillors without previous local government experience are **Crs Anudhi Wentworth** and **Rex Smith**.* So governance of the new entity was left in the hands of the old guard, disappointing those hoping for a watershed moment reflecting changing demographics and social attitudes.

(Primary scores were **Robinson** 1257, **Timms** 119, Sheldon 62, Wood 130, Gamble 28, **Todd** 236, Siwicki 51, **Giles** 302, Sheaffe 183, Rowan 76, Hudson 169, **Mules** 688, **James** 261, **Wentworth** 286, Lysaght 58, **Watterson** 497, Maughan 231, **Smith** 293, Whitworth 77, Gable 61, Craven 42, Seaton 23, Donoghue 213, McIlwraith, 32, Sigley 169, Francis 89, Alderman 144, Chudleigh 69, **Brown** 541, Hoving 10, Langley-Clark 58, Bourne 215, Informal 532, Total 7202.)

## Council Chambers

*The poll for the location of the headquarters favoured Mullumbimby by 763 votes (4010 to 3249), so Shire President **Robinson** has called the first meeting of the new council at Mullumbimby Council Chambers at 10am 1Oct80.... Chris Shevallar was appointed new Shire Clerk, Gary McDonald as Shire Engineer, Jim **Fanning** as Health Surveyor, Dugal **Graydon** (former Town Clerk) as deputy Shire Clerk, and his former deputy G.R. Rose, as Chief Administrative Officer. Stan Robinson was voted an allowance of \$3000pa.*

Reg Wright's Byron News was obsessed with the Shire headquarters question, echoing the stance of his son John of the Byron Chamber of Commerce, which *condemns the information circulated by Mr S.R. **Robinson** on his case for Mullumbimby....* Immediately post election the News editorialised that the poll was *a finding the new council will do well to completely ignore. Because of misleading and misrepresenting advertising and literature circulated late last week, a completely unfair and emotional result, founded on parochial interest rather than economic necessity, has placed this poll as only serving the interests of Mullumbimby. It therefore should have little credence and is completely unreliable. An endeavour has been made to hoodwink voters into believing what can be proved to be misleading propaganda....*

In the next edition the editorial became an 'Open letter to Cr S. Robinson'. *Why, Cr Robinson, are you bent on taking Council headquarters from Byron Bay? What have we done to deserve your attacks on our history, our heritage and our heart?....* And 3wks after that: *Such is the rapid development in our immediate area... any thought of changing location of Shire headquarters would be irresponsibly turning a blind eye to what is happening locally.... It should be noted that over the years Byron Bay has more than done its share in providing a considerable proportion of pupils for Mullumbimby High School, using more electricity and providing more employment than any other centre in the Shire, and is now making a massive revenue contribution to Council by way of land sales, subdivision works and rates....*

Things were off to an entertaining start and further provoked on 6Nov80 when 250 people attended a public forum at Mullum sponsored by 12 groups in the northern end of the shire..., and passed A resolution that the Mullumbimby council offices be the administrative headquarters of the Shire of Byron.... Eric **Davies** said that while the referendum gave a 55% to 45% result in favour of Mullum, *the country areas had voted overwhelmingly for Mullumbimby (71%) while Byron Bay had gained only 28.4%....*

No subject in yonks generated more letters-to-the-editor. The Byron News continued to stir things along, and 'Justus' of Byron Bay said *How dare the fanatics who organised the Mullumbimby meeting try to enforce their will on duly elected councillors....* A separate hassle was the fact that 13 of the 17 permanent Municipal employees were transferred to the NRCC, all remaining housed at the Mullum Chambers, the ownership of which was still in dispute, NRCC claiming the place and refusing to pay rent.



New Byron Bay library under construction Aug79. (Byron Shire Council Chambers left and Byron Bay Annex of the Mullumbimby Electricity Undertaking across the road.)

Jim **Fanning** informed the Councillors in Dec80 that *Byron Bay and Ocean Shores were expected to be the two future major areas of development within Byron Shire....* Figures for the year to November 4 had been produced so the council would have accurate facts relating to development....

Tom **Kendall**, President of the New Brighton Progress Association said *The "north versus south development statement" is misleading and paints an erroneous growth pattern slanting towards Byron Bay. One can only assume its purpose is to bolster the Byron Bay claim of being the shire's paramount growth centre....* Of the 12 rural polling booths, nine favoured Mullumbimby and three favoured Byron Bay.

'Westerner' of Mullum was also unhappy that public servant Jim **Fanning** drew attention to a 'north-south divide' when

**Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter**

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

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Newsletter team:  
Susan Tsicalas & Work  
Experience Participants  
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**  
**N.B. Thursday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2015 2.00pm**  
**See you there!**

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Wednesday 6th May 2015

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

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



we should all be living in blissful communal harmony.

On a vote of 6 to 4 the Councillors bestowed the headquarters on the Bay. *Voting for Byron Bay were Crs Patricia Brown, Mike Watterson, Rex Smith, Bob Mules, Cyril James and Anudhi Wentworth.... About 50 people attended the meeting. The debate on the headquarters issue was at times heated and lasted for about two hours. The report on the issue by senior staff ran to 39 pages....* Councillors voted to *immediately start alterations, estimated to cost \$30,000, to the Byron Bay chambers....* Resentment over the decision festered and grew, along with the 'North-South' divide, providing great entertainment over many years.

By Peter Tsicalas



Shire Council in front of new library 1983.

L to R: Shire Engineer Gary McDonald, Cr Patricia Brown, Cr Bill James (elected by-election following death Cr Les Giles Feb83), Cr Arthur Todd, Cr Howard Timms, Cr Cyril James, Cr Bob Mules, Cr Stan Robinson, Cr Rex Smith, Cr Mike Watterson, Shire Clerk Chris Shevellar, Cr Anudhi Wentworth, Health Surveyor Jim Fanning.  
(Only the bold councillors returned after the 24Sep83 election.)

**BRUNSWICK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

**MUSEUM**

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