



NEWSLETTER

June 2015

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

MUSEUM NEWS

OLD & GOLD

BVHS Inc was represented at the Brunswick Heads annual Old & Gold festival with a stall in the Memorial Hall. Thanks to the members who helped man it. Many an interesting discussion was held with locals and visitors alike. Our theme for this year was 'Fashions of Yesteryear'.



Dave and Ken holding the fort

SHED FACELIFT

At the end of last year Len Hand revitalised the front of the shed and asked Jacqueline to finish it off which she has done in fine style – looks terrific. Thanks Jacqui.



Also thanks to Nortec Work Experience participants who have repainted the floor in the shed.

Widening of the North-South Divide



A promo by the Chamber of Commerce May-Jun82 (when the economic outlook was starting to look a bit shaky).

In Oct82 *The Byron Shire Council voted not to re-introduce ridings into the shire at least until after the next local government elections...* on the grounds that ridings would reinforce the North-South Divide (or at least not help in bridging the cultural gulf). President Robinson used his casting vote to maintain the present situation... when voting was locked at 5-all.... Another change was contemplated the following month when Councillors voted to hold a referendum on the question of direct election of the Shire President. But Crs Arthur Todd, Howard Timms and Les Giles oppose a change... and have presented a rescission motion to the shire clerk in an attempt to preserve the present system.... They got their way at the next meeting, backed by a petition from the mob and Stan Robinson's casting vote.

In Jan83 'The Federation of Public Bodies' (FPB) elected Roy Darby of Brunswick Heads as the new secretary, replacing Eric Davies of Ocean Shores. Mr Darby, already active in the Bruns Prog Assoc, reinvigorated the

Federation's assault on Council administration. *Where are the promised savings from amalgamation? he asked.* The council now has a staff of 54, over double the combined pre-unification total (presumably meaning indoor staff). And 61% of Council income is *now required to service past loans. With the shire continuing to take up new loans, where will it all end? If the council was a business concern the liquidators would already have moved in.*

Council's staff had grown concomitant with the avalanche of development applications over the last few years, but they at least had a workload reprieve in 1982, when *Byron Council approved a total of 727 applications valued at \$20.12 million... verses 818 applications at \$28.53 million in 1981. (In Ballina Shire, the total value of building applications approved in 1982 was \$23,603,545, a 29.33 per cent decline on the 1981 figure of \$33,401,211.)*

Council's next headache was the furore over the granting of special paid leave for Town Planner McDonald to take-up a Bond-financed trip to the USA to study marina development. The army of objectors dwelt on the conflict-of-interest, but the controversy went to the backburner with the start of campaigning for the 26Mar83 by-election, necessitated by the death of Cr Les **Giles** on 7Feb83.

By-Election

Nominees were *James Thomas Curtis, Byron Bay; Elmo (Jack) John Donoghue, Byron Bay; William (Bill) Henry James, Mullumbimby; James (Jimmy) Mitsos, Suffolk Park; Peter Rowan, South Golden Beach; and Colin Robert Scattergood, Upper Main Arm.* Upon being disqualified because of rate arrears on his South Golden Beach property, Rowan reckoned that *'If unemployment continues to increase above the present 10.7 per cent nationally, the shire could be governed by a ruling elite of councillors and the disadvantaged will be prevented by law from running for council....'*

On 10Mar83 Bill **James**, chairman of the FPB, called a public meeting at which *Recent controversial decisions by Byron Shire Council came under fire....*, with Bill adding that *the issue which had brought about the formation of the federation was still unsolved..., ie the disputed ownership of the Mullum Council chambers and the decision to locate the headquarters of the shire in Byron Bay.... He said the federation was not anti-Byron Bay but did object to the favoured treatment that Byron Bay received.... There was criticism of the performance of some senior staff members.... Reintroduction of ridings was suggested as one way of ensuring better representation.... Strong opposition was expressed to the fact that the shire engineer... was to receive full pay while he... accompanied Eric Bond to California.*

Terry **Hudson** of Main Arm said that Bill's meeting to discuss the disgust with the present council... was poorly attended probably due to public apathy, which seems to run high in this shire.... Candidate Curtis said the FPB was a 'divisive and destructive body designed to bring about community dissension and ill-feeling'....

Bill James, 52, romped home with 4409 votes, about 100 more than the combined total of the other four candidates and 300 ahead of the nearest rival, Byron Bay butcher Mr Jim Curtis... who polled 1445 votes, Colin **Scattergood** 867, Jack Donoghue 570, Jimmy Mitsos 238... and Mr Informal 76. More than 70 per cent of eligible residents of Byron Shire voted in the by-election....



The Empire Theatre 1981, (re-opened Jul80 when things looked like picking up, but shut its doors forever in Dec82).

Post election the Federation kept up the pressure on Council, Roy **Darby** in May83 expressing concern at Byron council's financial position, especially in relation to the loan commitments and administrative overheads.... Much of the loan expenditure went on repeated additions to the council chambers in Byron Bay, while an excellent building remains empty in Mullumbimby.... Loan funds were used to develop the Byron Bay Industrial Estate, on Crown Land obtained at no cost..., and Councillors are telling porkies in claiming they made a profit.

He was backed by Bill **Gable** of Myocum in an orchestrated campaign in the build-up to the general elections in Sep83. *Unemployment has been rife for so long here there is only complacency..., and the way things are going with council's*

finances there'll be retrenchments of council staff to swell the dole queue. (Bill was president of the Myocum-Tyagarah Progress Association, re-formed in Mar83, with political player Neville **Newell** as vice-president).



Mallams 1983, shortly after management figured advertising with contemporary decor would help beat the economic downturn.

Next up was Tom **Kendall** of New Brighton, who said *The failure of the Bank of Adelaide... and now the collapse of Trustees Executors and Agency Co., holds an important message for the present councillors of the Shire of Byron....* He followed with another letter asserting Council's request for a Government grant for erosion control at the Bay without requesting similar treatment for New Brighton... is a continuation of the old Byron Shire syndrome that "it's not really a shire council at all, it's really a Byron Bay Town Council"....

Eric **Davies** of Ocean Shores, now calling himself the Research Officer for the FPB, continued the council blitz, saying that the Councillors who are responsible for the serious financial position, cannot expect to receive any gratitude from the people.... The recalcitrant councillors I've just referred to have consistently maintained that Byron Bay is the growth centre of the Shire..., but here are the facts: *Building approvals for new dwellings 1980: Byron Bay 31, Ocean Shores 86, Southern Towns 69, Northern Towns 135.... 1982: Byron Bay 23, Ocean Shores 63, Southern Towns 54, Northern Towns 107.... Value in 1982: South \$4,744,051; North \$8,351,353....*

[The flood of DAs continued, as *Despite the effects of the economic downturn, coastal shires in the Richmond-Tweed area and the mid North Coast have led population growth in the State for the year to June 30, 1983...*, and Byron Shire's addition of another 800 people to a total of 17,050 (a growth of 4.92%) made it the leader of the band, increasing the Councillor's headaches. Ballina Shire also gained 800 people (+3.85% to 21,600), both way behind the Tweed (+1500 to 42,200 - 3.69%). Lismore City Council added +700 to 36,200 - 1.97%).]

In Jul83 the Minister for Local Government made a ruling on ownership of the Mullum Council Chambers, indicating the NRCC had little or no equity in the building... and directed the Byron Council to pay to the NRCC the value of the showroom extensions, excluding the land component, as at 1Jan80.... Stan **Robinson** reckoned the rent owed will more than cover the compensation..., and Bill **James** hoped it could now be put to good use....

General Election

All councillors except Rex Smith indicated their intention to re-contest their seats and started making their pitches in Jul83. Howard **Timms** said *it had been difficult to achieve much in the first term of the amalgamated council as there had been a lot of parochialism in the early life of the council....*

Cr Watterson said *the fact that unemployment in the past three years in our area has risen by some 15 per cent is undoubtedly a major setback. With the recession, all levels of enterprise were drastically affected with a resultant loss of job opportunities.... This pressure has led to the recent upsurge in community ill-feeling between various groups within the shire.... We'd like to help the unemployed, but we're broke.*

The Association for a United Shire - a group of concerned residents and ratepayers - was launched on 19Jul83. The co-ordinator, Mr Oliver Dunne, said the group... saw a need to overcome factionalism and parochialism, two of the "bug bears" upsetting successful working of the amalgamated Council.... A member of the group, Mr Damien Wilkinson, said high-rise development represented a threat which could eventually affect the low-key character and uniqueness of Byron Shire. He said that in a recent council survey, 70 per cent of the residents of Byron Bay said "no" to high-rise construction.... (He must've got that from whistleblowers, as Council wouldn't release the survey, conducted by its consultants, Planning Workshops.)

The following week Clerk Shevellar reported that *A deficit of about \$700,000 is expected by 31Dec83, and that most of the deficit is a result of anticipated land sales revenue which would not eventuate this year.... In its 1983 estimates, the*

council had counted on \$1,360,000 from land sales..., but in the current real estate climate it would seem prudent to at least halve the expected revenue....

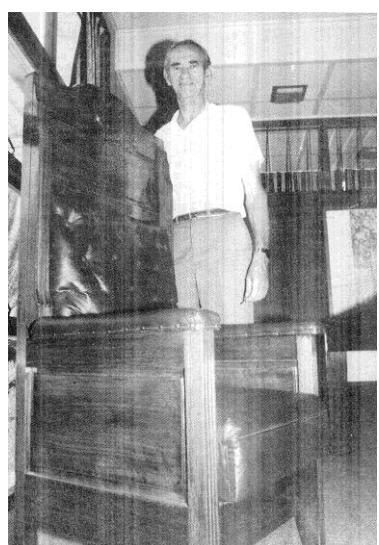
Stan **Robinson** followed up with an explanation of the shire's involvement in land development, saying that he was aware of criticism in some parts, mainly through letters to newspapers.... Between 1979 and 30Jun83 the council developed 244 residential and industrial allotments and sold 197 of those allotments..., and When the remaining 47 fully developed allotments also are sold within the next six months, the council's overall profit will be in excess of \$2 million.... Additional to this, the council has acquired in the past four years, two farms and three other large parcels of land conservatively valued together at \$1.06 million.... The council's current proposal to retrench 20 permanent staff was the result of an over-ambitious works programme..., and wasn't related to the council's involvement in land development at all.... He was also disappointed that newspapers and megaphone politics had become the new forum rather than public meetings or submissions to council....

More council candidates then started to put their hands up, including Bernie **Talbot** of Main Arm, ex-chairman of the Victorian Egg Marketing Board who came 7yrs ago to become Chairman of the Ocean Shores Country Club and President of Mullum Rotary. He thought There has been too much parochialism.... Dr Ian **Kingston** of Main Arm Road came 4yrs ago after RAN service. One of the main reasons I moved here from the city was the magnificent stretch of unspoilt coastline..., which is now threatened by council's determination to allow an eight-storey hotel.... Colin **Scattergood** of Upper Main Arm has been involved in community affairs for 10 years.... I am basically opposed to high rise and would be sorry to see the shire become a Gold Coast-type development.... Ian **Hosken** came from Melbourne 4yrs ago to run a mixed fruit orchard at Main Arm.

There were 31 candidates initially, but Graham **Watson** of Huonbrook withdrew and Peter **Rowan** of South Golden Beach was again declared ineligible, this time because he was an employee of the council under a Wage Pause Unemployment Relief Scheme grant. The final list was Group A - Anudhi Wentworth* and Robin Bekker; Group B - Phillip Pollard, Ian **Hosken**, Sarah Lysagh; Group C - Colin **Scattergood**, Jan Dawkins, Ian **Kingston**; Group D - Mike Watterson*, James Curtis; Group E - John Bourne, Bernard Talbot, Stan Sigley, Howard Timms*, Merv Reynolds, Bill James*, Roy Darby, Bill Gable; Group F - Arthur Todd*, Stan **Robinson***; Group G - Fast Bucks, Con Slick; Group H - Bob Mules*, Cyril James*, Vince Boyle; Ungrouped- Beth McKinless, Karl Walker, Bob Higgins, Tony Beavis. Robinson, Curtis and Bucks also put their hands up for presidential honours.

And on polling day, 24Sep83, Stan romped home with 5282 votes, far ahead of Jim Curtis, 1819, and Fast Bucks 1662..., and on the 16th count also elected as a councillor.... Byron Shire has a total of 14,288 electors of which 10,523 are resident and 3765 absentee owners, particularly of land in the Ocean Shores area. The total vote, 8952, a surprisingly high 83%, reflected the intense interest in the high-rise, conservation and council management issues....

After distribution of first preferences voting was: **Wentworth** 791, Bekker 81, **Pollard** 315, Hosken 108, Lysagh 25, Scattergood 260, **Dawkins** 287, Kingston 146, **Watterson** 660, **Curtis** 464, **Bourne** 356, Talbot 239, Sigley 217, Timms 70, Reynolds 197, **James** 972, **Darby** 313, Gable 104, Todd 382, **Robinson** 727, Bucks 383, Slick 12, Mules 376, Boyle 205, McKinless 154, Walker 63, Higgins 255, Beavis 16; Informal 305. Those in bold made it onto council seats. Cyril James defeated Anudhi Wentworth for deputy president in a 7-3 ballot.



Stan Robinson in a nostalgia moment, wishing he was back in the old mayoral chair he occupied for 4yrs.

At a rally organised by Cr Wentworth just prior to the election More than 50 protesters took to the streets in Byron Bay to demonstrate against high-rise.... A prominent Byron Bay businesswoman, Anne Charters, said she got the impression the protesters had done more harm than good..., and most of the business people in Byron Bay were 'sick and tired' of the continuing controversy. 'They can see the advantages to the town with more people in work, more tourists, and stimulation to the local economy....

But the old council put the debate to bed and The fiery argument... lost some of its spark.... Public opinion won out and the council voted unanimously... against developers establishing a high-rise building at the Globetrotters site at West Byron Bay, ending months of lobbying and protests. It was a bitter issue..., as The planners had recommended that the site would be suitable for an eight-storey international hotel..., as had Mick Cambray of Mexican Mick's, who said Byron Bay needed a major

injection of tourist dollars if it was to survive another disastrous winter season. "I would say that almost 80 per cent of businesses in the Bay are feeling the effect of the huge downturn in trade... , a view shared by most of us who rely on the tourist dollar. Developments such as the Globetrotters site and on the adjacent Moss site needed all our encouragement....

*Staff retrenchments would take effect from Friday (30Sep83). A reduction of the maintenance staff from 34 to 17 would reduce the number of gangs from three to one... and the Parks and Gardens staff by 35%. President **Robinson** further summarised that *The new council must continue to sell land... and Immediate action also must be taken to reduce the \$900,000 debt owed to council.... In mid-1982 the effects of the downturn in the economy started to affect the council, along with the whole community.... The council had received "endless criticism"... and he was disappointed that the public was not aware... of these pressures on council.**

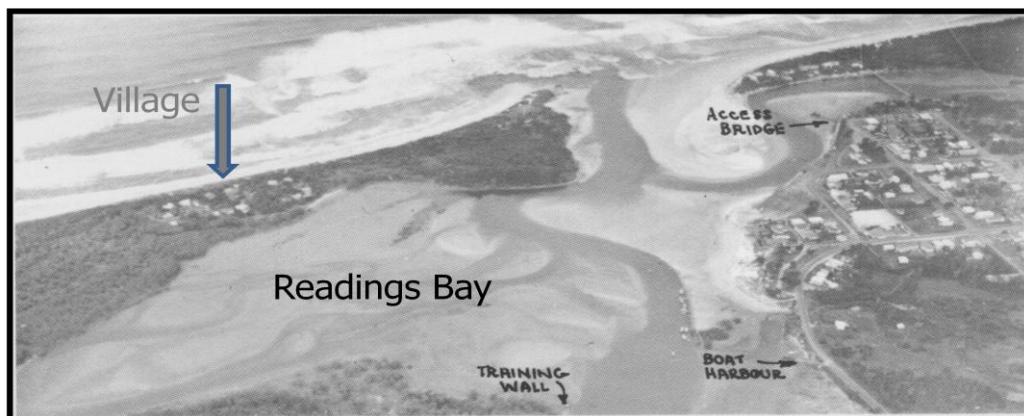
by Peter Tsicalas

The Story of Richard Reading

Ian Fox represented BVHS Inc at the Ocean Shores Community Day on Saturday 9th May and presented a Powerpoint about **Readings Bay**. This is a synopsis of his presentation. Thanks Ian

- Richard Reading served in World War 1 and was badly wounded.
- Awarded Belgian's & France's highest military honours.
- On emigrating to Australia in 1917 his ship was sunk by a mine.
- With assistance from his brothers he settled beside the bay at the mouth of the Brunswick River.
- He was advised to regularly soak his legs in sea water.
- The name "Readings Bay" came into being.
- About 1922 he returned to his old journalist profession in Melbourne.
- Chevalier Reading died in 1929 and his ashes were cast upon the waters at the Mouth of the Brunswick River.
- His family later left the cottage and land to Byron Shire Council to be used as a bird sanctuary – but Council subsequently sold the property asset.

Construction of the Breakwaters



1960



1962

**Brunswick Valley
Historical Society Inc.
Newsletter**

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

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Sts
Mullumbimby
P.O. Box 378 Mullumbimby 2482
02 6684 4367
bvhs84@yahoo.com.au
www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/MullumbimbyMuseum

Patrons: Frank Mills OAM
Basil Cameron
President: Stephen Hall
Vice President: Gordon Wright
Secretary: Janelle Barram
Treasurer: Susan Tsicalas
Assistant Treasurer:
Sarah Newsome
Committee Members:
Sadie Mudge
David Roupell
Kim Pedersen
Market Managers:
Kim Pedersen
Sarah Newsome
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 2nd July
2015 2.00pm
See you there!**

*Deadline for agenda items
Wednesday 1st July 2015

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

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



**Claimed by the ocean -
The destruction of North Beach
New Brighton
also known as Sheltering Palms**



Col & Vicki Loome's home
- Destroyed By Cyclone Pam in 1974



The same area 1976

There were 16 homes and a shop at this location until covered by sand in 1977

River mouth & shoreline today
Note the eroded shoreline of North Head ('zeta' curve)



REMINDERS

Next meeting: Thursday 2nd July at 2.00pm
Next market: Saturday 20th June. Museum open 9-1. **Museums Australia Far North Coast Chapter next workshop** will be held on the first Friday in September at the Lawrence Museum in the Clarence River Valley. Dr Michael Morendi, reputedly the textile expert from Queensland, will be running a hands-on workshop. If you are interested in attending please let us know.

CANCELLATION NOTICE

The planned two day seminar organised by the Society of Australian Genealogists which was to be held at Casino in November has been cancelled.

Casino & District Family History Group Inc look forward to possibly holding another seminar in the future and will advise us as details come to hand.