



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

July 2015

MUSEUM NEWS



Some of BVHS Inc's committee hard at it
From left: Sadie (Accessions Manager), Jennifer (Textile co-ordinator), Gordon (Vice President), Stephen (President), Susan (Treasurer & Volunteer Co-ordinator), Sarah (Collections Manager & Nortec Work Experience Project Co-supervisor)

A portion of the display in Stewart's Menswear Window. Our thanks to Liz and Ian for working their magic on the display. A huge thanks to Gerrard & Sue Walker for the very generous use of their window to promote the museum.

This current display is about the advertising used to promote the development of Ocean Shores

Check it out!



A few of Nortec's Work Experience Team – From left: Liz (Co-supervisor & Photoshop Trainer), Ian (our photo expert particularly with restoration and scanning) and Zac, one of the team of 3, who made our interesting new display information stands in the shed.

Under Administration

In Jan85 the inspectors from the Departments of Local Government (DLG) and Environment and Planning (DEP) released their final 300 page report on the activities of the Shire Council. Minister Stewart *has expressed his deep concern over the report, which he said reflected poorly on the standard of local government in the shire.... The report revealed serious defects in the operations of the council and is particularly critical of the council's administration of its town planning function, the council's financial position, the role of the caravan parks committee and the standard and level of management. The report details 40 recommendations it wants the council to investigate and implement....*

Ken Thurlow, Chairman of BEACON, said the '*feeling around town is that heads must roll'.... The Shire President, the shire clerk and the shire engineer have a lot to answer for. The heads of the various council departments are paid enormous salaries (some in excess of \$800 a week) with liberal entitlements and they have consistently failed to produce the goods....*

The United Shire Association (USA) called for the dismissal of *the shire clerk and shire engineer.... The council has committed 47½% of its normally recurring income to the repayment of loans. This is well outside the maximum recommendation of 25%. The association said the Shire President, despite 18yrs in local government, was responsible for a council which was guilty of gross mismanagement, bad financial practices, illegal planning decisions and appalling service to those it purported to represent....* A week later Dr Ian **Kingston** turned up the heat with the question *Where has all the money gone?*

At a public meeting at Bruns on 1Apr85, jointly convened by the USA, Brunswick Valley Chamber of Commerce and the Bruns and New Brighton Prog Assocs (and attended by Blunt MHR and Beck MLA), *further calls were made to sack the Byron Shire Council.... All but a handful of the 150 residents who attended voted for a council administrator to be appointed..., and for the shire engineer to be suspended.... Cr Anudhi Wentworth was the only councillor present..., and she blamed poor advice from council staff for the cock-ups, backed by Dr Ian **Kingston** who said the inspector's report recorded a litany of bad advice....*

By-election

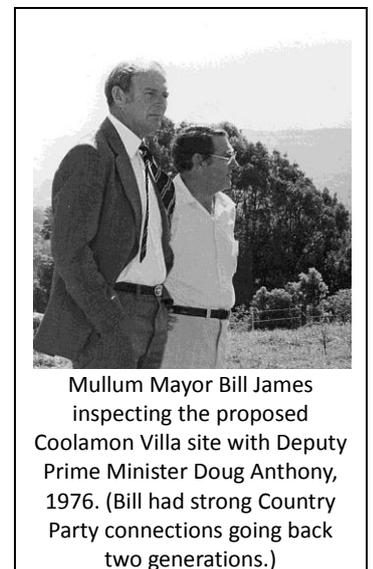
The following week it was announced that the *Shire Council will hold a by-election on 15Jun85 to fill a position created by the resignation of Cr Bill **James**.... He is resigning because of business and family commitments.... and not walking out on the council because they've got problems....* At the same time *Shire President, Cr Stan **Robinson**, has been granted special leave... for a long-planned 2½mth overseas holiday.*

Causing a problem for candidate **Sochacki** was a distraction by his mates at the Mullum branch of the National Party, which *has called for Byron Shire to be split and amalgamated with a neighbouring council. The branch has asked that the Tweed Shire Council or the Lismore City Council absorb about two-thirds of the shire.... Chairman Greg **Hoving**, said it was imperative that Byron Shire be split... in the interest of efficient and effective local government....* And we've written to Minister Stewart *about altering the boundaries....*

Dr **Kingston** said solicitor **Sochacki** should resign as secretary of the Nationals or withdraw from the council race, as we should all be *working towards unifying the shire....* Fast **Buck\$** said *Dearie me!.... No, don't laugh, they're serious!... - the proposed extinction of Byron Shire and its colonisation by Tweed, Lismore and/or Ballina shires.... All we need to absolutely guarantee the failure of this proposal is for the editor of a well-known Byron publication to come out in favour of it....*

There was *A huge 12½% increase in the number of electors in Byron Shire since the last ordinary election 18mths ago... The total enrolment of 16,066 consisted of 11,964 residents and 4042 absentee land owners... compared with an enrolment of 14,288 for the triennial election of Sep83.* Ultimately eight candidates were accepted, but Oliver Dunne, 38yr old foundation member of USA, won the campaigning and advertising contest. And his team *had door-knocked widely..., even organising the well-known Ted Mack MLA, Lord Mayor of North Sydney, to come and give a pep talk on Making Council Work.*

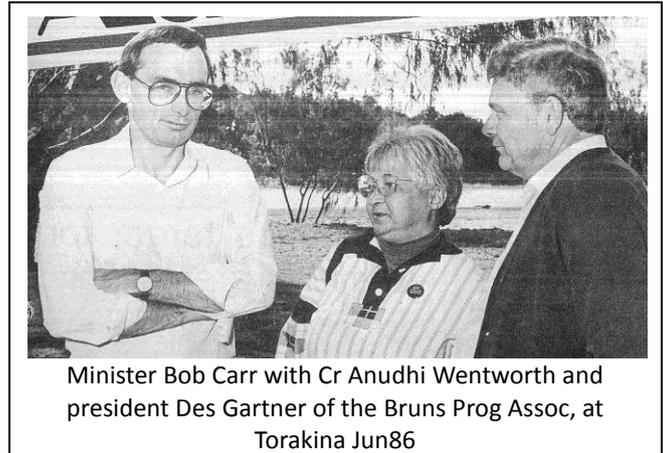
He *easily led the field on first preference votes and on the final count had 540 votes ahead of his nearest rival, Mr Ken*



Kingsford of Anderson's Hill. Three councillors - Phillip Pollard, Jan Dawkins and Mr Dunne - now have been elected on the United Shire platform and Cr Anudhi Wentworth... is a fellow traveller. The by-election attracted about the same number of votes as the election held in 1983, despite a ~12% increase in enrolment. About 66% of the residents voted.

Post Election Harmony

At a council meeting in Sep85 Engineer McDonald said he and the former deputy engineer, Mr Bill Knoble, took umbrage at the recent comments of Cr Dunne about the performance of the council's engineering department.... President **Robinson** then attacked Cr Dunne for taking his statements to the Press, saying the council meeting was the proper forum for comment.... In the end Council carried a vote of confidence in its engineer. However, the councillors posing the questions - Crs Dunne, Pollard and Wentworth - each asked for their votes to be recorded against the resolution.



Minister Bob Carr with Cr Anudhi Wentworth and president Des Gartner of the Bruns Prog Assoc, at Torakina Jun86

The following week Cr Pollard further inflamed Stan **Robinson's** ulcers with another letter-to-the-editor on Engineer McDonald and sewerage. (Other writers started rumblings over the shire becoming the 'Byron Bay Council' now that 6 of the councillors were Bayites.) Pressure also came from a spokesman for the USA, Dr Ian **Kingston**, who said *multiple occupancy dwellers are being denied permission to build urgently needed accommodation because of the threat of demolition orders...*, and it's all because the engineering department failed to install adequate sewerage for Byron Bay..., which caused a blockage in the LEP system.

In Nov85 Cr Dunne said '*Glaring inefficiencies*' had been revealed in the main departments of the council through a management audit report... prepared by the Management Services Division of the DLG. The council adopted his motion for establishment of a 'Management Review Committee' to carry out the recommendations and to act as an 'efficiency task force'.... Cr Dunne added that the shire clerk has recently informed the council that, in his opinion, staff moral, outdoor and indoor, has fallen to its lowest point in his experience. It is a truism among management consultants that inefficiency and lack of morale... usually points to a failure of leadership....

At the budget estimates meeting in Dec85 they imposed another 8% hike in the General Rate, which would do nothing more than cover inflation on wages and salaries next year.... Virtually all additional requests by Engineer McDonald were rejected.... At the current level of funding, it will take 110 years to improve roads needing work. His current workforce is 81, with no resigning or retiring staff having been replaced in accordance with the council's 1983 policy decision on a staff ceiling following retrenchments in that year.

The value of building approvals in Byron Shire totalled \$27.5 million in 1985, up 47.4% on the previous year and only \$1 million less than for the record year of 1981. However, last year's total included \$6.9 million for Government buildings including \$5.4 million for the new Byron Bay High School, \$382,000 for the John Pearce Auditorium and library at Mullumbimby High School, about \$200,000 for Housing Commission homes at Bangalow and \$330,000 for Commission town houses at Byron Bay.... There were 234 dwellings approved, a decrease of 17.1%.... (Ballina Shire's DAs exceeded \$30 million, up 10.7% on 1984).

Dunne's Daring

In Dec85 the Byron Branch of the Shire and Municipal Employee's Union explained that *On Monday, November 11, employees of Byron Shire Council undertook the felling and removal of two fig trees in Stuart Street... on orders from the engineering staff. That night, while watching the local news on TV, it was a shock to hear Cr A. Wentworth accusing council employees of vandalism.... And Cr O. Dunne has accused shire employees of not maintaining their machines. He also mentioned low morale..., which did not lift morale. If this statement cannot be substantiated by Cr Dunne, we would like a public apology from him also.*



Playing happy families at Mullum 1988 during a Tidy Towns presentation are L to R: Cr Kingston, ex-Cr Robinson, ex-High School Principal Ed Gaskell and Shire President Dunne .

Shortly afterwards there was a call for his resignation by the council's indoor staff... following his statement alleging feather-bedding and malpractices.... But resolution of the matter was overshadowed in Feb86 by Council being stripped of its planning powers with the appointment of Jim Waugh as planning administrator from the DEP. Minister Carr said "The Council's planning performance has given rise to a number of complaints...", but the whistle blowers remained anonymous.

Cr Dunne upped the ante in saying councillors have been consistently served bad advice by servants employed to give the council expert advice on a range of matters. When council's professional indemnity premium jumped from \$25,000 for a \$5 million cover to \$166,000 for a \$2.5 million cover in one year, it was surely obvious that some senior staff were not performing their duties competently or adequately.... USA spokesman Dr Ian **Kingston**... backed him up, the ex-navy man adding that the council is lurching from crisis to crisis like a ship without a competent helmsman....

Statements to the Northern Star made by Cr Oliver Dunne were discussed at a hastily called Council meeting on 11Feb86. The six councillors who attended - Crs **Robinson**, James, **Bourne**, Watterson, Dawkins and Curtis... said Cr Dunne had made serious and unsubstantiated accusations against the indoor staff, causing great distress to all the staff members and their families..., and gone to water when called upon to... substantiate the claims....

A fortnight later Cr Dunne was again challenged to substantiate his claims of shonky staff practices. He refused to do so, saying that he would address the matter only at a public meeting.... He said the council's management review committee - of which he is a member - had unearthed all sorts of administrative malpractices and featherbedding.... Letters were received from the council's indoor staff, the Federated Municipal and Shire Council Employees' Union and the Local Government Engineer's Association of NSW which all called on Cr Dunne to publicly substantiate his claims....

Cr John **Bourne** said... "The information given by Cr Dunne must have been leaked by him as a member of the management committee.... Cr **Robinson** said Cr Dunne had been mischievous by using the Press to air his views..., as we promised those interviewed in the management review that we would maintain the confidentiality of what was said.... Cr Dunne said... What we have here is a telephone box minority running a political campaign to keep the same old inefficient regime going, under which they personally benefit.... The motion for a public meeting was defeated on the grounds that it wasn't nice to air staff matters in public and cause further distress to families.

Next agenda item was the reading of Engineer McDonald's horoscope. Deep throat had informed *The Director of the DEP, Mr Dick Smythe*... that the shire engineer had exercised 'undue influence over the planning decisions of the council'.... Clerk Shevellar said Mr Smythe's remarks followed inquiries made by Cr Oliver Dunne... about stripping the council of its planning powers.... A letter had been sent to Mr Carr requesting that he require Mr Smythe to substantiate his opinion in writing and quote specific instances to demonstrate alleged interference so the council might further consider its position..., but Mr Smythe merely rang to say he'd be in town on 25Mar86 for a chat.

In the meantime Council began the process of adopting some of the recommendations of the management review committee at a special meeting not attended by Cr Dunne, who commented that *Effective reform of this council will never happen under the present regime.... It showed the grim determination by the 'old guard' to perpetuate its old ways; to maintain the inner cabinet style of secretive closed shop local government that had led to the problems of Byron Council....*

Administration

Things cooled down for a while until Jun86 when Cr Curtis resurrected the Smythe affair. The bloke hadn't fronted for the 25Mar86 meeting, nor had he turned up for a rescheduled meeting on 22Apr86, and finally at a 27May86 meeting Mr Smythe's explanation left all those present with the distinct impression that he could not substantiate his alleged assertions of wrong doing.... So in a



Some of the 'old guard' at a school reunion 1986

Back L to R: Stan Robinson, Bruce Stewart, Geoff Henderson, Bill James, Barry Hammond, Max Lindsay, Cyril Wray, Colin Forbes, Reg Byrnes, Dave Morris.
Middle: Dorothy Heyward, Alice Frost, Lima Dean, Audrey Plater, Edna LeClere, Ted Watson, Roy Venn.
Front: Barbara Ainsworth, Aileen Watson, Betty Condie, Lyris Bower, Vera Condie, Joan Forbes, Unknown, Unknown, Pearl Giles (McPaul).

letter to Premier Wran Cr Curtis requested an investigation through the Ombudsman's office....

Stan **Robinson** then dropped a bombshell, saying that in consultation with the *Local Government Association* he'd put together a 'salvage package' to Minister Crosio to avoid the threat of dismissal of council.... Her inspector, Mr G.H. Schuil, had found that *the council lacks the necessary expertise, resolve and sense of direction to establish a sound and practical management system... and had not implemented the major measurers... of the now 14mth old first inspector's report.* And on 2Jul86 *In a move described as historic and a 'landmark decision', the shire council agreed to appoint Mr Raymond Rawson, a former town clerk (ex-Windsor), as a chief officer or executive manager... for a period of 6mths.*

In Aug86 Cr Dunne said that he and Cr Pollard had made it clear to Mr Rawson... that their support for the Rawson measures (including the adoption of a 17% rate hike), was contingent on replacement of any senior council staff 'in question'.... Mr Rawson's presence in the shire today is the direct result of the efforts of Crs Wentworth, Pollard and myself, who wrote to Minister Crosio in February....

Over the preceding couple of months there had been an entertaining public spat as councillors and respective supporters blew raspberries at each other. But the fun ended with the news that *The shire clerk, Mr Chris Shevellar, has resigned and is expected to leave the council on October 31 after a 28-year career in local government.... Announcing the resignation last Thursday (28Aug86), Mr Rawson immediately moved to dispel rumours that the resignation was forced.... Stan Robinson, said that councillors had to share some of the blame for the attacks on the competence of the council and its staff because Mr Shevellar, three years ago, had tried to get the council to look more closely at its financial position....*

In Sep86 came release of the 'Rawson Report' and resignation of Engineer McDonald, followed in Oct86 with *abolition of traditional departments, replacing them with a management structure designed to increase efficiency in dealings with builders and developers....* And in Nov86 it was announced that new general manager, 37yr old Mullum-born Barry **Pullinger**, will receive a grade 12 salary, \$55,572 plus a civic allowance of \$3000. *Byron Shire is a grade eight council but... we wanted to attract a better field of applicants....* Mr J. Nicholson was appointed to the new position of commercial manager on \$40,000pa. *Council also agreed to extend the employment of its temporary chief officer-general manager, Mr Rawson....*

On 9Dec86 the Councillors voted to adopt the 'Rawson Package' (inclusive of a spending spree on new computers, staff, vehicles and assorted sundries), *but not without spirited opposition.... Four of the nine councillors present (sans Cr Pollard) at the estimates meeting voted against Mr Rawson's recommendations.... Against were the Shire President, Cr Stan Robinson, the deputy president, Cr Cyril James, Cr Roy Darby and Cr John Bourne....* If council rejected his rating increase proposals, Mr Rawson said he would have no alternative but to produce a final report... stating that the council was not an effective, viable unit.... A protest was lodged by Cr Bourne over the release to the media of the draft estimates before they were discussed by council.

Peter Tsicalas

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

Cup & plate celebrating Federation Bridge Mullumbimby



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

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

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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
AGM Thursday 6th
August 2015 2.00pm
See you there!

*Deadline for agenda items
Wednesday 5th August 2015

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

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



One of several T-shirts donated featuring
events in the Brunswick Valley. Others
include Mullumbimby Primary School
Centenary and the opening of the new
highway bridge at Brunswick Heads.

A Mastertone gramophone and with it a collection of old 7" and 10" records.
The members that love tinkering are exploring the chances of getting it to work .



Next meeting: Annual General Meeting
Thursday 6th August at 2.00pm.



REMINDERS

Next market: Saturday 18th July. 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 so we can organise car-pooling.

QUERY

We have had a research request asking how Torakina Beach got its name. A
couple of suggestions put forward:

- a) After a fishing boat that was wrecked in the river
- b) Came from a beach of the same name in Bouganville, perhaps by a
returning serviceman

Can anyone confirm if either of these are correct or is there another answer?