



NEWSLETTER
February 2012

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

Cnr Stuart & Myocum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

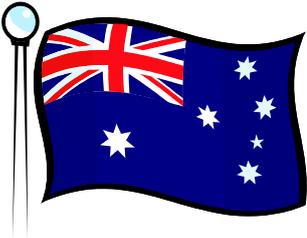
OPEN: FRIDAY 10 AM – 2 PM

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

MUSEUM NEWS

Welcome back to all and may 2012 be a prosperous, rewarding and happy year for all our members.

AUSTRALIA DAY PROJECT



Despite the huge downpour of the day before, the Byron Shire official ceremony for Australia Day went ahead at the Mullumbimby Civic Hall on Australia Day. All the deserving award winners and those being naturalised managed to attend accompanied by their supporters. The welcome to country was special as was the talk by the guest speaker, Shirley Nelson OAM.

Our members did us proud - the hall looked a treat, and then all chipped in to complete the clean up in record time. Thanks to all those who helped. A very successful event and good publicity for the Brunswick Valley Historical Society and the museum. Our thanks also to the members of the Uniting Church who catered a delectable lunch.



Address by Shirley Nelson



"Welcome to Country"

PHOTOCOPIER

The photocopier has died and we are making arrangements for a replacement. To help with this cost, your assistance is requested and would be much appreciated with donations for our Trash & Treasure Stall at the market. Please leave donations at the museum before market day e.g. books, CDs, records, DVD's, household items, jewellery etc – all donations gratefully accepted.



MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership subscriptions are due for 2012. Cost is still \$15 each. If you need a newsletter mailed to you it is an extra \$5 p.a. Newsletters can be emailed or collected from the museum for free. Please fill in and mail the attached renewal form with your monies. You can make a direct deposit but please advise us by email. Thanks.

**Brunswick Valley
Historical Society Inc.
Newsletter**

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

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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 17th February 2012
9.00 am See you there!**

*Deadline for agenda items
Thursday 16th February 2012.

**MUSEUM HOURS
Friday 10am - 2pm
Market Saturday 9am - 1pm**

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



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



CLIMATE CHANGE

The years immediately following formation of the Municipality in 1908 passed uneventfully. Her Majesty the Cow maintained a benign rule, although perturbed at the rise of King Banana, while Her loyal subjects continued to seek greener pastures in Queensland. *The bourne from which no traveller returneth* relentlessly claimed the pioneers, notably Thomas **Doran**, Allan **Cameron**, Neil **Campbell** and Henry **French**, while the rate of arrival of fresh faces wasn't compensating for the loss. Nevertheless, a new political paradigm was emerging, but only driven in part by the arrivistes; the old hands were still clinging to the reins of Mullum's destiny.

By early 1913 the Town/Farmer divide was becoming more apparent (or Mullum's famous laid-back lifestyle was emerging) when President Moriarty of the *Liberal Association* twice attempted to hold the AGM at the School of Arts, but couldn't get a quorum. He finally attracted about 18 of the faithful, mostly landlords, to a meeting at Mooyabil, where school headmaster W.J. **Milgate** was secretary of the *Farmers and Settlers Association*, which colluded with the Liberals to endorse Massy-Greene MHR and Perry MLA for the respective Federal and State elections of mid and late 1913. The election of officer bearers resulted in the following:- President, N.P. **Moriarty**; vice-presidents, Messrs W.G. **Cochrane**, D. **Blanch**, H. **French** and T. **Gibson**; hon treas., Mr R.W. **Thompson** (elected in absentia); joint hon secs., Messrs A. **Cameron** (elected in absentia and died a week later) and W. **Argue**; delegates, Messrs J. **Davidson**, A. **Baker** and N.P. Moriarty; committee (with power to add), Messrs A.E. **Tarlinton**, C. **Schrader**, J. **Campbell**, H. **Holt** (Proprietor Mullum Star), R.Y. **Gourlay**, J. **McPaul**, R. **Argue**, W. **O'Brien**, H. **Nelson**, W. and P. **Bower**, W. **Fraser**, J. Davidson, A. Baker, W.G. Cochrane, D. Blanch, T. Gibson, W.R. Mackay, A. Cameron, and H. French (who died in Nov13). G. **Kedzlie** and S. **Cornwell** were additional names forming a subcommittee to arrange for speakers to visit country centres and deliver addresses on the issues before the electors, and drag Protectionist Sir Thomas Ewing out of his Burringbar retirement home to wave the Liberal flag around the traps.

Despite the town apathy the Liberals appeared to be better organised than the Laborites, having re-established active branches throughout the neighbourhood in late 1912. The Laborites had been on the nose almost from the start of forming Government in 1910 and the farmers had had enough of union pressure to impose award wages and conditions, but they at least had a win in getting the *Rural Workers' Union* to modify its stance on child slavery by ensuring proposed new rules shall not apply to members of employer's family.

Following a 90 minute harangue from the balcony of the Middle Pub by the Federal Labor candidate, Ballina lawyer Percy E. Tighe, Alderman **Joe Hollingworth** delivered the vote of thanks, implying he was still the leading Labor light in the district, confirmed in Aug1913 when one of Labor's rare mentions in the local rag referred to his re-election as President of the Mullum Branch of the *Political Labor League*. In mid 1912 he had been elected President of the *Byron Electorate Council of the Political Labor League*, at which time Mullum had 100 financial members, tying with Ballina as the second largest branch in the Byron Electorate after Murbah with 192 (Byron 62, Burringbar 20), paradoxically at the same time he was elected President of the *Mullumbimby Branch of the United Liberty League*, which was more inclined to Liberal ideology. That he was getting softer on Labor doctrine was pointed out by lawyer Moriarty in Sep13 *...The local branch of the Liberal League have even greater occasion to disapprove of the remarks of one of its own subscribers - Mr Hollingworth. It may be however, that he has not fully appreciated the wisdom of that saying, trite but true, " 'Tis well to be off with the old love before you are on with the new."*



Joseph Nicholson Hollingworth 1914
(who would be a monty for Citizen of the Year at any Australia Day ceremony)

Federal Liberal sitting member Walter Massy Greene delivered his oration in front of 150 punters at the School of Arts, the non-political institution which subscribed to *'Fighting Line'*, the official organ of the Liberal party, part of the misconduct alluded to by Alderman Hollingworth in the run-up to the State election and defended by Moriarty in a letter-to-the-editor: *Sir,- I notice in your*

report of the last School of Arts committee meeting, some remarks of Mr Hollingworth's alleging "underground engineering" between the Progress Association and the Liberal League, by which the Liberal organiser got the use of the supper room for 2s 6d as against some 25s which Mr Hollingworth had to pay for another meeting.... I have, in another place, explained that the Progress Association has always been a non-political body, and I have voiced that body's strong disapproval of the insult conveyed in Mr Hollingworth's statements referred to....

Orator Massy Greene offered nothing specific, preferring the traditional Liberal argument that the laborites were a bunch of financially illiterate mismanagers and *The Liberal's policy in regard to finance was a sane, safe and economical one....* He also ridiculed his later best mate Billy Hughes and frightened the farmers with the prediction that Labor would regulate the price of butter, the upshot of which was an increased vote (from 55% in 1910 to a big 70%) and the winning all subdivisions, the Mullumites presenting him with 73%, his 3rd best win in Richmond's 15 subdivision hierarchy, while up the road the recalcitrant Tweedies gave him his worst result. But within the Mullum subdiv the town and environs awarded him 67%, while the farmers at Billinudgel offered 74%, Durrumbul 88% and Crabbes Creek 89% (and the Bruns fishermen 85%). Across the country the punters ended the Labor experiment and gave the Liberals a one seat majority. And a week later Moriarty's mob held a meeting to endorse Perry MLA for the following State election, which no Laborite was game to contest, resulting in a very entertaining election in which the local Liberal candidates dueled with each other (and state-wide handed the Laborites an increased majority.)

In late Jul13 President Moriarty and W.R. Baker clashed at another Liberal love-in, Baker asserting that the minutes of the previous meeting were inaccurate and *...challenged the room as to who had voted, and the chairman threatened to expel him from the meeting if he did not keep in order.* Baker continued to be disagreeable throughout meeting, even with his own brother: *...The next question to be discussed was the sending of delegates to the annual conference. Mr A. Baker moved that one or more delegates be sent to the annual conference of the associations. Mr W.R. Baker thought the motion was out of order, but the Chairman, after argument ruled that it was not. Mr W.G. Cochrane said that the present time was critical in as much as the Farmers' and Settlers' Association had formed a Country Party, and he thought the branch should be represented as fully as possible, as we were a country branch and belonged to the great Liberal Party. He seconded the motion, which was carried....* Later Mr A. Baker moved that a meeting be held in the Main Arm Hall on Tuesday, 12th August, to organise a branch, or failing that to enroll members into this branch..., implying that the Main Arm branch formed 12mths earlier by W.R. had gone belly up. During 'General Business' W.R. finally revealed the reason for his good-natured disposition, accusing Chairman Moriarty of openly supporting Mr Perry whether he was selected or not.... Perry was once W.R.'s great mate but

they'd had a falling-out after *Perry had said he was a follower of Wade...*, which was however, secondary to the fact the W.R.'s son-in-law, lawyer Peter Street, the foundation Mayor of Murbah, was also seeking preselection as the Liberal candidate. At Perry's subsequent preselection pitch to the Mullum punters in Aug13... *Mr R.W. Thompson moved that a vote of thanks be accorded to Mr Perry. This was seconded by Mr Albert Baker in a characteristic speech, in which he said that this was the time to put back the old horse again as against the green colt.* And at the colt's final address to the Mullumites two days before the election, when he was again sounding off about preselection corruption, his uncle-in-law Albert Baker interjected *How do you know this is all true?* and Mr Street retorted: *This is my meeting, people did not come here to hear your ugly voice,* after the chairman called *Order.* (Another case of brotherly love not extending across political boundaries was the clash between Peter Nelson, long-time treasurer of the Political Labor League, and his brother Henrik, active in Baker's branch of the Liberal Association.)



William Robert Baker 1918

The first moves towards the Liberal preselection occurred in late Sep13 when 83 delegates from all over the electorate met at Bangalow and formed an Electoral Council. Mullum was represented by N.P. **Moriarty**, A. **Baker**, W. **Argue** and R.Y **Gourlay**, Durrumbul by W.R. **Baker** and M. **Simmons**, Billinudgel by J. W. **Banner**, J. **Torrens** and C.W. **O'Connor**, and Coorabell by W.E. Williams and J. Keys. They decided postal voting was the best way to hold the preselection ballot, subsequently mailing out 4441 ballot papers and getting 3885 back, 2099 favouring Perry and 1762 for Street. Lawyer Street, who had been campaigning as a Liberal since late 1912 after being drafted by a 900 signature petition, smelt a rat and cried branch stacking and corruption, and thereafter campaigned as an Independent Liberal. At a later meeting to clear the air *There was a good deal of excitement displayed... But on the whole bitterness of feeling was limited to two or three irreconcilables* one of whom was W.R. Baker who said it was 'well-known' that the Liberal Organiser, H.W. Margrie of Sydney and Bangalow resident for the past 12mths, was a Perry supporter and manipulated things accordingly. Street, like the Liberal challenger at the next election, also claimed 'Honest John' Perry broke a 'Kirribilli Agreement'.

Also having a run was 65yr old Catholic Robert Thord Campbell, credited as the founder of Bangalow and running as a 'Selected Country Party Candidate', the first ever appearance of such a party on the Northern Rivers. Also claiming to be the farmers' best friend was 71yr old Northern Irishman and Maori War Veteran, eccentric William McKeever of Cudgera, running as *The Farmers' Selected Candidate*. A late nomination came from Independent John Gray Pearson who turned up from Sydney 3wks before the election on 6Dec13, the local rags dobbing him 'closet Labor'.

But the main entertainment remained the Perry/Street clash, eventually won by the cunning Perry as he manoeuvred Street into the whinger's corner, although he couldn't sway the new management of the Mullum Star who, on the eve of the election, commented that *In the Byron Electorate many hard things have been said during the campaign and politics have sometimes been forgotten and personalities have got sway...*, and moved away from the past policy of impartiality to come down on the side of the Country Party. The changing of the guard at the *Mullum Star* was another of the major 1913 sea changes, finally bringing stability in ownership when Henry **Holt** handed his quill to George **Cameron** just after the Federal Election, although Editor **Uptin** still seems to have been running the show for this State election and a little into 1914. (Uptin remained as a reporter for Mullum Star and was also the Mullum correspondent for the *Northern Star*, which unapologetically associated the Laborites with Satan's disciples and elevated the Liberals to sainthood.)

Perry came home with 51%, Street 36%, Campbell 12% and Pearson 1%, with the local booths, including Byron Bay and Bangalow, showing an average return of 67% to Perry, who was marginally more popular in the country than the towns, thus reining-in the Federal poll trend. Nevertheless, the Country Party was on the march, although it took until 1920 to oust Machiavellian Perry.

By Peter Tsicalas