



NEWSLETTER  
August 2017

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

# MUSEUM

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS 10 AM – 12 PM

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



## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### John Thompson

I was born on 10/10/1949 in an ambulance on the way to Crown Street Hospital in Sydney. One of six kids, one room school, one shop town, which Mum ran and owned. We've spent hard days working in a small town, share cropping, no money, but plenty of honey. It was very happy days growing up. I left school at 14.5 years old, totally illiterate, couldn't even spell my own name.



I was conscripted into compulsory Army service at 20 years old. Went to Vietnam. Badly Wounded. Lost part of my eyesight when a napalm bomb exploded in front of me. Agent Orange put a stop to me having children, but as I say, 'shit happens'. The best lesson in my life I ever had: "Never trust anybody, only dream of things you can do and do them."

I never have been on the dole or government assistance or on the pension. I am proud of making my own road in life. Love my Country and I love to be able to pay my bills and taxes. I am a world citizen, refugee advocate. I have no time for people who only talk and whinge about life. If things need doing – DO THEM YOURSELF.

You can talk yourself into sickness, but you can also work yourself into health if you do it right. I love nature, walking long walks like Hadrian's Wall in the U.K. or the South Coast of England. I love boating, bought a canal boat in England and did 3,500 miles of canals in Europe for 1.5 years.

I spent a year prospecting for gold on the Palmer River, helped some farmers by pig shooting the pests, approximately 20-30 a day, all at the same time panning for gold. I drove buses from London to Nepal for 2 years. I was working on PNG Islands as a coffee plantation manager for 1 year during 1972 when independence came. I've worked for 4 years driving large dump trucks and dozers in the iron ore industry in W.A. I've built 5 houses and renovated many more.

I hate drugs. My brother died because of them. I don't drink or smoke. I still love life every day and try to do something positive for myself and somebody else. I have been in Rotary for 25 years. I wish I had joined earlier in life, because it has done so much for me by helping others.

I never had kids because of Vietnam. Never married. But that's life. 68 years has gone fast because there's so much more to do.

#### My Bucket List

Build a retirement Home in Mullumbimby. Walk the Great Wall of China. Boat down the Mississippi River in my own boat. Learn to laugh at myself. And maybe learn to read and write – it's never too late I'm told.

## More Unreliable Memories

In late 1922 80yr old **James Ainsworth** of Ballina reminisced to the Ballina Beacon, recounting his adventures around the traps after he arrived on the Richmond with his parents and two sisters in 1847. He was born at Moryua, the son of English convict Thomas, a shipwright and owner-skipper of the 'Matilda Ann', and Northern Irishwoman Ellen Laverty.

*My father's title to the land was by pre-emptive right – a right recognised in those days.... Our few neighbours at East Ballina included Joe McGuire and **Steve King**.... Further afield near the sawpits were **Tommy Chilcott**, Sandy Golding, Tom Woods, Jarvis, and Joe White.... West Ballina, or Ballina proper, was a secondary settlement.... **Joe Eyles** opened the Sawyers' Arms Hotel in 1850 or '51.... My father **Thomas Ainsworth** built the 'Sailor's Home' Hotel in 1853 and drowned in North Creek in 1864, aged 53. Ellen remarried Charles Brown, a Swedish shipwright and mariner.*

*There was obviously no police, no magistrates, and no legal or lawful authority of any kind on the whole of the Richmond in 1847.... The strongest personalities commanded leadership as a matter of course, and with the confidence of the community to back them up if they were worthy men, a rough and ready justice was always obtainable..., eg "Fighting Sandy" was a noted blusterer in the settlement, and a bully, who, it was known, would not hesitate to shoot if it suited his purpose. As a result most of the folk were afraid of him. At length a dispute arose among the sawyers, as a result of which this man set fire to the stack of sawn cedar and stood by it with a gun until it was consumed. Thereupon **Tommy Chilcott** was put up to fight him and establish supremacy and law for the settlement... and the two fought from 8 o'clock in the morning until 4 o'clock in the afternoon..., after which the battered Sandy had to leave the settlement.... "Fighting Sandy" was an undesirable, who was proved unworthy by the community, and was not wanted, and the manner of his death called for no official inquiry....*

*In '52-'53, before the advent of Const McLeod, the West Ballina cedar men had a method of their own for preserving order and punishing offenders. A 200-gallon vat open at one end, and originally intended for boiling-down purposes at the Pelican Tree, had been landed on the river bank opposite the Sawyer's Arms Hotel... and was used for drying out drunks.*

*The second cedar waterway to be opened up and developed after North Creek was Emigrant Creek. This latter name was given to the fine tributary owing to the fact that **Henry Williams** (his future father-in-law) and Tom Brandon, who were emigrants, fixed their camps at Cumbalum, on the land afterwards free-selected by the late Mr Geo Topfer, snr.... It is worthy of note to recall that Mesdames **McCurdy** senr., **J. Ainsworth**, senr., J. Henderson, senr., and J.J. Lewis, of Ballina, are daughters, and Messrs Charles (North Creek), William (Ballina), and Henry (Queensland), are sons of Henry Williams, the first Emigrant Creek pioneer.*

*In 1851 the Tintenbar camp was second only to Ballina in importance. Among those who constituted it were **Chas Jarrett**, **John Skennar**, **Charles McNeill**, **Dick Glascott**, Jno Holmes, Phillips, **Jas Ainsworth**, **Dick King**, **B. McCurdy**, **Steve King**, and Wm Smith.... About this time also, cutters were beginning to get cedar out at Boatharbour, near Lismore, from whence the industry rapidly extended up the creeks into the Big Scrub....*

*The general conditions of the river settlement were bad in the extreme until about the middle fifties, when the gold rushes brought widespread prosperity to the colony and better days for the river. The price of cedar, which had hitherto ranged from 10/- to 15/- per 100ft in Sydney, at once bounded up to £3/2/6 per 100ft.... Men flocked to the river to seek their fortunes in the scrubs.... Every man on the river at this time worked for himself. There was no such thing as hired labour.... The one great drawback was marketing.... Northward, a merchant of Sydney... was the principal buyer. He controlled the cedar trade in the city, and used his monopoly for a time to his own advantage. **Billy Wright** then entered the lists as an agent, but there was no benefit from the competition. Wright however, soon got a footing, and with Mr **Charles Jarrett** as his river representative rapidly built up a big connection. The cutters after their logs were measured up were paid with "I.O.U.'s" on Billy Wright, but as this paper "money" could only be realised in Sydney the losses to the owners of it will be readily understood. I cut cedar for a year and was supplied with stores by Mr Jarrett, who procured them from Wright (as the latter's agent) at 25 per cent above cost. When retailed to me I was charged another 50 per cent additional and was obliged the while to look pleasant. The timber getters, owing to these methods, were rarely out of debt, and Mr Jarrett himself was in the long run ruined by this pernicious agency system....*

*Every hut, humpy, or tenement had its supply of rum. Whatever else ran short, every care was taken that this "ration" was on tap in abundance.... The first cattle to reach Ballina... was the result of action on the part of the late Mr **Charles Hugh Fawcett** of Kyogle (afterwards first parliamentary representative for the Richmond and Tweed).... In order to*

supply much needed bullock teams – as well as meat – to the cedar men in the lower river scrubs, he had a track cut from the forest country at Wollongbar through to Newrybar and on to Tallow Beach round via what are known to this day as “Fawcett’s Ridges.” At a later date, in 1863, or ‘64, the late **Edmund Ross** opened a Government Road via Tintenbar to Teven..., so the standard route to Lismore from Ballina was via Tintenbar and Teven. The first post office at Ballina was opened and conducted by Mr E. Ross..., who opened the first store at Tyagarah in 1867.

The first marriages consequent upon the first visit of a clergyman did not take place until 1863, when in addition to two couples at Tintenbar the following were united in the happy bonds... including 21yr old **James Ainsworth** and 16yr old **Christina Williams** amongst the four couples at Ballina. The following year his sisters were married in a dual ceremony, 19yr old Jane to the Swede **James Ross** and 17yr old Susan to **Charles Coleman**, who spent considerable time on the Brunswick, drawing cedar for Mr **Charles Jarrett**, and camped on Tyagarah Grass. (Prior to his teamster career Coleman was a drover for Hugh Fawcett and Edmund Ross.)

The first freight to be shipped at Byron Bay was a wrecked cargo of tallow in 1864, salvaged from Tallow Beach.... There were 114 casks in all, which it afterwards transpired constituted the cargo of the schooner *Volunteer*, a 100 ton vessel bound from Baffle Creek (Qld) for Sydney.... The first tidings of the tragedy were brought to **Jas Ainsworth** at East Ballina – where he was at work building a small vessel – by a blackfellow in the employ of the late **E. Ross**, who then kept a butchery at West Ballina. The black and white man had been out on the northern beaches looking for a draft of bullocks coming from Mr Fawcett’s Ridges.... The tallow was taken on board the schooner *Wallaby*, owned by Mr Coleman, of Lismore (father of the late J.W. Coleman MLA for Lismore, the first Richmond River native to enter parliament), and Mr Geo Nicholls, of Bexhill, and despatched to Sydney. (Contemporary reporters said the tallow was recovered and safely secured by Messrs Black and Ainsworth).

In 1851 or ‘52 the headland of Cape Byron was the grim and silent witness of a sea tragedy that in its aftermath at least is unique in coastal annals.... The small well-found schooner *George*, which had been built on the Tweed, had left that river with a cargo of cedar for Sydney.... and sank. Old **Steve King** and **Johnny Boyd** had left the cedar camp inside Brunswick Heads... and noticed what looked like a big boat bottom up on the beach, distant about two miles to the north..., and so repeats another version of the oft told tale. (Editor’s Note – The particulars of this remarkable adventure were narrated to Mr Ainsworth by Brown and Green personally on their way through from the Brunswick to Sydney.)....

In 1847 there were between 400 and 500 native blacks in the tribes belonging to East and West Ballina.... They were a simple, good-hearted and friendly people who would generously give away anything they possessed to the “whitepeller”. It is regrettable to have to record that in return they were often very badly treated by the settlers.... Tribal warfare was not infrequent. The Brunswick blacks, hostile to those of Ballina, would meet on the Seven Mile Beach as a battleground and there they would savagely fight out their differences. Generally the trouble had its origin among the women folk.... The original white settlers witnessed many of these tribal collisions. A battle would sometimes last for two days, and would take place generally on the open beaches....

The hunting ground of the Ballina tribes extended north to Broken Head and back from the beaches to the Big scrub.... The tribe usually camped in divisions at different places excepting during oyster season, when they assembled unitedly at Chickiaba, on North Creek.... Naturally conversant with the ways of the bush and the scrub, they were of incalculable assistance to the cedar getters. They also became fine axeman and expert at squaring the logs, rafting, and bullock driving. It was never known that the whites had ever suffered injury at their hands, but on the contrary.... In 1853 or ‘54... came the big massacre at Ballina. Between 30 and 40 of the poor wretches were killed outright, and many who got away were badly wounded....

In 1851 getting a license to cut cedar meant a trek to Grafton. These licenses were limited to felling and sawing the cedar only, as squaring the timber was not then allowed..., but cedar-getters renewed their timber activities in defiance of the law. It is of interest to recall that at the beginning of the cedar traffic all logs were sawn into fitches in order to fit and stow them more compactly in the cramped holds of the necessarily very small vessels trading to the river in those days.... later the squaring axe displaced the saw....

In ‘64 the **O’Neills** worked a tree on Wilson’s Creek above Montecollum, near Mullumbimby, which yielded about 10,000ft. This latter tree grew on a tiny island in the creek, and was first seen by **George Williams** and **Joe Eyles**, who passed it by on the ground that it was a “bit too big.” The O’Neills, who were not so particular, cut it into 8ft lengths, and when the flood came to carry the timber out to the main stream it was noticed that they had turned over and

floated on their ends owing to the fact that the diameter of the logs was greater than their length.... **George Cooper** (father of the late George Cooper, and Ben Cooper, of Tintenbar), when operating cedar near Bexhill on Cooper's Creek – called after him – also put up a record, only less astonishing than Chilcott's... in pit sawing on his own.

In the early fifties – about '52 to be exact – after the handy cedar had been cut along the banks of the main creeks and tributaries of the Richmond, attention was directed to the scrubs of the Brunswick where the coveted red wood was known to be plentiful. By "handy" cedar is meant, of course, the cedar that grew beside the edges of navigable water and required only to be felled and cut into logs, and rolled into the streams, when it was at once ready for rafting and subsequent shipment without further trouble or expense. At that time there were no bullocks in the district and consequently the haulage of logs from a distance was out of the question. Included in the first party to exploit the Brunswick were **Johnny Boyd, Tom Boyd, the Kings, Tom Ainsworth, and Joe White**. These pioneers in the course of a brief campaign felled and shipped all the removable timber and then returned to the Richmond to follow the cedar with bullock teams back from the main waterways. They were attended on the Brunswick by some ten or fifteen small schooners, which transported the logs, or rather fitches, to Sydney. The river entrance was one in name only, and was infinitely more difficult to negotiate than the Richmond, which in those days was bad enough. Due to this disability the vessels sent there were so small that 5000ft constituted a cargo for many of them, while 20,000 feet was a maximum. In 1864 the industry on the Brunswick was revived, and with the introduction of bullock teams the arms and creeks of the river were worked to the uttermost extent. Shipping again became active, and the tiny river hummed with life and industry, Captains Ben Alley and Harry Jackson commanded Brunswick traders at this period, and among those engaged ashore were **Jos Eyles, Jack Johnson, J. Ainsworth, C. Williams, B. McCurdy, G. Williams and Jim Ross**.... (Ainsworth mostly worked as a teamster. His son James Ainsworth Jnr, was born at Brunswick Heads in 1867.)

In '64 I was engaged in hauling cedar into Skennar's Creek, and at the time of the flood, was busy salvaging the wrecked tallow washed up from the foundered schooner Volunteer on Tallow Beach and in Byron Bay. A terrific easterly gale breached the protective sand dunes and... the sea penetrated to where the creamery now stands and filled the swamp opposite all the way to Bilongil Creek with salt water. The foam churned up the agitated surf and lashed by the gale covered the old track between Tallow Beach and the Bay to a depth of ten feet in spots, and generally was higher than the horse's back. No vessel could have survived in the roadstead, and be it sadly stated many river ships off the coast at the time were never heard of again....

The cedar-getters were rough, generous, reckless, and kindly, with a sense of justice that admitted no compromise.... **Archie Meston**, who knew the "old hands" well, and who is an undisputed colonial authority, says of them: "The reader will be careful to remember that in Australia to-day there is but a very slight strain of the bad types, who, as a rule, did not marry and settle down.... As a youth I met scores of them... and nine out of ten lived and died as bachelors. As a rule they were silent, taciturn men, very uncommunicative.... Usually they were strictly honest, very truthful, very loyal to each other, and visitors were welcomed with an immediate request to "have a bit o' damper and pannikin o' tea."... These were the pioneers of the Northern Rivers. Submitted by Peter Tsicalas

### The New Nature Cabinet – Volunteers in Action



Volunteers Rollie and Dave spent an interesting morning separating and arranging blown bird eggs that were kindly donated to the museum by Patrick Cairns. The eggs had been collected from the banks of the Brunswick River, Devine's Hill and Ocean Shores.

Can you help with deciding which mother hen laid what? It would be much appreciated.



The finished display

## AGM REPORT

The AGM was held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> August. Election of office bearers resulted in no hats changing heads. A new hat was added with the election of John Davis to the committee. Congratulations to all for the sterling efforts you have given for the last year and thanks for continuing to support our great society and museum.

Two major changes will occur as a result of having the market lease from Byron Shire Council for the next five years. Council requires an audit in November so one has not been conducted on the books for this annual report. Consequently we have decided that next year the AGM will be held in December to better coincide with the audit. The annual report has been prepared as normal and is attached to this newsletter for members.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome friends, volunteers and members to the BVHS AGM 2017.

Another year of steady and sometimes game changing accomplishments.

A summary of some would have to include.

1. Our partnership with COREM to install 22 solar panels discretely on our heritage roof.
2. The introduction of air-conditioning in the main work area and soon to include the main display areas.
3. The new fence and chain surrounding and protecting the grounds of the museum. Thanks to Bunnings, Mitre 10, Alan Creighton and our volunteers for planting, painting and organising the chain and lock system.
4. A new market sign opposite Uncle Toms. Thanks to Nortec Work Experience Project team.
5. Thanks to NORTEC, Sarah and Liz for continuing their valuable service. A nod also to Kim Pederson for being part of the market management team.
6. John Thompson & Steve Baldwin for the replacement of our signage on our building.
7. Stuarts Menswear (Gerald and Sue) for ongoing display space in their window.
8. Sharon Shostak for her work on our new three part epic films on the alternative culture. A crowd funding campaign is underway and the first part screening is due by Christmas.
9. During the year we celebrated the contributions of three long standing members by making them life-members - Sadie Mudge, Gordon Wright and Barry Lomath. Congratulations and keep up the good work.

A few months ago I attended the Northern Rivers Historical Society Zone Conference in Lismore and was struck as to why we are so different from other organisations of similar size. Apart from common concerns and frustrations we are in a healthy financial position, have a fine building and an eclectic group of volunteers. So what is the difference; the x-factor? Well it's obviously our Shire Volunteer of the Year who continues to impress with her valuable contributions both to our and other local organisations.

So if Susan is our X-factor then Michael Adams must be our Y-factor. Why or how he has managed to transform so many objects and relentlessly restore them is truly extraordinary. Unfortunately he is continuing his museum studies in the UK. We wish Michael well.

The only sour note for the year was Debbie. We were lucky compared to many others but the flood waters came higher than ever before. Our great little team got their hands dirty, cleaned up, rescued some unusual items, then cups of tea and cake; fingers crossed for next time.

In concluding I will repeat myself by saying that I am honoured to continue to do whatever it is that I do and am continually indebted to Susan and Sarah for doing whatever it is that I do not do.

## Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

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

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Sarah Newsome  
Newsletter team:  
John Davis & Work  
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Public Officer: Susan Tsicalas

## All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

\*Please leave material with Sarah or Liz  
Wed Thur 10 am - 2 pm.  
Or email to:  
bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au

## NEXT MEETING Thursday 7th Sept 2017 2.00pm See you there!

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Wednesday 6th Sept 2017

**MUSEUM HOURS**  
**Tuesdays & Fridays**  
10am - 12pm  
**Market Saturdays 9am - 1pm**

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



## Common Ailments and Home Remedies – Part 2

From Neta MacKinnon's book "Fetch the Nurse, and Call the Doctor, Quick", the *Story of Medical and Health Services in the Brunswick Valley 1900-1994*, comes the following article on home remedies.

**PLEASE NOTE: The BVHS in no way promotes the use of these remedies. Ailments referred to hereunder should be treated by a suitably qualified medical practitioner.**

### **CONVULSIONS OR SPASMS**

*Keep the child perfectly quiet and put ice or cold water cloths on the head. Put feet in hot mustard water and wrap entire body in towels which have been dipped in warm mustard water. Use two heaped tablespoons of mustard to a quart of warm water. If there is undigested food in the child's stomach produce vomiting by tickling the throat. Put the handle of a knife or fork in the child's mouth to prevent it biting your finger or its own tongue. If the convulsions continue till the face is very pale, the pulse weak, the feet and hands cold and the nails and lips blue, then the hot bath must be resorted to. Have the water at about 106 degrees (N.B. this is degrees Fahrenheit NOT Celsius) or put your arm in water to the elbow. The water should then feel warm but not uncomfortable. It is wise to add a cup of mustard to the bath. Excepting the head, put the child's entire body in the water. To prevent the return of the convulsions, give the following internally: one half dram of bromide of potash, 15 grains of chloral hydrate and two ounces of simple syrup. Make and shake thoroughly and give a teaspoonful every hour while the child is nervous and feverish.*

### **DIPHTHERIA**

*Gargle with salt and water and apply bandages wet with salt and water to the throat and bind on slices of fat bacon. Or a poultice of linseed meal may be applied to the throat or salt and ashes in a flannel bag applied hot to the neck.*

### **CHICKEN POX**

*After the liquid has formed in the pimples the large ones on the face should be pricked and washed twice daily with boric acid solution, using half an ounce of boric acid to a pint of boiled water. Do not let the patient scratch the sores. Keep the patient in the house, but little medicine is required. Give saffron to act on the bowels, sage or catnip tea as a tonic, pennyroyal to cause sweating, and open bowels with a seidlitz powder.*

### **ASTHMA**

*The old saying that "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" applies to the treatment of asthma, so herewith a preventative for the disease as well as a cure for individual attacks: take half a pound of quick lime and "slack" it by turning two quarts of hot water and while it's "slacking" and boiling, stir in two teaspoonsful of tar, mix well and let settle. Take half a pound of wild or Indian turnip, half a pound of fresh milkweed and a small handful of lobelia leaves, and bruise and steep these in two quarts of wine at a sanguine heat for 24 hours. Then pressed and strain and add lime water and bottle at once. Dose: a wineglassful three times a day for asthma. This asthma tincture is also good for coughs, hysterics, spasms and consumption.*

### **BOILS**

*Chamomile flowers made into a poultice will draw a boil to a head so that it may be opened. It holds heat and moisture for a long time and it has a sedative, or quieting and soothing, action on the local parts which is due to its oily constituents. Or, apply castor oil freely to the boil and at the same time, take lime water to cleanse the blood of its impurities. The calcium in lime water is what aids in purifying the blood.*

### **LOCK-JAW (TETANUS)**

*Put hot wood ashes in hot water, wet thick cloths in the water and apply to the jaws as quickly as possible and at the same time bathe the entire backbone with hot vinegar with cayenne pepper or mustard added.*

### **MUMPS**

*Mumps is usually conveyed from one person to another and is contagious from beginning to the end of the attack. Above all things, do not take cold. Anoint the parotid glands at the back of the jaw twice daily with warm oil of henbane and cover with cotton. Keep the bowels open. If the swelling goes to the breasts, ovaries or scrotum give aconite in full doses, from one to five drops every three hours and citrate of potash in full doses, ten to 30 grains every three hours for the kidneys. Rest is a necessity. Put a bandage on the scrotum to hold it up. Apply hot boiled beans to the scrotum as a poultice.*

### **MEASLES**

*The disease spreads rapidly through the air and you do not need to come into contact with the patient or his garments in order to take it. A very short exposure to the infected air is all that is necessary for one to take the measles. Put the patient in a darkened room where no sunlight enters and do not allow him to use the eyes or they will be weakened. See that he does not take cold or serious consequences will follow. Keep him warm but not uncomfortably hot. To bring out the rash, give warm teas such as elder blossom, ginger or horehound. If there is no room that can be kept at an even temperature, the patient should remain in bed during the entire attack.*

