

Sarah + Liz



NEWSLETTER  
JULY 2010

# Brunswick Valley Historical Society MUSEUM

Cnr Of Stuart & Myocum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: FRIDAY 11 AM - 3 PM

MARKET DAY (3RD SAT OF THE MONTH) 9 AM -12 PM



## OLD & GOLD 2010

On Saturday 14th June the bargain hunters, garage sale slaves, and the outright curious inundated Brunswick Heads for the annual Old & Gold Festival. The organisers should have been delighted with the turnout and the glorious weather.

Four of our members manned a stall in the hall hawking our publications, shamelessly promoting our museum, waxing lyrical re our photo collection and trying to field historical queries, not always successfully. We missed Frank Mills, our patron, who was at his school reunion and so had to muddle through on some of the questions thrown at us.

Thanks to all who supported this day by preparing the displays etc, carting it there, meeting & greeting the public on the stall and then packing it up and away. Well worth the effort!

## Brunswick Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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

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Treasurer  
Susan Tsicalas

Assistant Treasurer  
Sarah Newsome

Market Co-ordinator  
Gordon Wright

Newsletter team  
Liz Walton

Patron: Frank Mills OAM.

**All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter**

\*Please leave material with Sarah or Liz Wed - Fri, 10 am - 3 pm.

Or email to:

[bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au](mailto:bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au)

**NEXT MEETING**

**Saturday 17th July 2010  
1pm. See you there!**

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Friday 16th July 2010 .

**MUSEUM HOURS**

**Friday 11am - 3pm**

**Market Saturday 9 am - 12pm**

BVHS Newsletter is produced by NORTEC Work for The Dole participants and BVHS

**PUBLIC FORUM** e-news  
[mullumbimbymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:mullumbimbymuseum@gmail.com)  
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## JUNE GENERAL MEETING REPORT

We attempt to bring you all the news from the monthly meetings but to make it easier on those compiling the newsletter and because people have different ideas about what is significant information, anyone who would like to get a copy of the minutes of the monthly meetings can do so by sending their details to Janelle at the museum or e-mailing us at [bvhs84@yahoo.com.au](mailto:bvhs84@yahoo.com.au).

Starting this month we have a new member, Ashley Mills who will be acting in the position of Volunteer Coordinator. Hopefully he will find it to his liking and stay on longer. He will be at the Museum on Fridays so please feel free to drop by and make him welcome.

Can anyone help us keep the Machinery Shed open for the July and August markets as Bill will be away and we don't want to have to close the shed? If you can, please contact Ashley and put your name on the roster.

We are currently holding a fund raising raffle. 1st prize is a handmade single bed quilt and 2nd prize is a selection of local history publications. Tickets are \$1 and it will be drawn at our November meeting. If you would like to help sell tickets, please contact Jennifer who will be at the Museum on Fridays.

Family histories are of significant interest to many people who visit our Museum and we will very soon (this month hopefully) have a permanent computer in the Photographic Display Area which will be dedicated to Family History Research. Come in and check it out.

## THANK YOU

Big thanks to – *Ray Musgrave* for giving a fantastic talk to the Byron Regional College Water Discovery Bus Tour on the Laverty's Gap Weir – *Everyone* who helped make Old and Gold such a successful day – *Lucinda* for representing us at the Land Care Festival – *Susan* and *Annie* for opening

the museum on a Sunday for the St John's school reunion and *Janelle* for the donation of her beautiful handmade quilt which we are raffling.

## BRUNSWICK VALLEY LANDCARE

At this years Brunswick Valley Landcare Nature Festival, BVHS had only a small static display which never-the-less attracted quite some attention.

The Nature Festival celebrates and encourages learning about our rich local biodiversity. People were obviously making connections between past and present and generating discussion about historic and environmental values. Thanks to the *WfD team* for assembling the material and *Ken Ohlsonn* from BVL for helping get the display set up.

## LOCAL HISTORY MINI DOCUMENTARIES



Thirteen local history mini documentaries now online

Hear a tale or two from days gone by, presented by some of the region's senior historians and storytellers...

As part of the Rivers Roads and Rail Regional Exhibition Trail project, Arts Northern Rivers recorded a series of oral histories. These have now been incorporated into 13 mini-documentaries, which focus on a particular aspect of local history relating to the towns of Alstonville, Ballina, Byron Bay, Casino, Coraki, Evans Head, Glenreagh, Iluka, Kyogle, Lawrence, New Italy, Tweed River and Yamba.

View the documentaries online at [www.artsnorthernrivers.com.au/Local\\_history\\_documentaries.php](http://www.artsnorthernrivers.com.au/Local_history_documentaries.php).

Image: Spreading nets in days gone by, from one of the local history documentaries.

This article is from the Arts Northern Rivers e-news which you can subscribe to yourself or check ours at [mullumbimbymuseum@gmail.com](mailto:mullumbimbymuseum@gmail.com) password Mullumbimby. If you have any stories you think would be of interest to other members you can send them to this e-mail address for anyone to read.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Despite being told to get a life by my wife, my latest obsession is trying to get a handle on the origin of Mullum's corporate culture and the forces that shaped it, the most powerful of which seem to be religious beliefs, the national origin of the disciples and the practice of the transplanted dogma in a remote primeval rainforest (which they remodelled into the green rolling hills of home.)

The Gurus reckon that the corporate culture of a town is put in place right from the arrival of the first settler and thereafter evolves along a predetermined path, the general direction of which can never be changed, only ever deflected. Notwithstanding that the Bundjalung People would argue that 'Mega Events' are an exception to the rule, I'd be grateful if you'd place a notice in the next newsletter requesting members researching their ancestors to note the religion, birth place, political allegiance, war service, trade, civic prominence, or any info pertinent to this thesis, and either send it to me to build the data base or leave it in the folder marked 'Mullumbimby Corporate Culture' I've left at the museum.

[And by-the-by, identifying 'first settlers' is pretty tricky - except for Charlie Jarrett, the timber merchant of Ballina who apparently bankrolled a store at Bruns in 1870 to provision the gold diggers, George Simpson, who established the pilot station at Bruns in 1872 to guide the cedar ships picking up the other

golden bonanza, and the Venerable Rev Abbe Schurr, Catholic priest of Grafton from sometime in the 1860s, none of the people featuring in the 1865 Barrett birth saga mentioned in your last newsletter are identifiable from records, including registration of the baby's birth, suggesting early residents were a bit slack on paperwork and making reliance on oral history and family folklore as the main identifying source. And those founding fathers of yesteryear could be the same fine specimens of yeomen stock referred to by a Sydney Morning Herald comedian on an 1884 safari to Brunswick Heads, describing the place as a "... picture of desolation. On the northern headland is a group of dilapidated houses, with a poverty-stricken pig or two.... On the opposite side of the river is a public house, with the usual up-country group of loafers holding up the verandah posts...."]

As an example of what I'm on about, Mullum, or at least the Byron shire, was the last area in the Clarence-Tweed to be colonized by the whitefella, but grew into the most densely populated rural district in NSW, the growing up process giving it a lot of peculiar character traits at odds with the state norm, a big manifestation of which occurred during the conscription referendums of WW1:

Richmond was one of only 6 electorates in NSW to say Yea, but, interestingly, the only country electorate so inclined. And within Richmond the voting pattern shows a close correlation with religious distribution, with the patriotic subdivision of Byron Bay being the leader of the band, while Mullum took 5th place in the 12 subdivision hierarchy where shirkers weren't welcome. (In 1916 NSW voted 57% No, Richmond 60% Yes, Mullum sub div 65% Yes, Byron Bay sub div 79% Yes. In 1917 it was NSW 60% No, Richmond 56% Yes, Mullum 64% Yes, Byron Bay 70% Yes. Byron Shire enjoyed the proportionally small-

est Catholic cohort and largest Church of England enclave of all the Richmond LGAs, if that's a clue (even though the Anglicans are perceived to be of a broader church than the narrower focused and not so English inclined Methocathbyterians.) Mullum Municipality was below the regional average in Anglicans, but above average in Catholics and Presbyterians. Travelling north, the catholic influence increased and the Anglican presence decreased, so much so that in the second round the Murbarhians joined the rest of the state in the No club, giving a thumbs down to conscription a week after Fr Henry Van Riel, Catholic Parish Priest of Tweed Heads, was charged with 'statements likely to cause public alarm'.

Leading the charge for the Mullum conscriptionists was Scottish-born Presbyterian, **George Cameron**, owner and editor of the Mullum Star, while his nemesis, colonial-born Catholic Labourite **James David Condon**, a dairy farmer in the Presbyterian enclave of Myocum and President of the Richmond-Tweed Tenant Farmers Union, needed police protection whilst rallying the faithful from the balcony of the Middle Pub. Paradoxically, post war pacifist Mullum was one of the few country towns in Australia not to erect a WW1 monument engraved with the names of all its home town lads who served, and was widely condemned for failing to observe Anzac Day, particularly getting up the nose of local returned soldier and Presbyterian minister, the Rev John Simpson Hamilton (1919), and generating an editorial titled 'Public Apathy' (1921). [At last count Mullum and environs contributed 227 enlistees to the slaughter, 50% of whom were Anglican, 22% Presbyterian, 14% Catholic and 10% Methodist, 21% of whom died in Gallipoli/France/Belgium, way above the nation's 14% sacrifice for the Empire. Oddly, of the 31 Mullum-born enlistees, 14 were Catholic, 11 Presbyterian, 5 An-

glican and 1 Methodist. But the pattern may change as counting progresses.]

(The Condons were also leading lights in the Mullum branch of the Australian Hibernian Catholic Guild, a meeting of which was held in Jan1924 and addressed by Bishop Carroll, who *'scathingly denounced the present State Government.... He regarded the Labor Party as one of Australia's greatest achievements against the entrenched strength of Capitalism...'*, thus pointing the Catholic flock to the Labor how-to-vote cards at the polling booths. But pre war the local leading Labour lights were of a different persuasion - in 1910 Presbyterian Mayor Hollingworth was elected foundation president of the Mullum branch of the Political Labor League, Presbyterian Stewart as vice president and Presbyterian Cameron as secretary, at the same time Methodist William Baker was gearing up as an Independent Liberal to challenge the sitting Liberal, Presbyterian Perry, whose campaign manager was William's brother Albert, while Anglican lawyer Moriarty was also running around recruiting for the 'Liberal and Reform League'.)

The conscription referendums generated great political turmoil, the Labor pro-conscriptionists joining the Liberals to form the Nationalist Party, while the jewels in the crown of the new Country Party dynasty became the state seat of Byron and the federal seat of Richmond.

In 1908 Lismore-born Presbyterian **Joseph Hollingsworth** was elected Mullum's first mayor, ably assisted by Presbyterian aldermen **Thomas Torrens** of Kiama, **James Davidson** of Scotland and **John Stewart** of Scotland, with Catholic alderman **William Reilly** of Ireland playing the devil's advocate along with Methodist **William Baker** from South Australia. Baker resigned in early 1909 and at the by-election 65 voters turned up

to anoint Kiama-born Anglican auctioneer **James Parrish** as Reilly's new co-guard against monoculturalism. (And of the 8 candidates who missed out at the first election, 5 were Presbyterian. Through to WW2 Mullum had 8 mayors, 4 of whom were Presbyterian, 3 Methodist and 1 Anglican, very disproportionate to Mullum's population of ~18% Presby, ~13% Meth, ~38% Anglo, ~23% Cath, ~8% Other/Unrecorded.)

By 1933 the Mullumites enjoyed the distinction of having the proportionally largest Presbyterian enclave in the Richmond-Tweed region, double the state average, and, combined with their close relatives the Methodists, on the verge of challenging the Anglicans numerically. In the surrounding Byron Shire, but not in the immediate vicinity of Mullum, the Anglicans continued to dominate, while outside Bangalow the Catholics enjoyed one of their smallest concentrations in the shire and region.

The Rev Dr John Dunmore Lang, the fiery Scottish Presbyterian preacher, populist politician and anti-papist, would have seen this as his ultimate triumph. He played a large part in encouraging Scotsmen to populate Northern NSW, while in 1866 his son George missed out on the opportunity to represent the region as the squatter's candidate for the seat of Clarence in favour of Scotsman Mackellar of Runnymede and Kyogle stations. The Rev Lang also had an obsession with bungling the Clarence, Richmond, Tweed and Brunswick into a new colony to be called 'Cooksland', a cause later taken up by his spiritual descendants in the Country Party.

The inheritor of Rev Lang's pulpit was the brother of the Rev **Richard Dill Macky** of Mullum, the Rev Dr William Marcus Dill-Macky, Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of NSW and the most politically active cler-

gyman in the land. Upon arrival from Northern Ireland he immediately joined the Orange Lodge because *'...when I saw the determined effort of Rome to dominate this free country, I felt it to be my duty to assist, by every means in my power, those who were endeavouring by constitutional organisation to check the encroachment, and so I joined the ranks of the Orangemen...'* and subsequently formed the Protestant Defence Associations, establishing the one at Mullum in Mar1903 during his triumphal march through northern NSW. At one of his rallies he said *'...He considered the Roman Catholic Church more as a political organisation than as a religious one, therefore it behoved all Protestants to watch their own interests...'* To further belabour the Labor point, at another rally in Sydney shortly afterwards he *'...warned the workers to beware what they were doing in regard to Socialism; Cardinal Moran, he said, had declared that Socialism was democracy, but experience had taught Protestants that Cardinal Moran was not to be trusted...'*

The regional Protestant Defence Associations, combining under the umbrella of the Protestant Federation, subsequently exercised their muscle at every election through to the 1930s, particularly post 1920 by taking out large adverts in most regional rags advising that Rome was making a bid for temporal power through the wicked Labor Party, thus reinforcing the Catholic bunker mentality. They punched out their own how-to-vote cards and intimated most non-Labor candidates to sign their platform. But that's another story. More pertinent to the corporate culture thesis is would Mullum's god-fearing Methocathbyterians of yesteryear recognise today's pagan place (and be gobsmacked to learn that Saint Gough was a Presbyterian)?

Cheers  
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