



NEWSLETTER
MARCH 2011

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

MULLUMBIMBY AWAKENS

In mid 1889 Thomas G. Hewitt of the Clarence, the purchaser of 5 parcels of land opposite the present High School at the time of the Mullum Village subdivision sale, became proprietor of the *Northern Star*, and lo and behold his coincidental Leader was headed *Brunswick River Wants. A Correspondent writes on the 12th instant, as follows,-* The prospects here at present are not at all promising. That the Brunswick district has been sadly neglected no one can deny who has had occasion to

travel up the river a few miles. The settlers in their efforts to advance the district have not been assisted as they ought to have been by their Parliamentary representatives;... and the people up the River (that is around Mullumbimby Creek) have particular cause for complaint, as they have no road yet to the Heads - their only place of shipment. They are thus denied the means of sending their produce to market with any prospect of realising a profitable return. They've weeped and

wailed ...but their petitions have been as persistently ignored. The present roads, or rather tracks of mud and water, are a disgrace to the settlers, and reflect great discredit on their Members.

The only road Mullumbimby can boast of is a half-finished one to the Byron; and does it not seem anomalous that the settlers here should be denied a road to a port they use, and have access by road to a port (?) they do not use? In plain language it is this,-



The first Byron Bay Jetty Circa 1920.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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

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Patron: Frank Mills OAM.

All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

*Please leave material with Sarah or
Liz Tue Wed 10 am - 2 pm.

Or email to:

bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au

NEXT MEETING

**Friday 18TH MARCH 2011
12.30pm. See you there!**

*Deadline for agenda items

Thursday 17th March 2011 .

MUSEUM HOURS

**Friday 11am - 3pm
Market Saturday 9 am - 12pm**

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PUBLIC FORUM e-news
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the people of the Brunswick are to wait till the Byron is ready for them - their country is to be annexed to the Byron - and they, "nolens volens", must send their produce there. Roads radiate to all parts of the district (even to Mullumbimby) from Byron Bay, while only the main road from the Richmond to the Tweed passes through the Brunswick.... The endeavour to FORCE one place to prosperity - for the purpose of benefiting land speculators - at the expense, and to the total neglect of another... is not fair. Do not detract from the Brunswick to add to the prosperity of the Byron.... Had a fourth part of the money that has been laid out on the Byron, been expended on the Brunswick, a prosperous community would exist where now there is nothing but destitution. Great dissatisfaction exists at the way in which our senior member, Mr Ewing, has disregarded the requirements of the place..... [At the election in Feb89 for the three-member electorate of Richmond, the Brunswickites were the odd men out in giving ship owner Nicoll their first preference over Alstonville cane-grower Perry and surveyor Ewing of Burringbar, while Byron and Eureka and all 5 booths in the Tweed went with Ewing.]

Ominously, a group of unconciliatory Mullumites also blamed the *Brunswick Progress Association* for this neglect and split to form the *Mullumbimby Progress Association*, stepping up the Byron/Member-bashing. Nevertheless, the Bruns letter got swift results. A month later, at the start of an orchestrated letter campaign, 'A *Brunswick Correspondent*' reported *I am glad to notice that after fighting for fully seven years, there is at last a prospect of £500 being expended on the Brunswick-Mullumbimby road; thanks to the exertions of our junior Member (Mr Perry), who evidently studies the welfare of every portion of*

his constituency.... [At this time John McGregor was president of the Brunswick Association with identifiable loyal members Messrs French, Francis, Nixon, Torrens, Hains, Cameron, Mills, Reddacliff, Anderson and Nelson, while the only positively identified member of the Mullum Association was Secretary Stanley G. Woodrow.]

And a week after that another anonymous bloke reported *The gale on the coast the week before last had the effect of driving five vessels ashore at Byron Bay. It seems they ran there for shelter I think that this is a pretty fair proof that the far-famed Byron Bay is no Bay at all, and the money spent on the jetty is a mistake, forced in by a few influential members who happen to have an interest in the locality.... they seem to concentrate all Government works to their own centre, as is plainly shown by the way the roads have been made from all back parts of it, some of them never used, while the principal road of importance, viz., the Mullumbimby to the Brunswick Heads, has been totally ignored,....*

In late Aug89 a letter writer calling himself 'Justice' said *From what I can see by the papers, the breakwater at Byron Bay is a certainty, while the improvements to the Brunswick Heads is very doubtful. In fact, from what I can glean, if the breakwater at the Byron is pushed on, it will cost so much that the Government will not spend any more on a spot so adjacent as the Brunswick. Now let us look at the facts in an unbiased point of view. The breakwater at the Byron will ... cost a motza... and when completed there is no certainty of its being a success.... Now let us look at the Brunswick..., for a small sum it can be made safe in a short time. Several have been ruined here, having spent their*

all in the hopes of something being done for the transit of their produce, then thrown up their hands in disgust, and gone to more favourable spots to earn a living...

Two days later another writer reckoned that while the roads were now starting to be trafficable ...We would like to know when the Government intend to take action in regard to the breakwater at this place.... Replies from the Minister say no money, and yet we see in the face of this that a gang of men are now testing for stone for the Byron Bay breakwater, which has not yet come before the Works Committee....

Our Progress Association has persistently urged that plans of the proposed works be prepared, but the invariable reply has been that until the money is available nothing can be done. The inhabitants of the Brunswick have, however, sufficient mental capacity to understand that that apparent rule is not strictly adhered to, and trust our Members will explain why some parts of the electorate participate in advantages which are denied to the Brunswick.... This too got results and in early Nov89 Ewing MLA confirmed that the sum of £4000 has been placed on the Loan Estimates for works at our entrance.... Great satisfaction was expressed by residents at the thoughtfulness of the proprietor of the Star in acquainting us by wire of the fact.

In mid Nov89 the Northern Star's 'Byron Correspondent' awoke from hibernation in a happy mood about *The successful trade that is springing up at this once remote corner of the electorate, through the weekly trips of the "Alice," has at length removed from us the reproach of our neighbours, who were and are ever ready to "pick holes."* Our jetty is now the

scene of life... Eleven teams of bullocks and horses daily put in their appearance with logs of timber ... and farmers from the North, west and south bring in their produce while the steamer is discharging or loading.... Our local progress association, has held no business of late, everyone being so busy since the revolution caused by the arrival of the "Alice." (At a revivalist meeting on 1Mar90 Secretary Wareham of the Byron Bay Association advised that he had written To the hon. Secretary Mullumbimby Progress Association, declining to co-operate with them re deviation in railway line, between Byron Bay and the Tweed, via Mullumbimby.)

Into the new year the Brunswick Progress Association was also into a bit of self congratulations... *The Association dates its existence from April, 1883, a period of nearly 7 years duration, and is probably one of the oldest in the district...., and in a spirit of goodwill figured The action of our members, Messrs Ewing and Perry, in refusing to vote with the opposition recently, appears to be unanimously approved of here, (At the next election in 1891 Ewing, Perry and Nicoll stood as Independent Protectionists because they favoured the leadership of Parkes over Dibbs, the latter arguing strongly against the Byron Breakwater and allegedly the coiner of the phrase 'the railway from nowhere to nowhere'.)*

At the Byron AGM it was still all champagne and back slapping. *The past 12 months has brought a great change here for the better; ...A splendid receiving store, calf and pig pens, have been erected at the jetty; three heavy mooring buoys laid abreast, and a powerful steam crane supplied at the berthing end of the wharf. Good metalled approaches have taken the*

place of the heavy sandy terrace leading to the jetty, and a first-class road made at Cooper's Shoot; another to top of Tyagarah, Mullumbimby, Curribl Creek and Eureka;... Three important bridges are now in course of construction - 2 over Byron Creek, and one across Wilson's Creek. These, when completed, will admit of large quantities of dairy produce finding its way to this port. ...We have now three Sydney mails a week, and your Committee take this opportunity of heartily thanking the Members....

Kelly was replaced as president at this meeting by a new noise on the Byron stage, David Jarman, now highly vocal with yet more demands for his grand vision of a city exporting directly to the world. His successful committee remained in place; Boyle as vice-president and the Wareham brothers as secretary and treasurer, while Kelly remained a strong presence behind the scene. (At the next AGM, Mar1891, Kelly was voted back into the chair, still with the same Boyle/Warehams team, while Jarman independently continued his ineffectual racket about the rock wall to 'Juan Juan Rocks'.)

But up the Brunswick road competing factions broke out into megaphone politics, initiated by an innocuous enough anonymous letter... *For some time the Brunswick residents have advocated a deviation of the railway line between Byron Bay and the Tweed; viz, that on leaving Byron Bay the line should strike across country, and cross the Brunswick River at or near Mullumbimby township....* This writer, probably **Hugh Campbell**, argued that the Bruns harbour scheme was a waste of money, and would be made redundant anyway with the advent of the railway and direct access to Byron Bay. By Peter Tsicalas

COMMITTEE NEWS

Our Volunteer Coordinator, Rothy Benson, is enjoying settling into her role and tackling the huge learning curve about the running of the museum. Rothy is keen to meet the members and is at the museum every Friday; so come and introduce yourself.

The Accession Committee will be meeting monthly, on the 2nd Friday of each month at 10.00am. We are looking for a chairperson for this committee. If you are interested in the items that the museum acquires come and help. The first meeting will be held 11th March 2011.

On 19th March at Brunswick Heads there is a "Taking Care of the Brunswick 2011-16" Expo. The Society has been invited to hold a display. Frank Mills, our patron, will have a power point presentation. See you there!

The tenure of the markets in the Byron Shire that are held on Crown Lands is under consideration by the NSW Lands Department. The Stall Holders Association & the Market Managers have written to the council asking for a decision on who gets Market Management Approval. They are requesting that it be for a reasonable length of time, so that completion of maintenance and some capital works can be justified.

REMINDERS

Our monthly meetings are now held on the third Friday of each month at 12.30pm.

Acquisition Committee 2nd Friday of each month at 10.00am.

Membership fees for 2011 are due – the renewal form is attached.

NEW LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS

St John's Primary School Centenary 1910-2010 by Lisa Russell

2 CDs from Dot Andrews of photos of the Beautiful Brunswick Valley

MEMBERS CORNER

Alan Claydon is trying to trace information about a great uncle – Robert Nixon, a bachelor Irishman. Robert Nixon lived in a humpy on the eastern side of the Brunswick River. He had an oyster lease, sold oysters and smoked mullet. Later on he was employed making concrete bricks for the construction of the Cape Byron Lighthouse. Years later, in poor health, he moved to the Bay where he died in July 1940. He was buried in the Presbyterian portion of the Byron Bay Cemetery.

If any members know anything about **Robert Nixon**, Alan would appreciate it if you would contact him. Phone 66858136