



NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2011

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. 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 V. BRUNSWICK

In Feb 1890 a dormant 'Brunswick Correspondent', probably **John McGregor**, wrote to the *Northern Star* apologizing for not keeping the editor updated.... However, I notice that you have been fairly well posted up in news from this quarter by others.... In reference to remarks of one of your correspondents from these parts, re the railway line through Mullum..., I can scarcely agree with him as regards the whole of the inhabitants being in favour of same.... It was arranged by a few that this deviation should be recommended (to the Chairman of the 'Sectional Committee').... When this became known there were strong hints thrown out that if the deviation was mentioned the witness would

have rather a warm time. The feeling was so strong against this proposal that he (the witness) deemed it prudent to allow matters to remain as they were, but a witness was sent from Mullumbimby to Lismore to advocate this deviation. The very fact of the strong feeling evinced here against the proposal at the time is, I consider, conclusive proof that the majority are in favour of the line being taken where it is already surveyed....

Three weeks later he got a retort, presumably from **Hugh Campbell** ... Your Brunswick correspondent ..., appears to take exception to my recent remarks regarding the proposed railway route, via

Mullumbimby.... I merely desire to state that in March, 1885, a public meeting was held here to advocate that the railway route be surveyed so as to intersect the rich and extensive lands at the head of the Brunswick River (alias Mullumbimby). The meeting, which had a large and representative attendance, was of the unanimous opinion that the line should go via Mullumbimby, and a petition was sent to the Government to that effect. Since that time, at irregular intervals, public meetings have been held for the same purpose, and since the formation of the Mullumbimby Progress Association they have taken the matter up.... He didn't mention the letter recently



Lismore to Tweed Railway Tunnel

**Brunswick Valley
Historical Society Inc.
Newsletter**

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

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**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 15TH APRIL 2011
12.30pm. See you there!**

*Deadline for agenda items

Thursday 14th April 2011.

MUSEUM HOURS

Friday 11am - 3pm

Market Saturday 9 am - 12pm

BVHS Newsletter is produced
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participants and BVHS

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received by the Mullum Progress Association from the Byron Bay Association *declining to cooperate ... re deviation in railway line, between Byron Bay and the Tweed, via Mullumbimby*, perhaps implying that the Bruns citizens had pre-empted Mullum's action and formed an alliance with Byron.

At the same time *A well-attended public meeting was held at the Heads*, presumably outside the auspices of the Bruns Progress Association, *to consider what steps should be taken to push on the works of improvements to the river entrance, and other matters affecting the district. Mr F.D. Nixon occupied the chair. After reading the notice convening the meeting...* (presumably stuck on a tree somewhere)... *the chairman said that the chief object of the meeting was one which affected the whole of the residents of the district, ie getting work started on making the Bruns a safe port. Henry French, Robert Smith, John McGregor, Robert Marshall and Delaney Hains all had two bob's worth.*



John McGregor

Again suggesting that there was a third Progress Association in the making, two weeks later (26Apr90) yet another *public meeting was held at the Brunswick*, at which they

were disappointed to learn that it looked like the river improvements probably wouldn't go ahead, at least until after completion of the railway. **Henry French** (Chairman), **Fred Nixon**, **John Macgregor** (aka M'Gregor/McGregor), **Martin M'Mahon**, **Robert Marshall** and **James Colefax** argued back and forth.

In the meantime the Brunswick's absentee delegate to *The Alliance of District Progress Associations*, Lismore-based **James Anderson**, was starting to push his own perceived priorities, which were more aligned to Byron's. He had done a stint as Chairman of the Alliance and was now nominated as secretary of that organisation by Edward Boyle, the Byron Bay delegate. And over at Bangalow and Newrybar the new Progress Associations were furthering their own interests by directly lobbying for a fair share of the available pie, contributing to the inevitable breakdown of 'The Alliance'.

In mid Jun90 someone, presumably Hugh Campbell, felt compelled to keep people focused on the railway deviation and not be sidetracked by the harbour schemes, supplying the *Northern Star* with the history of the saga and implying it was all due to **Neil Campbell** with the backing of **John McGregor**: *The route appears to have been first urged on the Government as far back as January, 1885, when Mr Neil Campbell addressed the Minister.... Two months later Mr J. M'Gregor wrote on the same subject, urging the same point, stating that by far the larger area of rich agricultural land lay considerably inland, and for several miles along both banks of the river, where the great body of settlers were located....* (This argument over who supported what where and when carried on for another year, McGregor playing the compromising

politician in attempting to keep the Brunswick Heads people on side, while the unconciliatory Hugh Campbell considered the Bruns port demands a waste of money and pushed the priority of inland rail.)



Neil Campbell

Two weeks later there was jubilation throughout the land when news arrived that Ewing MLA had managed to get *The Lismore-Tweed Railway Bill*, *The Byron Bay Breakwater Bill*, and *Entrance Richmond River Improvements Bill* through the lower house. By the end Jun90 a Ewing Testimonial Fund was underway, with Bruns rep James Anderson and Thomas Hewitt of the *Northern Star* on the committee. By Nov90 heaps of people across the Richmond-Tweed region had reached into their pockets - Byron Bay 51 contributors, Byron Creek 17, 'Jasper and Eureka' 13 (inclusive of the Jasper Progress Association), Clunes 11, Mullum 3 (**Hugh Campbell, S.G. Woodrow and W.G. Shearer**), Brunswick nil.

By early Sep90 the railway surveyor had finished the work on that portion of the line, known as the *Mullumbimby Deviation*, and has expressed himself as highly satisfied with the route, giving great joy to the Mullum Progress Association. At the Heads they were still awaiting news of some crumbs from the

table and in Oct90 pointed out that *It is now a considerable time since the sum of £4000 was voted by parliament for the purpose of improving the Brunswick River entrance...*, but nothing had been done. *No meetings of the Brunswick Progress Association have been held for several months, and the Society is to a certain extent defunct.... One reason is owing to the fact that several members have attached themselves to the Mullumbimby Association.... There has been also a general 'apathy' on the part of those who were in a position to attend. ...Mr **Marshall** proposed that a new Association be formed, which was agreed to...*, but it seems to have come to nothing.

Shortly afterwards a public meeting was held at the Heads with the object of considering what further steps should be taken to induce Government to carry out the works at the river entrance... **Mr F.D. Nixon** was in the chair, and advised that he'd received news to the effect that to carry out the proposed improvements to the Brunswick River entrance in their entirety would necessitate the expenditure of £40,000.... **Mr Marshall** said that he had just returned from Sydney, and had several conversations with the Members, ...but had not been able to obtain any very satisfactory promises that the work would be done, and thought the only way was to agitate the matter. **Mr H. French, J.P.**, gave an epitome of the efforts which had been put forth recently..., and Messrs **MacGregor, Colefax, Thompson and Starr** backed him up.

The following month (15Nov90) secretary Wareham of the Byron Bay Association advised he'd written *To Mullumbimby Progress Association, co-operating RE erection of a bridge over Brunswick River at Mullumbimby, and a deviation in*

railway line from Byron to Tweed to embrace the large tract of rich agricultural land at Mullumbimby, implying there'd been strong lobbying from Mullum for Byron to reverse its Mar1890 decision. ...The meeting, at a late hour of the evening then terminated, and its members (especially those living 8 miles distant) had a midnight ride by the light of the moon to their homes.

Influential Byron wrote to the Members with a strong recommendation in support of the deviation and Bruns got the bad news via the SMH 27Nov90: *Mr Bruce Smith laid on the table of the Legislative Assembly last night a copy of the report by Mr Price, temporary examiner of public works proposals, in regard to the proposed improvements of the Brunswick River, who said it would cost a motza ...to confer any real or lasting benefit. ...With Byron Bay within 10 miles, and railway communication thereto authorised and about to be carried out, any money spent on improving the Brunswick River would be simply thrown away. All the trade of the Brunswick was derived from the good country some distance inland. Mullumbimbi would then become, as it should, the commercial centre of a rich district. No matter which course the line followed, it must destroy the shipping trade of the Brunswick River. He therefore arrived at the conclusion that no money should be spent on the improvement of the Brunswick River.*

And that was the *coup de grâce* for Brunswick Heads, although they continued to hold ineffectual meetings to make thundering resolutions, resulting in more wasted petitions and delegations to Sydney.

By Peter Tscicalas

COMMITTEE NEWS

CALENDAR REMINDERS

For Committee members only – 1st Friday each month 10.00-12.00 committee meeting

Members are invited to attend the following each month:-

2nd Friday from 10am to 11pm the acquisition's committee meets to assess new items offered to the museum.

3rd Friday from 12.30pm to 2.00pm - our monthly meeting.

4th or 5th Friday from 10am to 11.00am – training/information sessions. Starting on 29th April at which Sarah will take us through how to find items on the photo database & museum database.

MEMBERSHIP REMINDER

Memberships for 2011 are due and if you wish to continue to receive the newsletter each month subscriptions need to be renewed by the end of April. Thanks to those who are financial. Your support is much appreciated. Cost is \$15 per member plus \$5 if you wish to receive the newsletter by post.

FROM OUR VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

I've been in this role a couple of months now, and find the position enjoyable and stimulating. It's still early days as to enlisting volunteers but I'm happy to welcome Bill, Michelle, and Shona so far. We'll all be learning together, as we sift and find information on all the 'how-tos' of conservation, researching, and processing of objects generally – there's plenty to do, I see.

My main focus is bringing attention to the Museum and attracting more Visitors as well as Volunteers. The list of general contacts is growing with the help of the database already in place. I also look forward to meeting more Members, so please contact me anytime. Or better still call in when I'm here working on Wednesdays and Fridays. Give me all your suggestions and ideas, and let me know if you'd like to be part of planning events.

There'll be an 'Old-fashioned Picnic' on the Queen's birthday in June, so think about getting involved. It's also been decided to hold a Trash & Treasure stall every Market Day, for the Museum to raise funds, so if you have any bits 'n pieces; feel like baking a cake or two; pot up some spare plants; or anything else you choose – bring items over the Friday before the Market and they'll go on the stall. Ring me if I can help pick things up, or if you'd like to work on the stall.

Our Museum is such a 'treasure' in the district and I'm expecting to be part of it for a long time to come – so see you there!

Rothy

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