



NEWSLETTER
November 2022

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

17 Myokum Street MULLUMBIMBY 2482

Email: admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au Phone: 02 6684 4367

OPEN: TUESDAYS & FRIDAYS 10 AM – 12 PM

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

PLEASE NOTE

The November meeting has been moved to a week later. It is now on 15th rather than the 8th.

Vale to the Last Ithacan

The recent death of 95yr old **Eftihia** (Effie) **Korialos** (nee Kachrilas), long-time resident of Argyle Street, draws to a close Mullumbimby's fellowship with Ithaca, the mythical Greek island of Odysseus, and in particular the village of Perahori, from which so many post-WW2 migrants came to help make the Brunswick one of Australia's leading banana growing districts. In a wonderful Perahorian tradition the bells tolled in the village square to mark Effie's passing.

Of the 50 or so Greek families in the Mullum district in the heyday of the banana industry, the phenomenon of chain migration saw the majority come from this single village on Ithaca. Perahori, the old island capital in pirate times and overlooking the current coastal capital of Vathy, declined quickly with post-war migration, most residents leaving in equal numbers for Australia and America, with smaller groups settling in Canada, South Africa and New Zealand, but it's reckoned that for a time the remote town of Mullumbimby became the single largest enclave of the village's expatriates. According to Guru Google, the village has now built back to 354 residents, most bearing names familiar to many older Mullumites.

Widespread starvation, malnutrition and disease accompanied the bloodshed of war-torn Greece, Effie's beloved mother succumbing in 1945, leaving the 18yr old with the responsibility for the care of her siblings and father during the turmoil of the subsequent Civil War (1944-49). (Estimates put the Greek WW2 death toll, through the attendant effects of the famine alone, at ~450,000.)

Post-war saw a huge exodus of refugees escaping Greece, but it was the devastating Ithacan earthquake of Aug1953 that finally forced Effie's hand. Thousands of Greeks on Ithaca, Cephalonia and Zante were left homeless because of the earthquake, which also destroyed the bulk of their ancient monumental heritage. Only 50 of the ~2000 buildings in the Ithacan capital of Vathy were left standing. Effie's home was destroyed, necessitating many months of tent living for the family (until the inventor of 'Dexion', **Dimitri Ioannis Comino** OBE, BSc (Eng), born 1902 Sydney of Kytherian heritage, turned up to provide emergency housing and hospitals made from the stuff.) Locally, the reaction to the earthquake marked a distinct attitudinal change to the 'undesirable aliens' in the Mullumite's midst, while the regional newspapers did a turnaround and became more pro-active in assisting migrant assimilation.

The Mullum Rotarians were to the fore with an approach to Steppa Stephens MLA, presenting him with a list prepared by the local Ithacans of relatives left homeless and a request to expedite their immigration. Stephens in turn approached Mr Holt MHR, Minister for Immigration, who publicly indicated preference under the immigration scheme to all affected Greeks and a minimizing of compliance with normal formalities. In the meantime the local club approached Rotary



Effie Korialos
6Aug1927 Perahori – 6Sep2022 Mullumbimby
(Courtesy Korialos Family)

International with a request for financial assistance to have the relatives brought to Australia by plane, while the Mullum RSL, previously ambivalent to migrants, agreed to coordinate the Greek Aid Fund, which accumulated over £500 in a very short time, most of it from donations by the local Greek community.

The momentum for culture change grew from here and Mullumbimby's conservative core values, intact since it boasted NSW's first 'White Australia Café' in 1909 and triumphed over the first alien invasion of the banana plantations in 1919, began to transform, particularly after the local branch of the 'New Settler's League' (formed Nov1952 with the Rhodian **Tony Peters** as president) morphed into the 'Good Neighbour Council' in Nov1955.

The earthquake also marked another major change in Effie's life when a fellow villager, **Tilemachos (Archie) Vasilios Korialos**, now banana growing at isolated Palmwoods, wrote her a marriage proposal. Despite misgivings at leaving her family she accepted Archie's overtures and duly landed in Jan1954 to be met with a huge culture shock, not least of which was the geographic dislocation and loss of the familiar milieu of cultivated olive groves on the barren and rocky terrain surrounding her mountain village. Then in a double whammy their spartan home, on a secluded 10acre banana patch leased from fellow Perahorian **Andreas Lambros Alidenes**, was destroyed in the Feb1954 cyclone along with all their possessions. The wonderful care and assistance rendered to the homeless couple by the neighbouring Cranney and Pike families left Effie with a profound appreciation of Australian mores.

[The influential **Andrew Alidenes** (1903 Perahori – 1962 Mullum) had established himself at Palmwoods in 1937, joining his ex-Murbah employer **Con Dimitri Vlismas** (1895 Perahori – 1987 Murbah), who had sold his well-known *Austral Café* at Murbah in 1933 to acquire a 100acre lease from Palmwoods pioneer **J.R.H. Gaggin**. Later in that year Con became a foundation member of the Main Arm branch of the BGF, at the same time **Angelo Hanos**, also from Perahori and another earlier employee in Con's café, was a foundation member of the Billinudgel branch. Other pre-war Perahorian growers in the Mullum area included **Denis Pilikas, Jack Karavia, Paul Melidonis, Toto Livanis** and various interconnected bearers of the name **Kassianos**. (You can follow the story of the Ithacan banana growers through the digital version of '*Aliens of the Tweed and Brunswick*' at <http://freepages.rootsweb.com/~aliens/history/index.htm> or the hardcopy available at BVHS.) Most of these names appeared in Mullum's high-profile *Australian Greek Day* celebrations in Feb1941. By-the-by, the first clearly identifiable Ithacans in the region were **George Adelenes** (1862 Ithaca - Unknown) and **Athena Andrulakis** (nee **Florias**, 1867 Ithaca – 1938 Lismore), who turned up in Lismore in 1904 to open an Oyster Saloon. (There's also a school of thought that **Matthew Perry**, who settled at Emigrant Creek near Ballina in 1882, was an Ithacan seaman who jumped ship in Melbourne in 1868, aged 35.) Most played a part in sponsoring rellies and fellow villagers.]

Following on from the Rotary initiative, the Mullum CWA rolled out the welcome mat in Aug1954 with a soiree for over 50 of the 'New Australian' wives and children. **Alice (Alik) Black** (Mavromatis), nee **Raftopoulou** of Ithaca, delivered the speech of thanks while her daughter **Poppy** sang a few solos for the entertainment of all. Also helping to increase the standing of 'New Australians' were the high-profile '*Continental Balls*' held through the 1950s and 60s, which always raised a heap of money for local charities. The balls became a showcase for the respective cultures of the various national groups, and on occasion attended by the Greek Consul from Brisbane, partnered by Poppy's sister, **Vera Black**. (Vera was school captain in her Leaving Certificate year in 1953 and upon graduation went off to Teachers' College, returning to spend 3yrs teaching at Mullum High, becoming a role model for the 'New Australian' children and fondly remembered by many others. She and her musically gifted brother **Les** starred at the concert to celebrate Mullum's Jubilee in late 1958, the same year **Christine Alidenes** became Girl's Captain and **Lambros Alidenes** Boy's Captain of Acacia House, of which Vera was House Mistress.)

After their Palmwoods adventure Archie and Effie managed to obtain the lease of a 15acre plantation from an ex-Vathy identity, **Stathis Andreas Pippas**, at Mullumbimby Creek, where social life improved with the strong growth of an Ithacan enclave. Nevertheless, it took another 9yrs of hard labour before they accumulated the wherewithal to acquire a house in town in 1963, the same year life was made a little easier when



Mullumbimby Show 1960
Archie, Effie, Gerry and Leo Korialos
(Courtesy Effie Korialos)

the standard banana case was changed, reducing the 75lb monster down to a slightly more manageable 56lbs. While raising their two children, **Argiro** (Geraldine) and **Eleftherios** (Leo), Effie remained diligent in helping Archie on the plantation until he semi-retired in 1974, after which she had more leisure moments to pursue her love of cooking, sewing, gardening, reading and writing poetry.

In the wake of Archie's death in 1997, aged 85, Effie continued to pursue her remarkable talent for writing scholarly poetry in her native Greek, while Geraldine had left for a teaching career in Sydney, and Leo, having inherited his father's engineering aptitude, was becoming one of Mullum's most well-known identities through *Leo's Garage* in Dalley Street. Gerry returned permanently in 2012 and together with Leo lovingly cared for Effie through her declining years until her peaceful death at home.

The Brunswick district Greeks, making up the largest 'alien' group amongst their fellow banana growing 'New Australians', inclusive of Macedonians, Italians, Finns, Dutch, Indians, et al, were a prominent presence around the neighbourhood over most of the early post-war years, giving the locals a significant exposure and heightened awareness of 'alien' values and ways-of-life, which proved not so different upon familiarity through day-to-day contact in the shops and streets, on the sport's fields, P&C meetings, parades, festivals and carnivals. And it was the personal traits of people like Effie, with her reserved and sensitive nature, that exemplified the commonality of family values.

[The predominant Greek cohort around the Brunswick was overshadowed by the Crabbes Creek-centred Macedonian community ("*WE ARE NOT GREEK*"), which could have numbered over 300 in its heyday in the 1950s, making it the largest alien group in the wider Tweed-Brunswick district.]

Despite the great assimilation pressure the Greeks adopted an early form of multiculturalism in their desire to keep alive Greek language and cultural values in their Australian-born offspring. Initially the enclave at Mullumbimby Creek hired its own teacher, organised by **Jack Karavia** and **Gerry Arcouzis** (both of Perahori), resulting in an ad hoc arrangement with **Kyriako Sarris** (believed to be Athenian) to give lessons, delivered after travel from Murbah to Mullum each weekend from the late 1940s. But with the continuing influx of Greeks into the region's banana plantations a wider and more structured arrangement was instituted in the early 1950s when the combined Orthodox communities of Lismore, Murbah and Mullum levied themselves to hire Lismore-based **Mrs Ecaterina Savvas**. She taught in Lismore during the week, giving Greek lessons after school on Tuesdays and Thursdays, then on Fridays travelled to Byron Bay, drilling the Feros children, before moving on to Mullum on Saturday morning and Murbah on Sunday.

While **Mrs Savvas** also taught English to the adults in Lismore, it's understood an attempt in Mullum was abandoned, mainly because most adults couldn't spare the time away from their plantations. Effie taught herself English by tuning into the ABC's two early-morning programmes per week allotted to rudimentary English lessons, supplemented by a booklet for enrolled migrants. And shortly after the arrival of TV she tuned into the ABC's Sunday afternoon programme titled '*Walter and Connie*', a series of conversations between two people rendered in both English and Greek, again supplemented by a free booklet, which helped her pick up grammar and written English. This study went on at night after the day's banana labouring and sometimes went through to one in the morning.

Mrs Savvas and her husband, **Socrates**, were from long-established Greek families in Romania. How they happened to find themselves in Lismore is a mystery, but both were well-educated and sophisticated, bringing an element of old-world Greek culture to the region. Unfortunately, she lost her job in 1963 when **Fr Theodoros Kousiandos** was finally appointed as a combined resident priest and teacher following a decade long campaign by the Lismore Orthodox Community. At this time the communities were in decline and couldn't afford two wages, as well as housing and other financial support for the priest and his family.

At one stage the Brunswick district growth rate was such that Mullumbimby was mooted



Combined Richmond, Tweed and Brunswick function, Bexhill Hall 1955.
Mrs Mary George Black on Piano and Mrs Ecaterina Socrates Savas
conducting.

(Courtesy Harry Eric Crethar)

as the central location for a regional Orthodox Church. **Archbishop Ezekiel Tsacualas**, newly enthroned as the administrator of the Greek Orthodox Church of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands, accompanied by **Fr Gregory Sakellerian** of Brisbane, was given a civic reception when he arrived in town in early Sep1959 scouting out a suitable site.

The Mullumites took the opportunity of his visit to form the *Greek Orthodox Brotherhood of the Northern Rivers*, with **Theo Economos** (Cypriot) as president, **Archie Caponas** (Kytherian) as secretary and **Nick Alidenes** (Ithacan), **Toto Livanis** (Ithacan) and **Tony Peters** (aka Pizimolas, Rhodian) as committeemen. The subsequent collapse of the banana industry and the departure of many families saw it all come to nothing, but at this time it was reckoned that the north coast had the strongest Greek community in NSW outside Sydney, Newcastle and Wollongong. (And the appointment of **Fr Kousiandos** to Lismore put paid to any further territorial ambitions of the Mullumites.)



Caponas residence, Argyle Street, 1959.

L to R: Theo Economos, Tony Peters, Fr Sakellerian, Archbishop Iezekle, Dionysia Caponas, Archie Caponas, Nick Alidenes

(Courtesy John Caponas)

Fr Kousiandos's parish was a large one and involved a lot of travel between all the major towns on the North Coast, conducting services, weddings, baptisms and burials as well as religious instruction and teaching after normal school hours. He was relieved in 1965 by a retired Cypriot monk, **Fr Kallistratos Adamou**, who apparently never came near Mullum. He wasn't replaced upon leaving in 1968, as by this time the Lismore community was also into rapid decline. (And thankfully the appointment of a local priest meant goodbye to visits from the sleazy Very Reverend **Chrys Boyazoglue**, *Archimandreti of the Greek Orthodox Church of Southern Queensland and Northern NSW.*)

On the social side, the heyday of the Richmond, Tweed and Brunswick communities saw combined picnics at Brunswick Heads, bus trips to scenic spots and functions organised at various halls in the region where matchmaking was a feature of the mixing. Initially the three groups mostly combined for Christmas and Easter festivities at the Burringbar hall, the religious interactions evolving into more frequent general social mixing. But by the mid1950s Bexhill had become the preferred meeting place, where **Mrs Savvas** organised regular children's concerts.



Ithacan Matchmaking at St Martins Anglican Church, Mullumbimby, 1961.

Bride and Groom: Christine Nick Alidenes and Peter Aristidis Dendrinos.

Standing L to R: Helen A. Alidenes, Jenny S. Dendrinos, Leo N. Alidenes, Unknown, Fr Gregory Sakellerian.

(Courtesy Harry Eric Crethar)

It all started to fade away in the late 1950s when the combined communities peaked at around 600 Orthodox adherents (inclusive of the Macedonians, but representing less than half the regional total of persons of Greek heritage, many of the offspring of the earlier café group of migrants preferring to evolve into mainstream ockers.) Thereafter community interaction gradually declined.

The good burghers of Mullum may have sensed something disquieting as in May1960 *Praise for the part immigrants were playing in the community life...* was given at a special dinner held by Mullumbimby Apex Club with the theme "*International Goodwill*".... England (exempt from the 'alien' label) was represented by **Albert Gardner**, Italy by **Matthew Bortolussi**, India by **Satman Singh**, Finland by **Bill Hager**, Holland by **Gerald Jansen**, Macedonia by

George Kotrones and Greece by both **Theo Economos** (of Cyprus) and **John Develengas** (of the Ioannina region of the Peloponnese). A couple of months later saw the newly formed Quota Club celebrating United Nations Week by entertaining Mesdames **H. Thornley**, **A. Caponas** (nee **Dionysia Pippas** of Vathy) and **L. Benedet** representing England, Greece and Italy..., at a soiree at Brunswick Heads.

The year 1960 marked the peak settlement of Greeks in Mullumbimby and the start of the exodus of a lot of the long-term families from the district, concomitant with the decline in the banana industry. Although bananas continued to be the lifeblood of the district, average net returns continued to decline and Mullum's future prosperity was looking dodgy. Recovery began in the early 1970s with the arrival of a new wave of home-grown undesirable aliens, mostly dubbed 'hippies' until the label 'alternate lifestyles' started to stick.

A thousand times I asked myself...

[WHAT IS ITHACA?]

*Poor Homer, you adorned her, you endowed her,
Your Ithaca, with great fantasy and glamour; Utopia;
Your pain was heavy in your Asia Minor emigration
But I repeatedly ask myself
What is Ithaca?*

*Perhaps a young daughter, a daughter of the Ionian
Daughter of a harsh Mother; austere
who hesitates not in farewelling her
Many things, and many children who over
The ages she lost, never to see them again!!
And again I contemplate
What is Ithaca?*

*But Homer, ever sensitive
Drowned in the dream of the return of
his children, and of his own.
Weighed down by harsh remorse about the beloved children
He lost. But Homer
the harsh egotist, always chose pretence
in his thinking, warm with a vain conscience like, like
Therapy in two words:*

[BLESS ODYSSEUS]

Effie's poem was translated and orated by Fr Romanos Stergiou, Parish Priest of the Greek Orthodox Church of Saint Anna, Bundall, Gold Coast, who had also performed the funeral service for her husband Archie 25yrs earlier.

Mullum's adaption to the 'alternate lifestyle'

movement, and the range of derivatives that followed, was facilitated through its experience adjusting to 'New Australians', which was in turn helped along by the advent of the pro-active service clubs (Rotary in 1949, Apex 1951, Lions 1952). (And while the migrant-driven mechanisms introduced in the 1950s initiated the forging of a new corporate culture for Mullumbimby, further afield similar measures in conjunction with

the post-war mass migration scheme saw a new Australia emerging.) Over the following years the bewildering pace of transformation of institutions and commercial, social and cultural conventions, driven by an unstoppable technical revolution and environment awareness, has seen Mullum emerge with today's 'laid-back' ambience and healthy tolerance of a menagerie of 'Aliens', although it's probably drawing a long bow to credit Effie and her cohort with paving the path to Mullum's current reputation as the Anti-Vaxxer capital of Australia. But her compatriots can indulge in vicarious credit for 'The Alidenes Fund', which generously helped our reconstituted Historical Society survive its early years.

Mullum's new identity was a big turnaround for the staunch Country Party town, as the early waves of conventional 'Aliens' can attest. Refresh on their experience in 'old Mullumbimby' at [87.-Newsletter-August-2019.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#), which focuses on the Chinese invasion, and [Mullumbimby \(rootsweb.com\)](#) for the story of the White Australia Café. [Further light reading at [88.-Newsletter-September-2019.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#) and [First-People-of-the-Brunswick-Part-1.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#) will complete the picture with the trials and tribulations of the Kanakas and Indigenes.]

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

17 Myokum St, Mullumbimby
P.O. Box 378 Mullumbimby 2482
02 6684 4367

admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au
www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au

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All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

Please email contributions for the newsletter to

admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au

*Deadline for newsletter items
LAST FRIDAY of the month

NEXT MEETING:

**Tuesday 15th November
@10.30am**

**MUSEUM HOURS – Tuesdays
and Fridays 10.00-12.00
Market Saturdays 9.00 - 1.00**

**MULLUMBIMBY COMMUNITY
MARKET**

Next Market- Saturday Nov 19
mullumbimbycommunitymarket.com.au



Heritage Homes

In the last Newsletter we opined that 'Wilooona', built by **Sylvester Walker** at 5 Main Arm Road in 1911, might make a suitable candidate for inclusion in an expanded list of 'Heritage Items' on the Byron Shire Register.

Thanks to member **Bruce Wallace**, whose Tulloch grandparents lived next door, we now have some post-Walker history of the place. The **Hopf** family was ensconced in 'Wilooona' by at least 1960, in the meantime likely living somewhere else on the 7ac property, where they had taken up residence shortly after May1945 upon selling their 120ac dairy farm on McAuley's Lane, Myocum, originally the 'homestead' portion of the **Reddacliff** selection. Patriarch **Charles Hopf** died Dec1957, aged 84, and his wife **Ellen** in Dec1978, aged 93, leaving their carer, daughter **Emily**, as custodian through to the early 2000s when she moved into a Suffolk Park nursing home, where she died 10Apr2005, aged 97.

Emily sold 'Wilooona' to one of her attending nurses, after which the place changed hands a few times and became a bit unloved. (Mr Google says the place was sold in Dec2003 for \$320,000 and in Sep2006 for \$425,000.) Emily had earlier sold 22 Coolamon Scenic Drive, another part of the original Walker holding, to her long-time tenants.

Bruce's grandparents were **Lindsay** and **Annie Tulloch**, the inheritors of 'Glenlyon', Myocum, the original selection of Lindsay's uncle, the illustrious **John Macgregor**. [See [82.-Newsletter-March-2019.pdf](#) (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au.)] In May1950 their daughter **Gene** married **Douglas Wallace**, the commemorative wedding cake provided by **Emily Hopf**. And in Jul1970 the Tullochs retired to 3 Main Arm Road, specifically to again be near their old friends and neighbours at Number 5.

We alerted Byron Shire Council to the deteriorated condition of 'Wilooona' in May2021 and at a Sep2022 meeting of the Heritage Advisory Committee it was decided to start the review process for possible heritage listing. ['Glenlyon', at 35 Myocum Downs Drive, is already on the Heritage Register as 'Tulloch House' (ref pgs 863-4 at [Community-Based-Heritage-Study-final-combined-volume-3.](#))]

[Note that Nos 3 and 5 Main Arm Road were part of the original 7ac property 'Bellevue', put together from 4 lots acquired by **Patrick Walker** 1906-09. In 1910/11 Patrick retired to 'Bellevue' after passing his main property, 'Belmont' near the showground, to son **Billy**. At much the same time he seems to have passed the 'Bellevue' blocks to son **Sylvester**, who completed a new home, 'Wilooona', on Lot 202 in May1911, necessitating the removal of *another building which stood there... to be... re-erected... elsewhere on the property, possibly referring to the original 'Bellevue' homestead built ~1904 by first owner H.T. Blanch?* Thereafter Patrick either lived in the relocated 'Bellevue' and/or moved in with Sylvester after the death of his housekeeper, **Miss Elizabeth North**, in 1936. *Patrick died at his home on Main Arm Road... 16May1941,*



Wilooona, 5 Main Arm Road, 30Dec1996.
(Courtesy Bruce Wallace)



Feb2010
(Courtesy Google Maps)



Apr2021
(Courtesy BVHS Archive)

aged 97. On 16Feb1949 **Sylvester** passed away at his home, "Wilooona," Main Arm Road, at the age of 70 years..., and his wife **Lillian** (nee Jarrett) in a Lismore Hospital 19Jul1959, aged 78.

It's a fair assumption that sometime after May1945 the Hopfs occupied 'Bellevue', by which time it may have been decoupled from the Walker consolidated holding (maybe becoming No 3 Main Arm Road, upon which a later owner, Mullum plumber **John Vardy** (1940-2022), had built a new brick house by the time he sold to the Tullochs in 1970?) The large property is also home to the *Mullumbimby U3A 'Men's Shed'*.

Five Hopfs appear at 'Main Arm Road' on the 1947 Electoral Roll. **Ellen** and **Emily Hopf** appear at '5 Main Arm Road' on the 1960 electoral roll, probably having acquired 'Wilooona' shortly before or after the death of **Lillian Walker** in 1959?

Also in the Hopf property portfolio was Lot 122 across Chinbible Creek that formed part of the original Walker holding, becoming 22 Coolamon Scenic Drive at some stage after reversion to freehold. The house on this property is an alternate candidate for the site of relocated 'Bellevue'. Refresh on the Walker story at [110.-Newsletter-September-2021.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#) and [111.-Newsletter-October-2021.pdf \(mullumbimbymuseum.org.au\)](#)



Wilooona Oct2022
(Courtesy BVHS Archive)



22 Coolamon Scenic Drive, possibly 'Bellevue', Apr2021
(Courtesy BVHS Archive)



Glenlyon, 37 Myocum Downs Drive, Jul2020
(Courtesy BVHS Archive)



Glenlyon, 1149 Myocum Road, Mar2008
(Courtesy Ian Fox via [Community-Based-Heritage-Study-final-combined-volume-3.](#))

The Mullumbimby Show is back this year, following cancellation for the past 2yrs because of the pandemic. The Historical Society will have a display in the pavilion.

Go to <https://www.mullumbimbyshow.org.au/> for information on the show, schedules, memberships, tickets etc. Please support.

Mullumbimby Show 2022

11th, 12th & 13th November 2022

Mullumbimby Showgrounds

mullumbimbyshow2@gmail.com

[PURCHASE TICKETS](#)

