



NEWSLETTER  
September 2022

**Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.**

# MUSEUM

17 Myokum Street MULLUMBIMBY 2482

Email: [admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au](mailto: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

## AGM REPORT

The AGM was held without fanfare on 9<sup>th</sup> August and the only position changing hands was Minute Secretary, with Lindy McCollum handing over to Wendy Champagne, while Robert Garland joined Roland as co-manager of the Machinery Shed. Everyone has made terrific contributions over the past year.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The society's books were audited by 'WD Nicholls' chartered accountants. If you receive the newsletter by post please let us know if you would like a copy emailed. It is rather lengthy. Email recipients will receive a separate attachment. A copy is available for browsing at the front desk.

In brief, we made a loss over the year of \$6,358. This was as a result of Covid-19 lockdowns and flooding. We lost 6 markets over the last year and another 4 were very small as the grounds were a quagmire and unusable for any vehicles. We have 'retained profits' at the end of the financial year of \$101,250.

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome everyone.

I confess that this is the hardest thing I do all year. I don't do financials (is that a word?), I don't fix windows or doors or arrange market stalls, I don't take minutes at meetings or mow the lawns. I don't clean toilets or apply for grants. I turn up and marvel at the knowledge, patience and perseverance of all of our volunteers. I sign my name a lot, participate in the camaraderie and make a small speech here and there. I insist people use 'we' rather than 'they' when referring to the society.

SO - All is quiet on the eastern front, input is up, finances are down, attendances are minimal, the sun is shining, the grass is mown and the cataloguing is nigh. It's the quality not the quantity of our participants that makes the difference. Although we seem to have a shrinking number of participants, a keener flock of volunteers won't be found anywhere else in the valley. I must acknowledge the seemingly full-time job of our treasurer/secretary Susan and also her husband Peter for a marathon contribution with the newsletter over the last decade or more. Other important players have been and continue to be... Mark, Jacquie, Wendy, Frederick, Lindy, Ken, Roland, Rob, Chris, Anne, Basil, Steve, Genevieve, Barry, and me. Plus Glen (our plumber) on his birthday for ameliorating a market disaster, the crew from the Gold Coast who helped with our flood recovery, Gerard and Sue for hosting the ongoing downtown window display, and many others that do the assorted bits and pieces that keep us keeping on.

We have missed a lot of markets (our primary source of income) because the grounds have been waterlogged, because the heavens have opened and the virus has compromised our ability to attract visitors.

Understandably, visitors have been scarce (to the museum and to our market) over the previous two or three years. However, all things must change and eventually be renovated, repaired, re-adapted, rewritten, rewired, recorded and refined. A watershed moment in our history, change is inevitable, the society needs a contingency plan.

Frederick scanned like a scientist, Ken gardened like a regenerator, Roland raconteured, Susan smashed all records for service, answering enquiries on all platforms and filing the findings.

I will run through some of the displays and events from the last year:

Obsessions- the naive art and crochet dolls clothes of Violet Frisbee, special thanks to Robyn Sweeney;

The Municipality of Mullumbimby 1908-1980 display, Hats and Headwear display, Sleepwear for ladies and children glass cabinet display. Stewarts Menswear window - Medical Matters;

An object of the month pamphlet, thanks to Dr.T., was instituted. The Hospital display was expanded. The piano was relocated to the Machinery Shed.

We've been audited, been successful with grants (special thanks for an amazing effort by Dr. E), acquired a defibrillator, a square terminal, a new computer and an oil spills kit.

We have been flooded, vandalised and robbed - all impacted on and around the Machinery Shed.

All is now quiet on the western front. Fingerprints have been taken, windows repaired, toilets scrubbed, machinery hosed and replaced. Dangerous waters did not get into our more vulnerable collection in the building proper. The sludge made a mess of the machinery shed, moved large outdoor exhibits, coated iron and timber objects under the museum and deposited a layer of mud that covered the saturated grounds. Are we secure enough for future events? Probably not.

Unknown objects were sold along with other donations of books, DVDs and CDs in a successful garage sale. Thanks everyone who donated time, plants, and books, and special thank you to Friends of the Byron Shire Libraries for the donation of an overwhelming carload of films and music disks.

Although many locals remain apathetic to BVHS, most would strongly support the need for the preservation of our history. We can only encourage interested people to become engaged and by collaborating together we shall attempt to use the past to defibrillate the future. Thank you and goodnight.

## VALE LIFE MEMBER GORDON WRIGHT

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Gordon George Wright, on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2022. Gordon had held several positions in the society – president, vice-president and market manager over many years.

He was made a life member in March 2017 along with Barry Lomath and Sadie Mudge for services to the society.

<https://www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/61.-Newsletter-April-2017.pdf> .

Gordon's profile in which he tells of his life can be found at <https://www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/63.-Newsletter-June-2017.pdf>



Gordon doing what he loved with the society—Left: Gordon (far left) and other market managers celebrating 25 years of the Mullumbimby Community Market; Middle: Gordon & Susan manning our stall at the Old & Gold Brunswick Heads 2014; Right: Gordon talking to primary school students at the back of the shed 2017

## A RETURN TO NORMALITY?



The M&G board with 4 members of our committee. Photo courtesy of Ken Robertson

At last we seem to be getting back to normal operations. The August market was a great day with lots of stallholders and lots of punters. So heartening! Jacqueline is doing a fantastic job!

Also we are getting day trippers again. Two weeks ago the Brunswick Valley View Club spent the morning at the museum and this was followed by a visit from Probus Club of Wollongbar this Thursday. Such a pleasure to show groups around again.

Then on Friday we had a special visit from the CEO and board members of Museums & Galleries, which was very informative and delighted us to hear such positive comments re our museum and displays.

## A quantitative snapshot of Byron Shire wef 10Aug2021 (by a member with too much time on his hands)

On 9Aug2022 the SMH put the wind up Byronian property investors with the speculative question: ‘... is Byron Bay’s property boom over?’ At their peak, Byron Shire house prices were rising at 44 per cent a year as city buyers made a pandemic sea-change..., but Annual house price growth has slowed to a still-sizeable 19.9 per cent..., which added \$10,000 to the median house price in the June quarter, taking it to a record \$1.8 million..., but was also the slowest growth rate since the pandemic hit.... Affordability is also stretched, after the suburb of Byron Bay alone reached a median house price of \$2,250,000.... Buyers were mainly from Sydney, Melbourne and the Gold Coast and the market was transitioning from holiday homes to more owner-occupier held housing..., an agent adding that many sellers were from overseas, offloading holiday homes. “Holidaymakers have been replaced by end users.”....

On 12Aug2022 the SMH followed-up with *Byron Bay housing crisis the worst in the state...*, accompanied by a chart of the *Top 10 areas in regional NSW with the highest levels of rental housing stress...* showing Byron Shire topping the list with 50.2% of its renters paying more than 30% of their income for a bed. According to the *Regional Australia Institute*, the number of people moving to Byron Shire from the capital cities jumped 33 percent in the 12 months to June 2021..., “then COVID hit, then the flood hit, and what was a housing emergency is now a catastrophe”....



Location (Aug2021 Definitions)	Area (sq kms)	Population	Median Age	Median Weekly Income per head	Median Weekly Family Income	Median Weekly Household Income	People per Household	Median Weekly Rent	'Non Believers'
<b>Mullumbimby Statistical Area</b>	<b>268.1</b>	<b>8896</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>\$654</b>	<b>\$1638</b>	<b>\$1364</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>\$450</b>	<b>6552 (74%)</b>
Mullumbimby Suburb	27.6	4180	45	\$660	\$1601	\$1355	2.5	\$500	2969 (71%)
Yelgun	6.8	88	<b>52</b>			\$1343	2.7	\$250	60 (68%)
Billinudgel	8.5	261	43	\$700	\$1562	\$1474	2.7	\$289	191 (73%)
Middle Pocket	10.7	141	44	\$862	\$1874	\$1718	2.7	\$580	96 (68%)
The Pocket	15.9	231	44	\$660	\$1791	\$1812	2.9	\$470	164 (71%)
Main Arm	25.8	640	45	\$628	\$1482	\$1403	2.8	\$450	463 (72%)
Upper Main Arm	16.8	283	44	<b>\$542</b>	\$1354	\$850	2.1	\$390	236 (83%)
Palmwoods	3.9	78	<b>40</b>			\$966	2.5	<b>\$200</b>	53 (68%)
Mullumbimby Creek	11.8	512	48	\$659	\$1775	\$1488	2.6	\$440	413 (81%)
Koonyum Range									
Wilsons Creek	18.2	466	47	\$581	\$1607	\$1347	2.6	\$300	375 (81%)
Upper Wilsons Creek	9.3	79	48			\$1562	2.5	\$490	<b>72 (91%)</b>
Huonbrook	18	99	<b>52</b>			<b>\$725</b>	2.1	\$255	82 (83%)
Wanganui	2.5	51	50			\$1125	2.9	\$500	40 (78%)
Upper Coopers Creek	7.5	78	50			\$1125	2.4	\$300	66 (85%)
Goonengerry	27.7	422	51	\$546	<b>\$1474</b>	\$1300	2.3	\$358	349 (83%)
Montecollum	3.4	67	<b>52</b>			\$1281	2.3	\$355	47 (70%)
Myocum	32.3	1217	47	\$738	\$1922	\$1505	2.5	\$380	852 (70%)
<b>Brunswick Heads Statistical Area</b>	<b>54.4</b>	<b>9170</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>\$723</b>	<b>\$1771</b>	<b>\$1462</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>\$498</b>	<b>6502 (71%)</b>
Brunswick Hds Suburb	14.3	1905	47	\$732	\$1763	\$1280	2.2	\$440	1256 (66%)
Ocean Shores	12.9	5777	43	\$711	\$1743	\$1471	2.4	\$508	4063 (70%)
South Golden Beach	0.9	887	40	\$785	\$1864	\$1620	2.5	\$509	727 (82%)
New Brighton	1.8	368	45	\$742	\$1829	\$1634	2.4	\$600	278 (76%)
Tyagarah	17.7	194	47	\$690	\$1843	\$2374	3	\$337	141 (73%)
<b>Bangalow Statistical Area</b>	<b>186.5</b>	<b>6958</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>\$886</b>	<b>\$2292</b>	<b>\$2106</b>	<b>2.7</b>	<b>\$550</b>	<b>4938 (71%)</b>
Bangalow Suburb	24.4	2752	40	\$920	\$2300	\$2097	2.7	\$650	2010 (73%)
Federal	27.6	784	47	\$797	\$2215	\$1910	2.5	\$450	607 (77%)
Eureka	21.5	353	47	\$855	\$2159	\$1944	2.5	\$455	299 (85%)
Nashua	18.1	267	48	\$830	\$1949	\$2025	2.7	\$450	169 (63%)
Binna Burra	11.4	223	<b>39</b>	\$807	\$2250	\$2113	3	\$400	148 (66%)
Poosum Creek	11.2	277	45	\$817	\$1937	\$1649	2.5	\$540	206 (74%)
Coorabell	20.4	481	48	\$836	\$2288	\$2107	2.7	\$485	374 (78%)
Ewingsdale	18.8	1025	42	<b>\$958</b>	<b>\$2557</b>	\$2553	3	\$600	706 (69%)
McLeods Shoot	6.2	113	<b>39</b>			\$2200	2.7	\$515	74 (66%)
Skidders Shoot	4.9	130	40	\$735	\$2083	\$1874	2.8	\$460	102 (79%)
Talofa	5.4	103	47			<b>\$3062</b>	2.6	\$300	70 (68%)
Hayters Hill	2.5	40	48			\$2749	2.5	\$450	31 (78%)
Coopers Shoot	14.1	409	46	\$890	\$2208	\$1954	2.7	\$500	<b>249 (61%)</b>
<b>Byron Bay Statistical Area</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>10,914</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$837</b>	<b>\$2091</b>	<b>\$1748</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>\$620</b>	<b>7743 (71%)</b>
Byron Bay Suburb	19.1	6330	<b>39</b>	\$805	\$2029	\$1561	2.3	\$600	4417 (70%)
Suffolk Park	4.2	4222	<b>39</b>	\$849	\$2164	\$2020	2.6	<b>\$700</b>	2964 (70%)
Broken Head	26.1	385	43	\$785	\$2136	\$1687	2.5	\$490	299 (78%)
<b>BYRON SHIRE</b>	<b>565.8</b>	<b>36,116</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>\$764</b>	<b>\$1926</b>	<b>\$1602</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>\$520</b>	<b>25,905 (72%)</b>
<b>BALLINA SHIRE</b>	<b>485</b>	<b>46,296</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>\$737</b>	<b>\$1848</b>	<b>\$1429</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>\$420</b>	<b>23,216 (50%)</b>
<b>TWEED SHIRE</b>	<b>1307.8</b>	<b>97,392</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>\$658</b>	<b>\$1663</b>	<b>\$1296</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>\$400</b>	<b>49,671 (51%)</b>
<b>LISMORE CITY</b>	<b>1287.7</b>	<b>44,334</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>\$685</b>	<b>\$1719</b>	<b>\$1319</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>\$310</b>	<b>23,658 (53%)</b>
<b>RICHMOND VALLEY</b>	<b>3047.4</b>	<b>23,565</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>\$609</b>	<b>\$1431</b>	<b>\$1137</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>\$295</b>	<b>10,614 (45%)</b>
<b>NSW</b>	<b>800,798</b>	<b>8.072 M</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$813</b>	<b>\$2185</b>	<b>\$1829</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>\$420</b>	<b>3.255M (40%)</b>

The SMH continued to milk the topic, pointing out on 17Aug2022 that *The biggest slump in values was in the Richmond-Tweed region of NSW, which includes Byron Bay, where house values fell by 4.5 per cent and unit values were down 3.8 per cent over the three months to July...*, but quoting a local Byronian real estate agent who reckoned that the market is just returning to normal... and owner-occupiers were still looking to get in. Investor interest had fallen away..., while *Slightly cheaper dwelling prices may be little comfort... to those who face high levels of housing stress...* [The SMH had a final word on 22Aug2022, pointing out that while Byron Shire topped *the regional million-dollar club...*, and priced out locals..., Ballina isn't likely to offer a refuge, its median rising to \$1,100,000 (31.3%). (And Tweed to \$1.02mill, up 26.2%).]

At the 2021 census the 'suburb of Byron Bay' registered 2364 'occupied private dwellings' (70.1%) and 1006 unoccupied (29.9%), verses 12,875 (84.6%) and 2348 (15.4%) across the shire and a respective 90.6% / 9.4% across the state. The shire's 'unoccupied' figure closely correlates with the number of Airbnb/holiday rentals available. We'll have to await the 2026 census to see whether the SMH astrologist's 'holidaymaker/end user' assertion results in a new paradigm for the Bay (and Shire).

Location (Aug2021 Definitions)	Households paying more than 30% of household income on rent	Median Weekly Rent	Mortgage repayments greater than 30% of Household Income	Rented Dwellings	Dwellings owned with Mortgage	Dwellings Owned Outright	Unoccupied Private Dwellings
Mullumbimby Statistical Area	452 (54.2%)	\$450	192 (22.7%)	834 (27.1%)	845 (27.5%)	1262 (41%)	351 (10.3%)
Mullumbimby Suburb	273 (58.3%)	\$500	100 (23%)	468 (30.6%)	434 (28.3%)	593 (38.7%)	134 (8%)
Brunswick Heads Stat Area	556 (53.1%)	\$498	198 (19.1%)	1048 (29.8%)	1039 (29.5%)	1314 (37.3%)	497 (12.4%)
Brunswick Heads Suburb	170 (54.5%)	\$440	31 (21.5%)	312 (38.9%)	144 (17.9%)	310 (38.6%)	170 (17.4%)
Bangalow Statistical Area	226 (40.9%)	\$550	153 (20.2%)	553 (24.4%)	757 (33.4%)	867 (38.3%)	247 (9.8%)
Bangalow Suburb	97 (41.6%)	\$650	70 (19.2%)	233 (25.5%)	364 (39.9%)	279 (30.6%)	74 (7.5%)
Byron Bay Statistical Area	720 (49.5%)	\$620	225 (23.4%)	1454 (36.8%)	960 (24.3%)	1372 (34.7%)	1241 (23.9%)
Byron Bay Suburb	497 (52.4%)	\$600	121 (25.4%)	949 (40.1%)	476 (20.1%)	830 (35.1%)	1006 (29.9%)
Byron Shire	1960 (50.2%)	\$520	770 (21.3%)	3907 (30.3%)	3621 (28.1%)	4832 (37.5%)	2348 (15.4%)
NSW	(35.5%)	\$420	17.3%	(32.6%)	32.5%	(31.5%)	(9.4%)

The general 'affordability' trend is not looking good. Back in 2001, 570 (47.9%) citizens of 'Mullumbimby' and 4666 (39.8%) of the Shire's denizens owned their homes outright, while a respective 223 (18.8%) and 2318 (19.7%) were paying off the mortgage.

The number of rented houses has been relatively stable over the years. In 2001 'Mullumbimby' recorded 317 (26.7%) rented dwellings (when the population of 2989 was accommodated in 1276 'occupied dwellings'). Across Byron Shire were 28,916 people housed in 11,738 occupied dwellings (89.6% of total stock), 3579 (30.5%) of which were rented. (Definitions, percentages and perplexing calculations courtesy mysterious ABS formulae).

As for rental affordability, in 2011 only 11.9% of households in the Byron Shire were paying more than 30% of their household income on rent, when the shire median weekly rental was \$350. In 'Mullum Statistical Area' and 'Mullum Suburb' it was a respective 16% (\$285) and 18.7% (\$300). There was more stress in 'Byron Bay Statistical Area' and 'Byron Bay Suburb' in 2011, with a respective 23.4% (\$400) and 24.6% (\$380).

The cars that are eating Mullumbimby continue to multiply, while ratepayers continue to pick up the tab for street parking. (And it looks like the comedians have failed to laugh out of town the proposal to build 'up to 32 affordable housing dwellings' above Mullum's only community car park next Poinciana). In 2021 the 'Average number of motor vehicles per dwelling' in the 'Mullumbimby Statistical Area, where 8896 people were living in 3076 occupied Private Dwellings, was 2.0; 1.8 in 2016 (with 7993 people in 2879 (88.4%) occupied dwellings); and 1.7 in 2011 (with 7335 people in 2751 (90.1%) occupied houses). In 'Mullumbimby Suburb' in 2021 were 1.9 vehicles per dwelling distributed around the streets in which 1816 private dwellings (1531 occupied) accommodated 4180 people; 1.7 in 2016 (3596 people in 1717/1337 total/occupied dwellings, with 3248 people and 1548/1225 dwellings in the 'Urban Centre'); 1.6 in 2011 (3172 people in 1446/1240 dwellings, but 1.5 in the 'Urban Centre' population of 3164 people living in 1409/1231 dwellings).

For more fun with statistics go to <https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/community-profiles/2021/LGA11350>. And all you lovely BVHS volunteers will be interested to know that in the 'Mullumbimby Statistical Area' and 'Mullumbimby Suburb' a respective 1551 (21%) and 709 (20.6%) of you 'Did voluntary work through an organisation or group (last 12 months)', verses 5913 (19.5%) across the Byron Shire and 13% NSW average. (But nothing's changed on who does the most unpaid domestic work at home - see demographer Bernard Salt's latest census article in *The Australian* of 13Aug2022.)

## HELP PLEASE WITH IDENTIFYING THE ARTIST AND OR ANYTHING ABOUT THE PAINTING



Simon Beer has this painting and is wondering if anyone can help. It was painted by N. Watego. It's made from different colours of sand glued onto the backing (which I think were taken by N Watego the artist from beaches and perhaps other places around Byron, going from memories of what I was told many years ago).

Eric and Clare Elphinston (maiden name of Clare and Mollie was Yabsley, descended from William Yabsley "Master of Coraki") used to live at 150 Lighthouse Road, directly across the road from Clarkes Beach (and not far from Wategos beach). Before that (and briefly also after Clare sold that house) they lived on a property which was later turned into a retirement home, and Clare's old house was one of the common buildings (maybe the library). My mother was Valmai Clare Beer, maiden name also Yabsley, her dad was Erle Yabsley who lived in Lismore for a while among other places in the area. There were two other siblings of Clare and Mollie (so five of them in total), Keith Yabsley and his son Robert who had a farm somewhere up there (near North Star?), and Pattie who moved to Sydney and ran a plant nursery.

John and Mollie Kennedy lived in, I think, Browning Street (forget the number).

The painting could have been handed down originally from either of Clare or Mollie. There is/was a second one somewhere (another relative probably has it), similar style.

Please, would anyone know anything about the painting, or know anyone who might know? If so please contact Simon at [simon@mathwiz.com.au](mailto:simon@mathwiz.com.au)

### Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

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](mailto:admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au)  
[www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au](http://www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au)

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Roland Sjoberg,

Robert Garland

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Jacqueline Smith

Heritage Panel Representative

Chris Cooney

Newsletter: Members

WFD Supervisor:

Dr Frederick Theiss

Public Officer: S. Tsicalas.

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

Please email contributions for the newsletter to

[admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au](mailto:admin@mullumbimbymuseum.org.au)

\*Deadline for newsletter items  
LAST FRIDAY of the month

**NEXT MEETING:**

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> September  
@10.30am**

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

**MULLUMBIMBY COMMUNITY  
MARKET**

Next Market- Saturday Sep 17

[mullumbimbycommunitymarket.com.au](http://mullumbimbycommunitymarket.com.au)

