

NEWSLETTER
Dec 2024 Jan 2025

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



IMPORTANT – PLEASE NOTE

- The museum will close after the market on **Saturday 21st December** and reopen on **Friday 10th January**.
- **The next newsletter will be in February.**
- **No meeting in January.**
- **We wish all of our members and supporters a Merry Christmas and all the best for 2025.**



Progressive Pioneering Families

The 'Family History' section of our bookshelf keeps on giving, providing these brief summaries of a few randomly selected entries from the many publications listed at Family-Histories.pdf (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au):

O'Meara Family

The interesting story of "*O'Mara/O'Meara Pioneers; The life and times of Michael O'Mara and Mary (Fitzgerald) O'Mara and their children*" was told by **Maureen Ackland**, nee O'Mara, in 2003. Maureen's ancestor, convict Michael (1796 Middlemount, Queens County - 1844 Jamberoo), arrived from Ireland to do his penance in 1824, followed by wife Mary (aged 26) and children Patrick (11), Sarah (9) and Catherine (6) in 1829. His grandson Henry (1858 Jamberoo – 1927 Tenterfield), the son of illustrious Patrick (1816/18 - 1899), appears to be the first into the local area with a selection on Possum Creek near the school in 1883. He was followed by his brothers Michael, Charles, Thomas and Sylvester. Down through the years they and their descendants were all active in community affairs, not least of whom was **Keith Francis O'Meara** (24Nov1924 Bangalow - 11Apr2013 Mullum), son of **Charles Richmond O'Meara** (1890 Bangalow - 1970 Lismore) and grandson of **Michael** (1852 Jamberoo - 1910 Federal).

After farming around Federal and Coorabell **Keith** settled in Mullum as a builder following his Anglican marriage to **Hazel Ann Ellis** 1948 Lismore, becoming a foundation member of the '*Mullumbimby Conference of St Vincent de Paul*' and taking an active part in Catholic affairs. Prior to the opening of a Vinnies Shop Keith did 'Rag Drives' door-to-door and distributed the collection from his garage. Vinnies first shop opened in Muirhead's garage on the Dalley/Tincogan corner, followed by a small shop next door where the RSL now stands. From there they moved to a shop front in Stuart Street before taking up residence on their current Dalley Street site, where Keith subsequently demolished the ex-Dry Cleaners premises and erected the present shop (now going up-market in the competitive op shop rag trade).

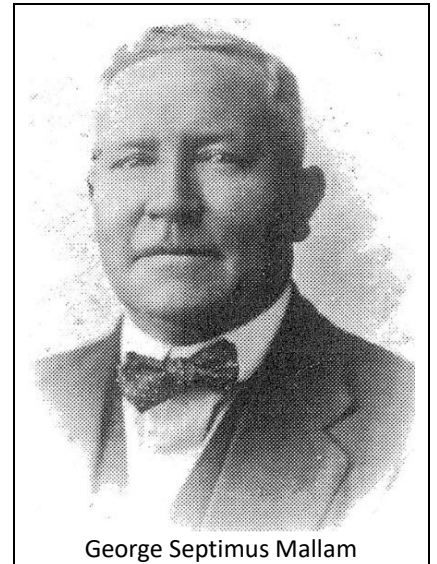
In the meantime he was amongst the original visionaries who foresaw the need for a retirement home for the town and district's ageing population, resulting in many years of intensive fundraising before Coolamon Villa was opened in 1984, with Keith on the steering committee. In 1996 he and son Greg personally built the craft room on the northern end of the original building. Along the way he was a committeeman with the baths project, the fund-raising efforts for which stretched over nearly 20yrs of activities that gave rise to the Chincogan Fiestas, culminating in his organisation and supervision of all voluntary work on the swimming pool amenities block opened in 1967. He was also the contractor who built the block of Housing Commission *Units for the Aged* in Morrison Avenue in 1970, and trustee of the Autumn Club's Pioneer Centre building in 1971.



Keith and Hazel O'Meara 26Jun1948

Mallam Family

The long association of the Mallam family with Mullumbimby began with Catholic **George Septimus Mallam** (1874 Armidale - 1937 Mullum) in 1904. His story and the family business activities are covered in *What They Did; Families of the Brunswick 1880-1950* by Neta MacKinnon, Edited by Robyn Gray, published by BVHS 1998, but are supplemented and amplified by various documents in our archives, viz *The Mallams of Oxford* by Peter Mullins 1987; *The Mallam Family of Oxford*, author unknown; *Descendants of Thomas Mallam 1786-1969 and his wife Lydia (nee Butler) 1793-1869* and *Richard Mallam 1756-1837 and his wife Elizabeth (nee Wall) 1755-1837* by Harry Johnson; Four obituaries of *Thomas Mallam 1786-1850*; *NSW Court Report on Lee v. Mallam* 1910; *History of 'Mallam House' 94 Rusden St., Armidale*, by John Ferry, UNE Nov1989.



George Septimus Mallam

George's significance to Mullum was highlighted in his obituary of 26Feb1937 - *The geniality, business integrity, and unobtrusive charity of Mr Mallam earned him the highest esteem. He assisted materially to lay the foundations of Mullumbimby's business life, resulting in its present stability, and his influence on district activities will long remain.... Besides being a cyclist of note he was selected seven times to tour with the Tableland's Rugby Union team.... In 1904 he commenced business in Mullumbimby on the site at present occupied by Mr A.H. Bartlett's newsagency. At that time there were practically no houses in Mullumbimby, although stores were numerous. These included Messrs A.J. and W.M. Richards (Mr W.M. Richards being still engaged in business in Mullumbimby), F.A. Row and the late Peter Nelson.... (A victim of this competition was bankrupt storekeeper James Ryan, whose business was in the hands of the liquidators when acquired by George Mallam in May1904, followed by the freehold from Thomas Torrens shortly afterwards.) In 1909 Mr Mallam foresaw the business possibilities of the district and built the present brick building of George Mallam and Co Ltd., which was destined to play a great part in the establishment of the Mullumbimby of to-day....*



Mallam's Complex 1912.

(R to L: Gourlay Newsagent, Baker Bros *White Australia Cafe*, Chemist Harpur, Pullinger & Son architects and builders, Williamson dentist, Maxwell tailor, Mallam store.

After many twists and turns Mallam's Burringbar Street supermarket closed its doors Feb2011 following numerous hassles gaining approval for a new site on railway land in Station Street, where a new supermarket opened in Jun2011 under the Woolworth's banner. The community's first inkling that change was in the wind came in ~2000, resulting in many protests over the following years, the excessive local opposition claimed to be the main driver in forcing Mallam's eventual sale to Woolies. The saga can be followed by the numerous references thrown up by Mr Google: [Fears held for future of Mallams supermarket | Daily Telegraph](#); [Mallam gets OK for Mullum | Daily Telegraph](#); [New Mallams plan for Mullum sparks protest | Daily Telegraph](#); [100 year old family supermarket leaves Mullumbimby - ABC News](#); [News-2602p1-10.indd \(echo.net.au\)](#) and many more.

Over the whole period of Mallam's sojourn their main grocery rival was the shop near the site of the present IGA store on the corner of Burringbar and McGougan. In its first incarnation this building was completed by Presbyterian **John**

Miller Moorehead (1869 Brushgrove, Clarence – 1938 Balmain) in Mar1903 as a two-storey timber affair housing a store and dwelling, with adjoining bulk store and detached kitchen, dunny, stables and assorted 'outbuildings', boasting the first plate glass display windows in town, with acetylene lighting produced by its own gas generator.

Civic-minded **Moorehead** initially had come from Alstonville in 1899 to take over the store of **Allan Cameron** (1848 Killmallee, Scotland – 1913 Mullum) in Tincogan Street (see [114.-Newsletter-February-2022.pdf](#) (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au)) prior to moving to Burringbar St. In Feb04 Moorehead took in ex-Alstonville Methodist grocer **Frank Aldrich Row** (1861 Tunstall, Suffolk, England – 1944 Cooroy, Qld) as a partner, selling out to him 6mths later and moving to Casino to continue his civic duties as President of their Progress Association.

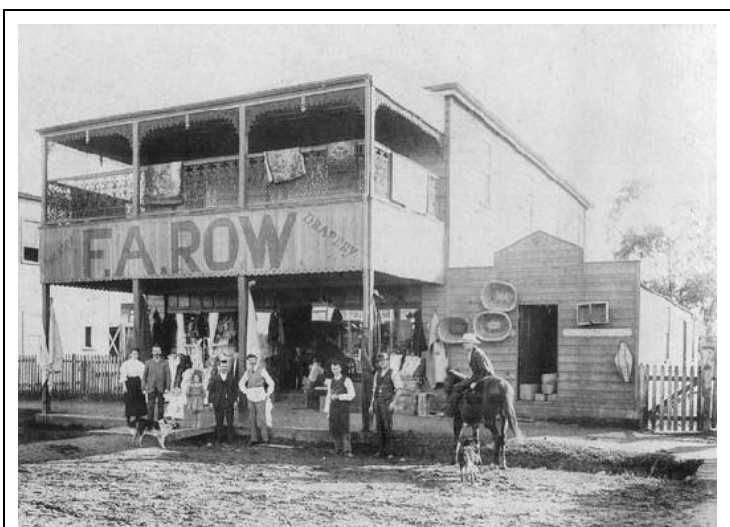
F.A. Row also became involved in Mullum's civic affairs and, as well as his storekeeping day job, branched out into property development and various entrepreneurial activities. Amongst other things, he became the agent for **Fred Bartlett Frost's** hand-made bricks, contracted *Pullinger & Wishart* to build the billiard saloon and hair-dressing salon for **Alf Parcell** in Burringbar Street, was the landlord of **Miss Smart's** private hospital in Gordon Street and **William David Bryant's** cordial factory on the Burringbar/Gordon corner.

In Jul1909 he sold the business to Anglican **Frederick Isaac Ward** (1872 Kiama – 1953 Mullum) and marked time in town for a while before joining the exodus to the Kingaroy district, but alternating between the two locations over the next few years. On a visit in 1913 he said *that there are now about 50 late residents of Mullumbimby in and about Kingaroy....* He left behind daughters **Laura**, who married carpenter/builder **William Nielsen** 1905 (both buried Mullum), **Emma**, who married **Leonard Yabsley King** of Main Arm in 1911 (see *The King Family of Sawmillers* at [136.-Newsletter-February-2024.pdf](#)), and **Ivy**, who married solicitor's clerk **George Ernest Henville** 1914. Son **Reg Row** served WW1 and afterwards became secretary of the Mullumbimby Soldier Settlement Office prior to becoming manager of his father's store in Cooroy. (Father Frank had acquired the Cooroy store in 1922 from none other than **John Moorehead**.)

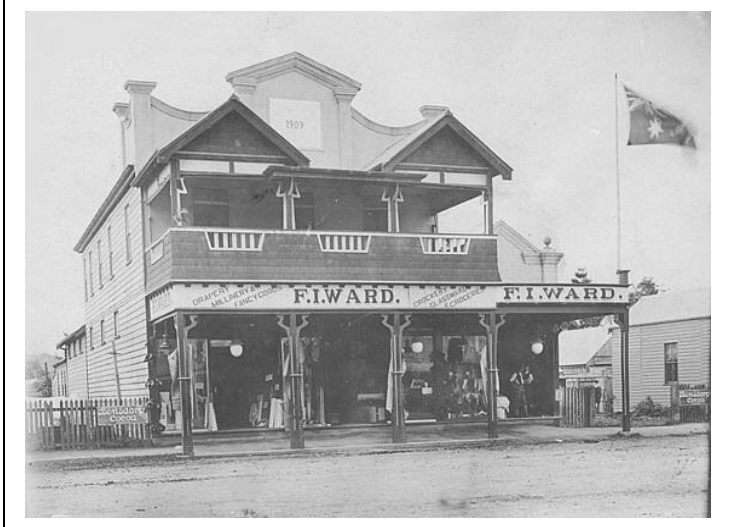
F.I. Ward carried on the storekeepers' tradition of heavy involvement in civic affairs, but after 40yrs of donning the grocer's apron sold *'The Brunswick Emporium'* (sans the freehold) to **Frederick Martin Uren** (1907 Niangala near Quirindi – 1984 Mullum) in 1949 and died 4yrs later. During the Great Depression, *Along with his friend George Mallam, Fred Ward carried many farming families while they awaited their monthly milk payments....*

Fred Uren, ex-headmaster of Byron Bay Public School, took civic duty to new heights, serving as Mayor 1958-1971 and becoming *active in a large number of organisations and a driving force behind construction of the swimming pool....* He was president of the P&C, the Bowls Club and the *Northern Rivers District Bowling Association....* At a 'valedictory dinner' to farewell the Municipality in Sep1980, Mayor **Stan Robinson** said *In the years since creation of the Municipality, there have been 15 Mayors and 64 aldermen, 63 of them men. The longest term served by a Mayor goes to Fred Uren, with 13 years. He was an inspiring leader....*

In Nov1968 **Fred Uren** moved out of grocery lines to concentrate on general merchandise, the catalyst probably being Mallam's announcement of a planned extension to provide another 500 sq ft of floor space for its self-service division. Demolition began in Jan1969 and the *old timber building is to be replaced by a bland block of brick shops with flats above. Owned by Misses Dorothy and Kathleen Ward and Mrs Tom Stewart* (nee Jean Ward)....



Row's Store 1905 above and in the hands of Fred Ward 1921 below. (Ward acquired the freehold from Row in 1920.)



And so we arrive at modern times. In Apr1976, *Cut Price Stores*, a recent arrival in Dalley St., moved into the new Ward's building on the Burringbar/McGougan corner, next Clifford's pharmacy, which was next the *hairdressers and sports store operated by Laura Nielsen's grandson, Barry Hammond, with long established Stewart's Mercery next door....* Down the street Mallam's store had established a link with *Independent Grocers (IG)...* in 1966 and introduced a full *self-selection food store section* in 1977..., followed by progressive modernisation of both supermarkets.

In a reaction to the unwanted intrusion of Woolies, in early 2012 a section of Mullum's new socially aware wokeish citizens proposed that the ex-*Cut Price Store*, now *Dennett's IGA Supermarket*, be purchased by said citizens and become a co-op ([News-2638p1-8.indd \(echo.net.au\)](#).) But *After a period of upheaval at the store, including an abortive attempt at a community purchase a few months back, Mullumbimby's Dennett's IGA supermarket changed hands* in Aug2012 with **Dino Rosa** of Brisbane as the new owner, the place still going strong in the face of Woolies' competition as *Dino's IGA Mullumbimby*. (Ref <https://www.echo.net.au/2012/08/new-owner-for-mullums-iga/>.)

Batson Family

In her 2004 book *How it all began; Batsons at Work*, **Denise Batson** says George (1850-1899) and Catherine Batson (1851-1903) of Portsea Island, Hampshire, England, were the progenitors of the Mullum branch of the family. Three known sons migrated - Bert to Canada and Dave and John to Australia:

1. **Edward Bert Batson**, settled in Halifax, Canada, *after a varied career as a soldier, sailor, and bank messenger...* and was a Halifax alderman 1937-40. He visited Australia May1948 and met Brothers Dave and Jack for the first time in 40yrs. He died Mar1950 Toronto.
2. **David Batson** (1874 Portsea – 1960 Qld) married (1) **Ida/Edith Faith Fryor/Fryer** (1874 England - 1917 Qld), (2) **Gertrude May Peake** at Methodist Manse 1918 Brisbane, and begat 2 daughters and 6 sons, including Wesleyan Methodist **David George Batson** (1897 Portsmouth - 1956 Qld) and Salvationist **Albert Edward Batson** (1899 Portsmouth – 1966 Qld) who served AIF WW1.
3. **John Batson** (1885 Portsea – 1956 Mullumbimby) married **Florence Elizabeth Atkey** (1885 Portsea – 1965 Mullumbimby) 1904 England and begat
 - (A) **Gertrude Florence Batson** (1904 Portsmouth – 1980 Qld). Married **Frederick George Ford** 1933 Qld.
 - (B) **Rachael Elizabeth (Rae) Batson** (1906 Portsmouth – 1987 Mullumbimby).
 - (C) **John Robert (Jack) Batson** (1907 Portsmouth - 1989 Mullum) who married **Margaret Amelia Denman** (1911 Jimna – 2008 Mullumbimby) Methodist ceremony 1930 Jimna, Qld, and begat
 - (i) **Robert John ('Rob')** (1931 Jimna – 2010 Mullum), married **Marie Denise Lindsay** 1959 Mullum (3 children, Gregory, Judith, Terry). Obit Echo 19May2010.
 - (ii) **Heatherbelle May** (1934 Jimna -) married **Barry Hammond** 1956 Mullum (2 children, Bruce and Robyn).
 - (iii) **Margaret Elizabeth** (1937 Jimna - 2006 Mullum) married **Ray Musgrave** 1959 (4 children, Shirley, Diane, Margaret, Raymond).
 - (iv) **Ernest ('Bert')** (1940 Jimna – 2010 Mullum) married **Christine Beryl Goodrich** 1964 (2 children, Joanne, Robert).
 - (v) **Philip** (1946 Mullum – 2023 Pottsville) married **Jennifer Ann Rice** 1969 Lismore (2 children, Lisa, Kim).
 - (vi) **Keith** (1948 Mullum -) married **Susan Keep** 1969 (2 children, Kelly, Jonathan).
 - (D) **Jessie** (1910 Portsmouth - ?).
 - (E) **Harold Richard ('Dick') Batson** (1917 Maryborough – 1995 Buderim). Married **Ethel May Tappenden** (1917 – 1996 Buderim) Baptist ceremony 1941 Maryborough.
 - (F) **Edward (Ted) Batson** (1921 Maryborough – 2015 Alstonville). Married **Thelma Iris Dean** (1919-2007 Mullum) Methodist ceremony 1943 Mullum. Children Bill, Harold, Stephen, Russell'.

It seems **David** and family were the first to land in Australia, making their way to the Darling Downs area of Queensland where they mostly stayed for the rest of their lives. **John** and family followed in 1912 and after various adventures around South East Queensland some of the family settled in Mullumbimby in 1937, John taking up a job at the Hollingworth sawmill. **John Jnr (Jack)** and family followed in 1941, he also working in the Hollingworth mill for a short period before joining Mallam's Grocery business.



Margaret and John Batson with children ~1980
L to R: Keith, Bert, Margaret, Rob, Heather, Philip.

After completing schooling, **Rob** took up a day job as a banana grower, complemented by work at the whaling Station and Brunswick Hotel. **Heather** went to work in Hammond's hairdressing salon, subsequently marrying her civic-minded boss. **Margaret** worked in Mallam's drapery department prior to marriage to Ray Musgrave, the later Laverty's Gap Powerhouse Superintendent, while **Bert** got an apprenticeship at Davies Garage and followed Rob into the Brunswick Surf Club. **Philip** gained an apprenticeship at Gray's bakery and **Keith** went off to become a plumber, both also joining the Bruns Surf Club and remaining stalwarts for many years.

The big move that cemented the Batsons into one of the shire's major contracting businesses came in 1965 when **Rob** and **Denise** purchased a Sand and Gravel business and were joined in partnership by **Bert** and **Christine** in 1966. They quickly expanded, buying quarries and establishing the ready mixed concrete business at Ewingsdale, subsequently engaging **Philip** and **Keith** in the venture, with Keith later winning the managing director's desk of what is still trading as *Batson Sand & Gravel Pty Ltd* from the Byron Bay Industrial Estate.

This very brief overview doesn't do justice to Denise's 100pgs of detailed research, but her story of the family exploits is an engrossing one and well worth borrowing from our library to get the whole picture (and view heaps of photos).

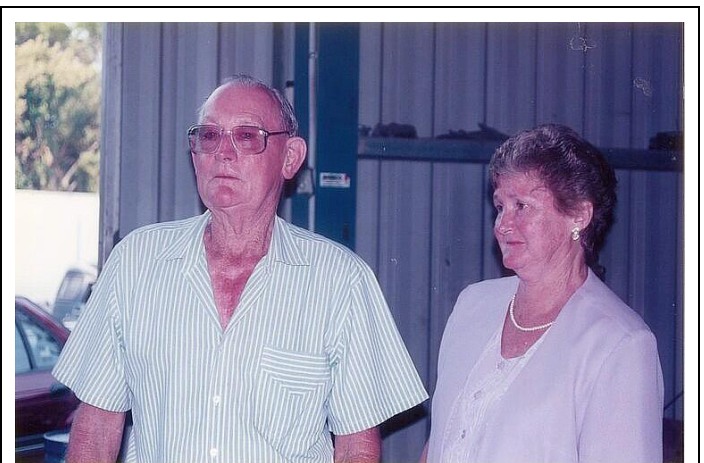
Bashforth Family

The Bashforths are another family that became a major force in the local construction industry. Thanks to the late **Sadie Mudge**, family historian and a stalwart of BVHS (see [132.-Newsletter-September-2023.pdf](#) (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au), we have their story. The Australian progenitor was **Alfred Bashforth** (1858 Conisboro, Yorkshire, England – 1941 Mullumbimby), son of Charles and Alice, nee Wyke, who landed in 1889 after 12ys in the British army. He had followed his brother **Henry** (1862 Conisboro – 1939 Murbah) who had landed with wife **Rose Pearson** (1861 Leeds – 1942 Murbah) in 1883 and settled on the Tweed in 1902.

Alfred initially leased a farm at Terranora but was washed out during a flood and returned to Sydney to acquire a confectioner's business at Parramatta, where he married **Harriett Louisa Strickland** (1878 Penrith – 1945 Mullum) in 1896 and proceeded to beget **Alice** (Ford) (1897 Parramatta – 1981 Brunswick Heads), **Edgar** (1899 Parramatta – 1980 Mullumbimby), **Dorothy** (1901 Parramatta – Unknown) and **Alfred jnr** (1903 Parramatta – 1972 Brunswick Heads). In 1903 he acquired a 140ac farm on Saddle Road with frontage to Kings Creek, leasing it to brother **Henry** for 2yrs until he and the family were in a position to take up residence. The last child, **Edwin Norman Bashforth**, came along in 1914, married Esther Tunsted 1938 and died 1982 Queensland.

Edgar completed his schooling at Brunswick Heads and upon enlisting in 1917 was given a send-off from the 'Pacific Hall' on Saddle Road (aka 'The Brunswick Road'), his father remarking *that his son had wanted to enlist for some time, and that he had consented on him reaching his 18th birthday. Mr Bashforth spoke feelingly of the many shirkers of Mullumbimby, and that he would make it warm for them....* Upon return from France Edgar acquired an adjoining 100ac farm (portions 108 and 109), dubbed 'Hill Rise', from father **Alfred**. In 1923 he married Kings Creek neighbour **Lydia Amy Vaughan** (1905 Redfern – 1982 Mullum) in an Anglican ceremony at Mullum and over the following years supplemented his income from the dairy farm with a milk run and fishing venture at Bruns, whilst begetting 7 children, **George** (1924 - 1956 Brunswick Heads), **Jack** (1925 - 2014 Brunswick Heads), **Joan Norma** (Addison) (1926 – 2006 Port Stephens), **Sadie Edna** (Mudge) (1928 Mullum – 2023 Ballina), **Alice Joy** (Christie) (1931 – 2024 Canberra), **Dorothy Ruth** (Knight) (1935 - Unknown), **Helen Jean** (Gosbee) (1938 – 2019 North Epping).

Edgar's son **Jack** ran a sawmill on 'Hill Rise', mainly making banana cases, and in 1946 was joined by uncle **Norman**, fresh from WW2 service, where he won the Military Medal for his bulldozer driving skills during an assault on Lae: **Sapper Bashforth operated his machine with an unperturbed calm under fire.... His steadiness under all conditions was largely responsible for the movement of the tanks....** He was discharged as an 'Excavator operator', providing the necessary skills for he and Jack to enter the contracting business. But Norm disappeared to Queensland at some stage and shortly after Jack's 1953 Catholic marriage to **Melanie Riley**, one time resident of Saddle Road when her father Gordon was licensee of the Railway hotel, the business became *J&M Bashforth, General Earthwork Contractors, Brunswick Heads*. They went from strength and to strength and by the 2000s were winning million dollar contracts, by which time their sons were heavily involved (see their website at [Services — J & M BASHFORTH & SONS](#): *Now into the*



Jack and Mel Bashforth

(Courtesy [J & M BASHFORTH & SONS](#))

Services — J & M BASHFORTH & SONS: *Now into the*

third generation of family ownership with John's son Luke, the company continues to deliver projects of the highest quality with enthusiasm and integrity for our clients.).

A minor hiccup occurred in Jun1994 when the \$14.5 million Brunswick bypass was announced, splitting the 'Hill Rise' farm on Saddle Road from the 'Hillcrest' Brunswick earthmoving business, and *Shell-shocked landowners who stand to have sections of their properties resumed for the proposed Brunswick Heads bypass have vowed to fight against the route.... Mr Bashforth said it was 'disgusting' the way they all had to read about the decision in the newspaper....* Another minor irritation was the uproar over bulldozing of a purported Aboriginal Heritage Site on the Saddle Road property in 1993 (see [First People of the Brunswick – Part 2](#))

Sadie Bashforth (1928-2023), daughter of Edgar, was a tailoress and telephonist prior to marriage to **Leo William Mudge** 1952 Mullum, becoming a devotee of BVHS following Leo's death in 1991. Her sister-in-law **Elva Bashforth**, nee Evans, wife of George, ran the *Devon Cake Shop* in Stuart Street 1954-1976, her pies famous far and wide. And 15yr old sister **Helen Bashforth** (1938 – 2019) of 'Hillcrest' was big on character building, saying in an essay on the '*qualities of a good citizen*' during Rotary's Civic Week Jul1953 that *The first and most important of these qualities is unselfishness.... Ask yourself a question and answer it honestly. Do you possess these qualities? If so, in my opinion, you are a good citizen. If no, you should strive your hardest to become one....* Sister **Joan** (1926 - 2006) went a step further and married **Pastor Bruce Addison** 1953 Petersham.

WAVE 2024

Shearwater's Wearable Arts Vision in Education Performance is on Wed 4 to Sat 7 Dec with a technology theme this year. Some of the filming for the show was carried out at the museum. It was delightful to watch the students in action. They too were very interested in the museum and its displays. For more information go to:

<https://shearwater.nsw.edu.au/wave/>

DEJA VU
Shearwater

WEARABLE ARTS COMPETITION
CASH PRIZES

ENTER NOW
shearwater.nsw.edu.au/wave

The costumes that have been entered into the competition will be on display in the museum after the show and throughout January.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

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

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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:

Tues 10th Dec @ 10.30

MUSEUM HOURS –

Tuesdays

and Fridays 10.00-12.00

Market Saturdays 9.00 - 1.00

MULLUMBIMBY COMMUNITY MARKET

Next Markets- Saturday Dec 21

Saturday Jan 18

mullumbimbycommunitymarket.com.au

