

TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society

July 2012 Vol. 1 No. 1



Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the Murwillumbah Historical Society's new newsletter *Timelines*. The aim of these newsletters is to introduce some of the rich historical heritage we share here in Murwillumbah and environs.

We plan on publishing the newsletter quarterly and future editions will also feature interesting local history stories, mystery photos and much more!

Please help us improve this new newsletter - reader feedback, input and contributions are most welcome.

This edition's contents:

- Museum Redevelopment Update
 - Historic Building – our Museum Building
 - An interview with – Ernie Cobb
 - Society and Contact Information
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Redevelopment Update

Council is undertaking a \$2.6 million expansion of the Tweed River Regional Museum in Murwillumbah, to create a better facility to store and display its valuable collections. A new building design was adopted by Council in November 2011, and Development approval for the renovations and additions was secured in April 2012.

Council staff and the project architect Paul Berke-meier are now working to identify the skilled engineers and designers who will work on detailed design of the building prior to beginning construction later this year.

The building design maximises the potential of the Murwillumbah site and provides a facelift for the existing heritage building, meeting the highest heritage principles and museum standards. It will provide substantial new collection display space, a significantly increased capacity to cater for visitors and school groups, and maintains a research centre for the Murwillumbah Historical Society.

Construction is also underway on a purpose-built storage facility in South Murwillumbah. This facility will house the Museum's collection while the Queensland Road building is being extended. In the long-term, it will provide ongoing storage for items in the museum collection, to better protect these pieces and allow greater flexibility with displays at the museum. The storage building is expected to be complete in August this year with fit out to follow.

Volunteers and staff have been extremely busy since late last year, developing and undertaking the painstaking task of assessing and preparing the collection for the move. So far over 2,000 items have been assessed and photographed and volunteers have contributed more than 700 hours to the project.

Happily the Murwillumbah Historical Society will not be without a home while all of this is taking place. Council has provided rent free temporary accommodation for the Society at Bray Park (33-35 Kyogle Road) as well as funding for the move.

Regular updates about Museum redevelopment will be available on www.tweed.nsw.gov.au and update articles will feature in Council's newsletter, the Tweed Link and in this newsletter.

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Volunteers Geoff Wilkes and Bob McKinnon at work

Please also contact me if you would like to discuss any aspect of this major project in more detail (02) 6670 2400, email jkean@tweed.nsw.gov.au.

Judy Kean, Museum Director, May 2012

Our Museum Building

(Research text by Max Boyd, architectural notes by Nick Gouliaev) The original headquarters building for the Tweed Shire Council was opened on 8th July 1915. It was designed by Mr W.A.Edds and built by Mr Modini. The cost was £1418.

The floor plan of the building is as shown below together with details of what each room was used for in 1946 and the original staff members who occupied them at that time.

Thanks to Society member (and Architect) Nick Gouliaev who has provided a full architectural analysis of the building. A short summary follows

(email david@highwayone.net.au for the full A4 page detailed version):

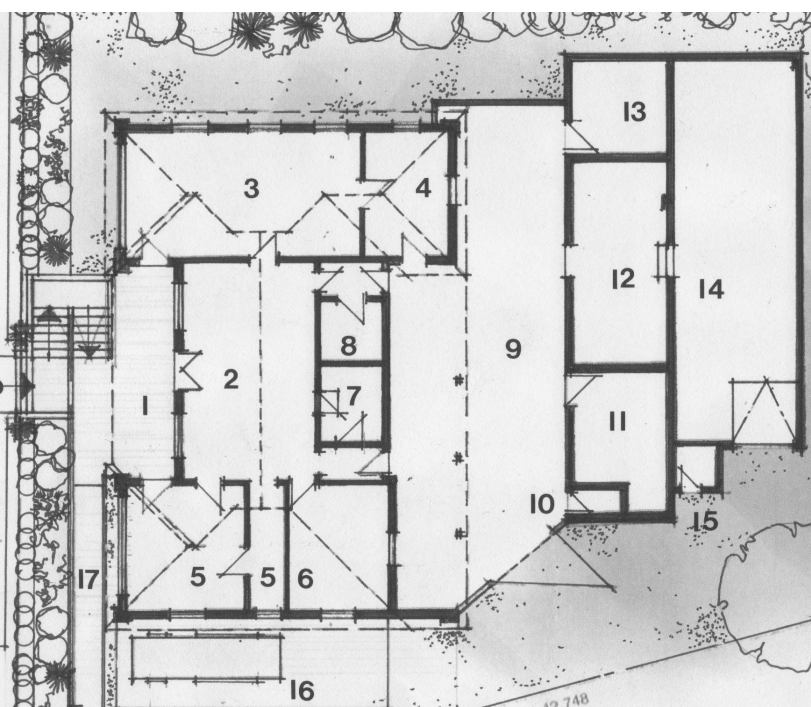
"The architectural style of the building is a delicate combination of Colonial Georgian and Federation with a splash of Art Deco to glazing of Windows and associated corbelling to roof eaves with wall corners featuring Cement rendered corner Columns, finished off with rough textured surface, painted.

All external walls are constructed with beautifully delicate coloured bricks and selected accented colour bricks to window arches facing Queensland Street(main facade/front of building with bull-nosed brick sills to all windows. Side windows and windows either side of Main Entry double doors are adorned with segmented arch/brick on edge construction. Arch over main entry doors is made with brick on edge lighter colour bricks matching main arched windows and other windows featuring same bricks to window sides. All windows are timber frame construction, with all side windows clear glazed to lower portion of all windows, with coloured glazing (called 'vitrail') to upper portion of each window, Colonial Georgian/Federation style..."

This building will be 100 years old in 2015 and has been the home of the Society and its Museum since 1984, but there is much to relate before that centenary occurs.

The constitution of the Council of the Shire of Tweed occurred on 7th March 1906 and the first election of Councillors was held on 24 Nov 1906.

Those elected were: E. C. J. Marks; D. C. Marshall; T. O'Keeffe; A. A. Loder; P. M. McMahon and F. P. Chambers. The first president was F. P.



Floor Plan Key

1. Entry
2. Administration: Jack Vesper - Rates Clerk, Pat Twitchet - Typiste
3. Council Chamber: Councillors Keys, Boyd, Merryweather, Trim, Cox, Dawson
4. Engineers Office: Arthur Horniman, Bob Horniman - Surveyor and Assistant to the Engineer
5. Health & Building: Charles Webster, Ken Forster (Assistant)
6. Shire Clerk: Fred Hassan
7. Strong Room
8. Tea Room
9. Pipe Maker: Percy Cramp
10. & 15. WC
11. Utility
12. Pipe Maker Storage
13. Storage (later chemicals)
14. Storage
16. Robey Steam Engine (added 1990s)

Murwillumbah Historical Society

Chambers and the first meeting was held on 8 Dec 1906.

In 1959, the Murwillumbah Rotary Club successfully requested the Tweed Shire Council to call a public meeting with the aim of forming an historical society. On 16 May 1959, a meeting was held in the Jessie McMillan Hall, chaired by the President, Cr Harold Lundberg and those present voted to form the Tweed River Historical Society. An election was held and the following people were elected: President - Mr Bob Whittle; Vice President - Dr Jim Marks; Secretary - Mr Jack Boyd; Treasurer - Mr Gordon Ind and a Committee of the following:- Mr John McCarthy; Miss Kate McIlrath; Miss Joyce Martyn; Mr Theo Flynn; Mr F. Julius and Cr Bill Taylor.



Unveiling of the foundation Stone in 1915

Regular meetings of the Society were held, predominantly in a room provided in the School of Arts. Over succeeding years, a valuable collection of objects, photographs and written material was accumulated from community members desirous of having cherished and important items retained for future generations. Much difficulty was experienced in where to store this material and eventually, in the early 1980's, Tweed Shire made a room available on the top floor of the building it then occupied on the corner of Queensland Rd and Main Street, Murwillumbah (this building was previously the headquarters of the Murwillumbah Municipality until the amalgamation of the Shire and the Municipality occurred in 1946).

This room was useful for storage but unsuitable to be used for display due to lack of space. Mr Whittle, who had remained as President for many years, made space above his pharmacy available as another temporary storage site. The Tweed River Historical Society was originally intended to cover the history of the whole Shire but because of the separation of distance and differing backgrounds of the Lower Tweed with its maritime as-

sociations as the Tweed's port as compared with the agricultural activities and settlement of the balance of the Tweed, Mr Warren Keats initiated a move to form the Lower Tweed River Historical Society in 1985 and became its inaugural President. Along with the two bigger Societies, passionate citizens of the Uki/South Arm area formed their own Society in 1983. This Society has played a significant part in ensuring the important memories and objects of that section of the Tweed have been retained for posterity,

In 2003, Tweed Shire Council received funding from the NSW Ministry for the Arts for the preparation of a strategic plan that would bring the three Societies together to form the Tweed River Regional Museum. This grant followed an agreement by the Societies to work together in collaboration with Council and to transfer ownership of their collections to Council whose responsibility would then be to employ appropriate staff to operate and oversee all three Museums with the voluntary assistance of the members of all three Societies. The consultant chosen by Council was Ms Kylie Winkworth who completed an excellent report to Council in April 2004.

In order to conform with the Regional Museum format, it was agreed that the Tweed River and Lower Tweed River Historical Societies should rename to Murwillumbah Historical Society and Tweed Heads Historical Society respectively as of April 2004; the Uki/South Arm Historical Society did not need to change.

The next significant progressive step that had to be taken was the drafting of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Council and the three Societies which in summary involved Council in accepting full responsibility for all three collections; providing professional staff and undertaking to build a new Museum at Tweed Heads as well as refurbishing the original building housing the Murwillumbah Museum and providing more space in an extension at the back of this building.

Which brings us to the current activity - Tweed Shire Council has appointed Ms Judy Kean to the position of Director with the responsibility of overseeing all three Societies. Judy will keep us updated each edition with a report on progress on our exciting building redevelopment project.

Interview with Ernie Cobb

(Interview by Tony Clark. Ernie has been Treasurer for the Association since 1983 – Ed.)

Just after I retired I went to the Museum and ran into an old friend, Norm Smith. We got talking and

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so I became a member. In those days we were only open four hours/day twice a week; you would only do two hours and some-

one else would do the other two. There was a lot of work, sorting and displaying things plus cataloguing to keep a record of what came in (very well done by Bev Fairly - she was kept busy). Also there were a lot of shelves to put in which kept me busy. Kevin Tyler used to work at the Standard Sawmill so timber was no trouble and we didn't have to pay for it. It made things easy as we had no money then, as there was no charge for entry; just a donation box (which was side stepped quite a lot).

I was only there a couple of months and was asked to be Treasurer. I said I didn't think I could do it as I'd only had four years of schooling (leaving for family reasons) but said I would give it a go. Jess Poole was a member then so I saw her a couple of times and she put me on the right track. In the early part Norm Smith & myself used to pay the monthly accounts as we had to keep buying stationary for keeping up with our records. At one time I started making chicken bats to sell. Christine Cousins would help me paint them. The first year we sold \$500-\$600 which put us in the black. We kept selling them for quite a while, plus other things that were made.

We ended up putting an entry fee on the door of a \$1 and that made things a lot easier for all concerned as we didn't have to juggle the accounts around. When the radio room was getting started Norm Smith & Kevin Dickson used to pay for stuff they wanted and I would pay them when there was enough money in the bank - that was the only way we kept going. When I joined Bill Taylor was President and we had to go to his shop at Taylor's Corner to get the key to open up and take it back when we finished. He was a great chap and if you were late he would open up for you when he had time as he was a busy man.

You meet some very interesting people from all walks of life from all over the world. A young lady called in one day in 1996 and wanted to look about. She was a backpacker from Melbourne and had no money so I took pity on her & said OK. We got talking later and I asked her if she would like to come and work with us and she said yes. When she left I thought well maybe she'll be back; well to my surprise the next week she did show up and settled into work; nothing was a trouble to her. Later she joined up and did a couple of displays - one was Australia at war which turned out very well. Her name is Penelope Williams; she stayed with us for a number of years, left to start her own business and re-joined us again in 2011. It's great to have her back and she is a very interesting lady in her own field.

It's marvellous how we started off with a few items, now we have thousands but not enough room to display even half of them! I've enjoyed all the years I have been there and still do, as all the volunteers are good to work with as there is no complaints as to who gets the highest wage!

ABOUT THE MUSEUM: Established in 2004 by the three local Historical Societies, and the Tweed Shire Council, the Tweed River Regional Museum is one collection and one museum in three special locations; Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki. In 2012 The Tweed River Regional Museum at Murwillumbah is entering an exciting period of development involving construction of a new addition. For further information about the Tweed River Regional Museum please visit Council's website www.tweed.nsw.gov.au or contact the Museum Director on (02) 6670 2400.

CONTACTING THE SOCIETY: Phone: (02) 6672 3337, email mhsresearch@bigpond.com. The Murwillumbah Museum is located in the historic 1915 Shire Council Chambers at 2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah NSW 2484 (the Museum is closed for extension and renovation during 2012 - the temporary address is 33-35 Kyogle Rd, Bray Park NSW 2484). The Museum's other branches at Tweed Heads and Uki will remain open as usual during this period.

COMMITTEE: President - Max Boyd, Vice-Pres. - Tony Clark, Secretary - Carol Piggott, Treasurer - Ernie Cobb, Members - Beveley Lee, Martin King, Geoff Wilkes, Don Beck, Lynne Beck, Ron Johansen, Bob Gerdes, Penelope Williams. **NEWS-**

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