

TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society

January 2014 Vol. 2 No. 3



Welcome

Welcome to the January 2014 edition of *Timelines*, the newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society. The aim of these newsletters is to introduce some of the rich historical heritage we share here in Murwillumbah and environs.

Thanks to our readers for the feedback you have provided. **Please keep helping us improve this newsletter - your feedback, input, corrections and contributions are always most welcome.**

This edition's contents:

- An Interview with Bill Aked
- Historic Buildings of Murwillumbah - The Imperial Hotel Part 2 (final)
- Did You Know?
- The JJ Richards Story Part 3
- Mystery Photo
- Facebook Page
- Society and Contact Information
- Museum Redevelopment and Update (see insert)

Interview with Bill Aked

Bill has a lifetime's involvement in the business and social fabric of Murwillumbah. The article was written by Tony Clark

from information supplied by Bill and has been approved by Bill.



Bill and Shirley Aked (photo courtesy of Bill Aked)

William Melvil Aked was born at 9pm on 31 March 1931 at the family home in Wardrop St, South Murwillumbah. He is the oldest of 4 children born to Reginald and Winifred Aked. At this time, Reginald was working as a secretary to A.G. Hayes in Prospero St and Winifred as a School teacher at Condong. The family continued to reside at Wardrop St before moving to Eyles Ave in 1933.

In 1936, Bill began his



Bill and young brother (photo Bill Aked)



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schooling life at Murwillumbah Primary School, leaving at the end of 1941. He then attended Murwillumbah High School, finishing in 1945. At this time, Bill obtained a job as a Radio Controller – Operator at Radio 97, 2MW in Murwillumbah. His duties included playing half-hour serials and controlling the volume and other settings for the sound booth. He worked there for 18 months



Bill (rear row right) at A.G. Hayes in 1962 (photo Bill Aked)

before obtaining a Fitter and Turner apprenticeship with A.G. Hayes in 1947.

It was while working at Hayes that Bill first met Shirley Mack Hubbard, a girl originally from Crookwell NSW who was working in Whittle's Pharmacy in Murwillumbah St. They married in the Church of



Bill and Shirley on their wedding day (photo Bill Aked)

England (Murwillumbah St) on 15 October 1955. Bill and Shirley set up their first home at 140 Byangum Rd. All three of their children were born there; Sally (1958), Bruce (1961-62) and Wendy (1964). In 1969 the family moved to 85 Byangum Rd and then again in 1976 to 14 Elouera Terrace. They now have five grandchildren.

Bill continued working with Hayes until 1966 when an opportunity to start his own business in partnership with Paul Belmont arose. Together they converted Biggs Furniture Store (Prospero St) to a Mercedes and Volkswagen Dealership with Auto Repair Shop. Later on they also added Datsun to the group. This partnership continued until 1972, when Bill sold his share to Paul. Bill started a new job with Dunlop IBC in Wollumbin St, and stayed there until 1977.

In 1977, Bill went into partnership with Bob Grainger in an Ampol Service Station, which they called "Auto Stratos Automotive". The Service Station was originally located on Uki Rd opposite the Catholic Cemetery in Bray Park but then moved to the site of the current (2013) Bray Park Service Station opposite the shop on Uki Rd. This partnership continued to grow with the beginning of another business in Wollumbin St; Auto Part. These two businesses were run together until 1983 when they were separated, Bob keeping the Service Station and Bill, Auto Part. Bill continued working here and sold the Business to Sham Lashand in 1991. He continued working for Sham for another six months before retiring in early 1992.



Bill (first male from left at front of stage) performing in The Mikado at the School of Arts in 1954 (photo Bill Aked)

Over the years, Bill has had many varied interests but swimming and music have been two of his main loves. As a swimmer, Bill was the winner of the Geoff Nunn Cup three years consecutively and a representative at the Country Championships multiple times. He still holds the Murwillumbah High School record for 33½ yards freestyle. Between the ages of 14 and 35, he was also a member of the Fingal Rovers (Point Danger Branch), competing and volunteering. Bill still enjoys swimming regularly to this day. At the age of 18, Bill joined the Philharmonic Society (an association which he had for 52 years) and preformed many productions including the Gilbert and Sullivan Shows. Both of his parents, sisters and wife were also members. Performing at the Musical Festival, he was awarded Champion of Champions a total of 4 times. Bill has also been a member of the Camera Club (Past President), the Tennis Club and the Golf Club (reaching a handicap of 15).

In 1950 Bill became a member of the Anglican Parish Council, and was Parish Recorder for 14

years. He was also on the Parish Council for the construction of the new Church on Byangum Road in 1960. He served 31 years on the Council before stepping down, but since retirement has been re-elected back to the council.

Upon retirement in 1992, Bill and Shirley built a new home at Eagle Place, in Dallas Park, where they still currently reside. On behalf of the Murwillumbah Historical Society, I would like to thank Bill and Shirley for their time and wish them all the best in the future.

The Imperial Hotel - Part 2

Research and story by Nick Gouliaev. In this edition's article Nick completes the story of this beloved Murwillumbah landmark.



Looking down Brisbane Street toward our famous landmark pink pub; an interesting contrast indeed with the 1906 photo in Part 1 of our story (photo Nick Gouliaev 2013)

[Following the burning of the second Imperial Hotel in 1929....] The Toohey's Brewery architect visited the hotel site on 19 Nov 1929 and established the building budget of £20,000 and the design criteria for the new building:

- 2 storeys with all external walls constructed as cavity brickwork and internal load bearing walls also brick.
- Ground floor timber framed and supported on brick piers off the ground with flooring of timber tongue and groove boards throughout.
- First floor also timber framed with timber floor boards and carpeted throughout.
- Roof timber framed with a high pitch at street façade and a tile roof. At the sides and rear of the building the roof to be clad with corrugated galvanized metal.
- All external doors and windows timber framed with clear glazing.

The new building was completed in 1931 by Builder A.F. Webb Contractors, in the style of the day; Art Deco street façade blended with Spanish Mission and Neo Georgian elements at the side and rear of the building.

The plan of the building was a square with an internal cut out, open to the sky, forming an internal courtyard used as a beer garden surrounded on all sides by the building, creating a courtyard private from the street, accessible only from the bar lounge area. At the side of the building were stables, later to become five garages (used as storage areas today).

The ground floor is commercial retail, bar lounges, a service/deliveries area at the rear of the building, a beer and wine cellar below the bar and a TAB area. The main lounge area was separated by a brick wall with double glazed doors from a secondary lounge area which had a fire place and a grand timber stairwell to the upstairs floor. Upstairs was 20 accommodation suites interconnected by hallways, communal bathrooms and function and meeting rooms. Later additions and alterations added attached ensuites to four of the rooms with the remaining 16 suites accessing communal bathrooms.

Ceiling heights throughout are 3600mm with Art Deco style elaborate cornices and ceiling roses, with ground floor ceilings similar with added beams decorated in Art Deco style as well. This has been changed and altered by various owners, so today little of that original beauty and charm remains.

Upstairs doors, skirtings and associated door hardware are all still original, with the ventilation openings above doors still operational. All accommodation suites and bathrooms, function rooms and the community kitchenette are connected by hallways. The suites facing the Main Street also have access to a roofed loggia (gallery); colonnaded, breezy and shady, looking down onto the street below. The loggia floor is tiled, creating a Spanish Mission feel which blends well with the Art Deco of the building. All other suites open onto walkways open to a roofed area; originally an internal beer garden below, now roofed over to create a function room at ground level - an alteration by one of the previous owners.

The Main Street sidewalk has a metal-framed awning partially covering the street-side, Alfresco dining area which is protected from vehicular traffic by a decorative safety barrier. This dining area has tables/chairs with Large Sun Umbrellas; quite decorative, and was the first such outdoor eating

area in Murwillumbah (created by John and Laurie Bortolli during their period of ownership of the hotel).



The Imperial Hotel viewed from Main Street featuring its loggia and alfresco dining area (photo David Taylor Jan 2014)

The roof facing the street is high pitched and terra-cotta tiled, whilst all other roofs at the sides and at the rear are metal clad and are not easily seen by the public .

The external walls of the front façade at the ground and first floors are cement rendered/ smooth and painted. The walls at sidewalk level have ceramic tiles up to the underside of the windows (approx. 1500mm up from street level). The other walls at the sides and rear of the building are original unpainted face brick work. All windows are timber framed, double hung and clear glazed in the Neo Georgian style.

Fire stairs (metal framed) are at the sides of the building at strategic positions. The services area at the rear and side have the ground levels built up due to possible flooding. The hotel laundry and other service areas are 600mm below these areas.

The street façade wall at the first floor roof level has 3 feature gable walls, extending above the roof gutters and spaced apart, creating an interesting remedy to the roof edge longevity in the Art Deco style, but in this case also in the Spanish Mission fashion with decorative windows surrounded by applied reliefs/arched, and the wall edges of these gable walls are of scalloped/rounded top edges more in the



A decorative Gable Wall (photo David Taylor Dec 2007)

Spanish Mission Style than Art Deco. The result is a highly decorative and pleasant façade, indeed memorable, aided by the striking Pink color of the walls .

The hotel was purchased from Toohey's Brewery in 1988 by Paul Wilson, enabling him to sell other beer brands as well as Toohey's. Prior to this, hotels in the state were owned by the breweries and the licencees were obliged contractually to stock and sell only the beer brands as supplied by the brewery (owner of the property and the hotel).

The next owners were John and Laurie Bortolli in 1994 before selling in 2001 to the Lewis Family.

The Bortollis were very active in refurbishing major aspects of the building internally and externally; restoring it to its original glory and even improving it:

- The street façade was fitted with beautiful timber framed doors and windows.
- Some internal walls were removed, opening up lounge areas. Timber framed bi-fold doors were fitted, glazed with etched glazing and spectacular lead lighting. They also commissioned artists to create and install a 3000mm x 2000mm mural to the fireplace in the secondary lounge (later to become a bistro area), installed a bistro kitchen with pizza oven, updated the lounge bathrooms, glazed internal doors with playing card themed leadlighting and built an internal telephone booth in the main lounge area.
- The bistro area was fitted with rounded cubicle seats and the main and smaller fireplaces were refurbished in the area which is now a Gaming Room.
- The front façade wall was repainted from cream and brown to pink (the actual paint color is called "Robin Breast").
- Installed Murwillumbah's first external dining area on the sidewalk.
- Behind the stairwell in the bistro area an internal courtyard was refurbished as a beer garden in the Tuscany style with tables, colorful chairs and sun umbrellas. The Tuscany beer garden was later removed in 2001 by the owner at the time; roofed over and used as a function room.
- The car park at the left side of the hotel as viewed from street was closed off from public access as a grassed area used as a private Bortolli family area.
- Upstairs the bathrooms were updated with tiled walls and floors and an apartment of 3 bedrooms was refurbished (still in existence,

for use by the current owners/licencees)

In 2003 new owners Taphouse Group removed the fireplaces (including the fire place mural originally created by an artist firm called "Castle of Light" from the Gold Coast, which was rescued by Toni Zuschke of Murwillumbah) and the round cubicle seats. The original timber staircase from the bistro area was replaced with a smaller, simplified staircase.

The hotel today has a ground level consisting of 2 retail shops leased by an Indian Restaurant (formerly used as the Hotel Bottle Shop), the Hotel gaming area, bistro, bistro kitchen, main lounge bar, TAB, function room at rear, timber stairway to accommodation suites upstairs, service rooms, service/delivery area at rear, 5 garages used as a cold room and additional store rooms.

The first floor still has 20 accommodation suites (four with ensuite), communal bathrooms, communal kitchenette, function and meeting rooms, a loggia for the street facing rooms and the owners' 3 bedroom unit, all interconnected by wide hallways.

Research References and Acknowledgements:

- Murwillumbah Historical Society Research Team: Tony Clark, Joan Cuthel, Max Boyd, Nick Gouliaev, Quinton Snow, Kelly Snow
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Thank you all for your wonderful assistance.

Nick Gouliaev, B. Arch. UNSW, 1 Oct 2013

Did You Know?

This series of stories, selected and edited by Max Boyd, highlights the famous people, clubs, institutions and more who have had a connection with Murwillumbah. This latest instalment features Stephanie Gilmour.



Stephanie Gilmour (photo Wikipedia)

Stephanie Louise Gilmour was born in Murwillumbah on 29 Jan 1988 and currently resides in Tweed Heads. Stephanie is an Australian professional surfer and five-time World Champion on the Women's ASP World Tour (2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012).

Her life began as a surfer at age 10, and by the age of 17 she was

entering world tour events as a wild card competitor, which paid off with a victory at the 2005 Roxy Pro Gold Coast. In her next season, she won another wild card event, the 2006 Havaianas Beachley Classic. Stephanie's success in the World Qualifying Series tour qualified her for the 2007 Women's ASP World Tour. She won four of the eight events and claimed the 2007 world title.

She repeated her success in 2008, 2009 and 2010. Stephanie also won the inaugural Swatch Girls Pro France in 2010. She won three events in 2007 to enter the Billabong Pro Maui and was ranked first place in the final event.

Stephanie won her fifth world championship in 2012 at Biarritz, France. Between 2005 and 2012, she has won 10 Australian title events and was named Female Surfer of the Year in February 2013 as well as being inducted into the Surfing Hall of Fame.

Her favourite waves are Greenmount, Macaronis and Honolulu Bay.

The JJ Richards Story Part 3

Thanks to Idwall Richards, son of JJ Richards, for permission to feature this fascinating story recounting the history of the man, the family and the company. This is Part 3 of the story, written by Idwall on 4 April 2006.

1932, a momentous year in the history of Australia, witnessed the opening of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and also proved to be the year of the metamorphosis of the Richards' dynasty (if

there is such a thing).



JJ with Joe Jr outside home in Thirroul NSW (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

The Murwillumbah Municipality (later to be the Tweed Shire resolved to change the sanitary service from Council day labour to private contract. In retrospect, it was probably one of the first Council's to do so. The transfer was achieved by the blind tendering process, a system that prevails today. Dad was the successful tenderer, so in May 1932, the partnership (J.J & Family) J.J. Richards & Sons was born.

Getting started in 1932 wasn't easy for a man with little money in the larder and even less in the bank, but Dad had a 3-year contract in his hand and he was determined to make it work.

The bank (The Commonwealth Bank of Australia) in those days needed bondsmen, otherwise known today as guarantors. One of the bondsmen was the then Mayor of Murwillumbah, Mr George Winterbon. We are deeply indebted to the Winterbon family for having faith in our father who returned that faith with an enduring credo never to let anyone down.



JJ at Chinderah in 1952 (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

In the early days the Sanitary Pans were hand-made from galvanised sheet metal by a Murwillumbah plumber 'Les Kelly & Co.'. The shop was about where Woods Newsagency subsequently opened. Solder was used to make joints watertight. Later taring created problems. J.W. Tomlin later took over manufacturing, and finally of course, plastic pans were developed which in the short-term had their problems.

In 1939 Dad successfully tendered for the Tweed Shire, including Murwillumbah, for both Sanitary and Garbage services. At this time the disposal site was moved from Byangum Road to Wommin Bay, Kingscliff. This required re-establishing our home to Wommin Bay, much to the chagrin of Mum, who had hardly got used to her new home in Myrtle Street Murwillumbah.

There was a tremendous difference between the two. The first home being built by a master builder,



Garbage Cupboard Wagon 1962. It wasn't until 1968 that the first garbage compactor collection vehicle was designed & built. (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

the second by an ex-coalminer, using his bare hands and say a hammer and saw. To Dad's credit the "house" still stands today on a block of land with

absolute beach frontage. Now I understand worth a seven-figure number. How times have changed!

Dad made many friends in and around Murwillumbah in the early days because at the time the community was comparatively small and close-knit. He was a member of the philharmonic. Among those friends was the late J.H. (Jim) Williams who I believe only 2 years after Dad started in business, started his own family concern by buying out George Winterbon's produce store in Main Street Murwillumbah. Therein lies a parallel story of a family involvement in a business of long-standing and tremendous growth.

Over time every member of our family became involved including brothers, sisters, in-laws and even cousins. It remains much the same today, although the corporate arrangements have changed of course to accommodate growth and changes in legal requirements.

By the early 50's it was obvious that the Tweed contract, even assuming we would continue to retain the contract, was not big enough to sustain



Idwall's wedding to Jill in Brisbane 1955 (last known photo of JJR) (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

the growing number of families and it was at this time that expansion began into other areas. The first out of town contract was the Shire of Walcha/

Uralla on the New England tablelands. It is an interesting aside that about this time the Lismore Council decided that they may try letting out their



Jim Chippendale operating a 1970s Garbage Compactor Unit in Murwillumbah. (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

at the time and he encouraged him to lodge a tender. As it happened, the Council subsequently decided not to proceed with the process and to

w a s t e services to a private contractor. Of course in those d a y s Lismore seemed to be a long way away, but Dad had an old friend living in Lismore

this day, continue to carry out this service by day labour, and therein lies another story.

The friend that Dad had in Lismore would be known to some people here today. His name was Russell Campbell who earlier had been the head mechanic at Hewitson Motors. He had subsequently moved to Lismore to open up his own business.

Over time Hewitson Motors provided many of our vehicles and were a great back stop for Dad who of course in the early days had to do most of the repairs himself, but when the repair got beyond his capability he would be off to Hewitson Motors. He developed a very unique way of getting attention at Hewitson Motors. If he needed something done urgently, he always made sure the truck dropped at Hewitson's remained partly loaded and virtually every mechanic in the workshop would swing into action to ensure that the truck was repaired & removed as expeditiously as possible.



Mystery Photo?

Whenever space in the newsletter allows we intend to publish historical photos where we hope readers will help us "fill in the gaps" around the photos' details - please write in to taylordg.54@gmail.com if you can help or would like to be sent a larger version of the image.

Can you help with any information about this photo? The only information held by the Museum is the date: circa 1918. (Photo Acc. No. M17-14)

Real expansion didn't happen until 1962, some 3 years after Dad's passing, when we successfully tendered for waste services to the City of Toowoomba. Once again we are proud of the fact that we have retained that contract continuously for 43 years (example of dedication - Tom served 14 years in Toowoomba without a real holiday).

Once we had learnt the tricks of spreading our wings, we continued to do so albeit a comparatively slow rate in the early days, accelerating over the last 25 years.



1970s combination Sanitary & Garbage Compactor (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

In 1968 after studying collection methods worldwide, we opted to design our first side-loading garbage compaction vehicles,

as distinct from rear-loading vehicles adopted by other manufacturers. This decision was to give us a competitive edge for many years. Some 20 years later with the advent of the MGB (Mobile Garbage Bin), it was with comparative ease that we were able to adapt our side-loading vehicles to automated collection. People with rear-loading vehicles were not so lucky.

To be continued next edition...

Facebook Page

Don't forget to "like" the Society's Facebook page to be automatically kept informed when new information is posted about things like activities, meetings and new editions of Timelines:

<https://www.facebook.com/MurwillumbahHistory>



The most effective way to destroy people is to deny and obliterate their own understanding of their history."

George Orwell

Study the past if you would define the future.

Confucius



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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 entered 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 enquires@mhsresearch.org. 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 until mid-2013 - the temporary office 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/Treasurer - Carol Piggott, Members - Beverley Lee, Martin King, Geoff Wilkes, Don Beck, Lynne Beck, Bob Gerdes, Penelope Williams.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: David Taylor

