

TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society

April 2014 Vol. 2 No. 4



Welcome

Welcome to the April 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.**

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- Museum Redevelopment and Update (see insert)

Interview with Dr Betty Marks OAM

Dr Betty Marks has been a pillar of our community since arriving in Murwillumbah over 60 years ago. The article was written by Tony Clark from meetings with and information supplied by Betty and has been approved by her.



Dr Betty Marks at home in March 2014. (Photo: Tony Clark)

Betty Jean Harvard McEwen was born on 28 Feb 1924 in Oatley, Sydney. She is the second of three children born to Dr Bruce and Bessie McEwen. Her father, who was away studying Dentistry in America at Harvard University at the



WE WANT YOUR OLD PHOTOS!

If you have or come into possession of any old, family or historic photos please don't bin them; donate them instead! Please contact the Museum (02) 6670 2400, email trm@tweed.nsw.gov.au



Dr Betty Marks (red marker) with the University of Sydney graduating class of 1948. (Photo: courtesy Dr Betty Marks)

time of her birth, was unable to meet Betty until she was around 18 months old. Upon his return, the family moved to Dubbo for about 2½ years before returning to Sydney for 6 months. They then moved once more, settling in Bathurst when she was 4½ years old.

Betty was educated at Marsden Church of England Girls School at Bathurst, beginning in 1929 and going through to Senior Prefect in 1940-41. Here her love of sports flourished, playing tennis, golf and hockey (of which she was school team Captain). Later at University she became Captain of the Sydney Women's Hockey Team (1944-45), a Hockey Blue and member of the NSW Representative Hockey Team (1945).



Captain of the Hockey Team (Betty is first on the left). (Photo: courtesy Dr Betty Marks)

After leaving School, Betty took a job with the Commercial Bank of Sydney as a Ledger Keeper. A job that after 15 months, Betty found to be not mentally stimulating enough for her. After reading a newspaper advertisement for female positions at University and conversations with her father, she decided to study Medicine at The University of Sydney. Beginning in 1943 and staying at the Women's College at the University, her class

completed the six year course in five years, finishing in 1948. For her last year at University, she worked at [now Royal] Prince Alfred Hospital in Camperdown as a Junior Resident Medical Officer. This consisted of working a 100 hour week followed by a 140 hour week alternately, for £5 a week and keep. In 1949, she became a Senior Resident Medical Officer with the pay increasing to £7 per week. By 1950, she was promoted to Registrar in charge of Gloucester House and was looking after 150 beds. This increased in 1951-53, when Betty was promoted to Assistant Medical Superintendent, to 1300 beds, and a pay increase to £16 per week. Then in 1953, Betty travelled to Murwillumbah and worked as a Day Girl for Dr Harbison, who had a surgery above Garling's Pharmacy on the southern corner of Wharf and Murwillumbah Streets.

On 25 Apr 1953, Betty married Dr James (Jim) Keith Livingston Marks at Vacluse Church in Sydney. Then in January 1954 they both moved to Murwillumbah and purchased a house at 4 Boscabel Ave. It was at this house both of their children were born, Susan (1954) and Peter (1956). In 1960 the family moved to 18 Boscabel Ave, where Betty still resides. She now has two Grandchildren and one Great-Grandson (born on Betty's 90th birthday).

Both Dr Betty and Dr Jim Marks worked with Dr Harbison for 12 months, before Dr Harbison semi-retired to Kingscliff. This became their first Medical Practice. At this time there were only 6 Doctors in Murwillumbah; Dr Unwin; Dr Cletus Smith; Dr Stanton-Cook; Dr Lipscomb; Dr's Jim and Betty Marks. As there was no Hospital at Tweed Heads or John Flynn Hospital, they all worked as Honorary Doctors at the Murwillumbah Hospital, as well as their own practices putting in 20 hour days. Being the only female Doctor in

town, Betty became a very popular choice at the Maternity Ward, delivering hundreds of babies over the years. In 1970, they moved Practice to the Queen St Medical Centre, a Medical Practice where she still works to this day (April 2014). In 1989 when Betty reached the age of 65, she was awarded a position of Honorary Consultant Emeritus for Murwillumbah Hospital. She still visits patients at the Murwillumbah Nursing Home and Heritage Lodge.



Dr Betty Marks as a younger woman. (Photo: courtesy Dr Betty Marks)

Over the years, Betty has been associated with many aspects of community work including President and Secretary of the Murwillumbah Hospital Medical Board (Secretary for 28 years), President of the East Murwillumbah Primary School P&C Association (1962-66), Vice President of the Murwillumbah High School P&C Association (1967-72), Patroness to the East Murwillumbah Primary School; Tweed District Hockey Association; Murwillumbah Swimming Club (1972); Murwillumbah Croquet Club; the Garden Club and the Hospital Auxiliary. She is a Member of The Heart Foundation; Dogs for the Blind Association; Lord Baden Powell Association; Australian Medical Association (NSW); Tweed Valley General Practitioners Association; Royal Australian College of General Practitioners; Murwillumbah Services Club; Murwillumbah Golf Club; Arthritis Foundation of NSW; Centenary Research Foundation; Prince Alfred Medical Officers Association; Old Bathurst Association; Friends of the Tweed Regional Art Gallery; Murwillumbah Historical Society; Friends of the Tyalgum Festival Committee and Australian Federation of University Women (Tweed).

Betty has also been a long standing Quota Club Member (1954-2010). In 1988, Murwillumbah Central Rotary made Betty a Paul Harris Fellow. Then in 1990 in the Australia Day Awards, she was honoured with an OAM for her service to Medicine and the Community. She also received a Centenary Medal in 2001.

In February this year, Dr Betty Marks turned 90 and has announced her retirement from June 30th

2014. On behalf of The Murwillumbah Historical Society and the Murwillumbah community as a whole, I would like to thank Dr Betty for her service to the community and wish her all the best in her future endeavours.

Vale Les Edwards

The Society was saddened to hear of the passing last month of our life member and stalwart supporter Les Edwards. Our thoughts and sincere condolences go out to Les' family and loved ones. Les was interviewed in our April 2013 Timelines.

The Marville Building - Part 1

Research, analysis and story by Nick Gouliaev. To provide the maximum historical detail possible, we will run this story in parts; this is Part 1 and outlines the early history of this hard-working Wollumbin Street Art Deco icon and its site.

- **The Marville Building**
- Art Deco style
- 9 Wollumbin Street, Murwillumbah (next door to the Austral Building)
- Construction - 1938-39
- Original Developer/Owner - J.J. Maher
- Architect - F.J. (Fred) Board & Son, Lismore
- Builder - John Sutton, Murwillumbah
- Current Owner - James Family, Brisbane (bought from Pat Maher (J.J. Maher's son) in 1952)

This authentic Art Deco building gem, built around 1938-39, quietly nestles in Wollumbin Street next door to its bigger brother the Austral Building, built in 1934 and sharing similar architectural style heritage.

In 1934 the land occupied by this building today was an empty allotment extending from the Austral Building along Wollumbin Street and terminating at a lane connecting through to Proudfoots Lane. Today this lane is a Tweed Shire Public Carpark still linking Wollumbin Street to Proudfoots Lane.

The land was owned by Cornelius Constantine Vlismas the then owner of the Austral Building. Overgrown with weeds and grass, the allotment was fenced off with barbed wire to contain grazing cattle until Mr Vlismas decided to have it cleared of weeds and lease it to a Boxing Promoter to entertain locals with periodic boxing bouts. Builder John Sutton was engaged to construct an open-sided shed to contain a boxing rink, public seating, a food stand and public toilet facilities. The construction was very basic, but sufficient to



The Art Deco Marville Building wonderfully complements other nearby Wollumbin Street architectural highlights, such as the iconic Austral Building. (Photo: David Taylor Apr 2014)

satisfy the basic needs of the attending public and to comply with building and health requirements .

World War 2 loomed in Europe, activating Mr Vlismas to thoughts of possible expansion of his business enterprises in town and elsewhere in the Tweed Valley. To achieve this he decided to sell the land he recently leased to the new Boxing Rink. The land was cleared of all structures and sold to J.J. Maher, an Auctioneer, Stock Agent and Realty Agent in town and who immediately decided to construct a building to complement and repeat the success of the Austral Building next door (for more details around the Austral Building, see the July 2013 edition of Timelines).

As an interesting side note, sale of the land enabled Mr Vlismas to expand one of his businesses in town, the Austral Café, and engage the services of some recently arrived immigrants from Greece to take shares in the café and work there as well. These were Nick Dimitricacus (later known as Nick James) and brothers Louise Bertso and Cassas Bertso. With the start of WW2 in Europe in 1939, the brothers were drafted into the Australian Military and spent some time away from the Austral Café until the end of hostilities, leaving Mr Vlismas to manage the Austral Café with hired staff.

Prior to WW2 however, the land purchaser, Mr Maher, did not waste any time on the project and in 1937 engaged the services of well-known architect F.J. Board & Son of Lismore to design the building and supervise construction. Local builder John Sutton was contracted in 1938 to commence site works and construct the building, completing all the building around 1939. (Prior to 1938 John Sutton was engaged in the construction of the biggest building project in town, the

construction of Sacred Heart Catholic Church, the biggest church in Murwillumbah, which his team started in 1937 and completed in 1938.)

To be continued next edition...

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 Sir Walter Campbell.

Sir Walter Benjamin Campbell AC QC was born in Burringbar on 4 Mar 1921. His mother Leila died unexpectedly leaving Walter and his brothers to spend a considerable amount of time with his mother's parents in northern NSW.



At age 12, he won a bursary providing five years' free education at Woodlawn College, Lismore. He completed his education at

Sir Walter Benjamin Campbell AC QC (Photo: courtesy Office of the Governor, Queensland website)

Downlands College, Toowoomba, becoming the college's first open scholar in the late 1930s, having already been named Dux of the College twice and earning the highest grade in Queensland for senior Latin.

Campbell attended the University of Queensland from 1940 with an interruption to his studies the following year to take up service in the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF). He passed his pilot's examination at Amberley RAAF base on 7 Dec 1941 and was assigned to 67 Reserves Squadron which patrolled Australia's eastern coast.

He married talented school teacher Georgina Pearce on 18 Jun 1942 and they had one daughter and two sons.

He graduated from University in 1948 with First Class Honours in Law, having already gained a Master of Arts the previous year.

He was admitted to the bar in 1948 and became a Queen's Counsel in 1960. His practice took him as high in the legal world as the Privy Council in London, before which he appeared on several occasions.

In 1967 he gained a position on the bench of the Supreme Court of Queensland. In 1982 he was chosen to fill the position of Chief Justice of Queensland in the time of the Bjelke-Petersen Government.

In 1977, he became the Chancellor of the University of Queensland, a position he held for 9 years until 1985. On 22 Jul 1985, he was appointed to the position of Governor of Queensland amidst a period of controversy. He occupied that position from 1985 to 1992.

The controversy involved Campbell and the Government and came to crisis point in 1987 when there was internal strife within the National Party between Bjelke-Petersen and his Cabinet which almost caused a constitutional crisis in Queensland governance.

On 23 Nov 1987, Premier Bjelke-Petersen visited Campbell at Government House to discuss a restructuring of his Ministry. It was Bjelke-Petersen's wish to dissolve his entire Ministry and be recommissioned as Premier with a new distribution of Ministerial portfolios. However, Campbell's advice was for the premier to seek the individual resignations of those Ministers he wanted removed from the Ministry.

After having approached five Ministers about resigning from their offices and being refused by each one, the Premier returned to Campbell on 24 Nov and requested the termination of the Commissions of three of the five Ministers, to which Campbell agreed.

While the government's problems were already serious, the difficulty for Campbell began on 26 Nov, when one of the dismissed Ministers, Mike Ahern, became Leader of the Parliamentary National Party and wrote to Campbell seeking a new Commission that would replace Bjelke-Petersen as Premier with Mike Ahern.

There was a tense period where Bjelke-Petersen refused to resign his commission and Campbell refused to prematurely terminate it. The legal advice Campbell had received dictated that his course of action should be to only contemplate dismissing Bjelke-Petersen without the premier's consent if he refused to resign after failing a vote of no confidence, however there were also fears that the Premier might advise Campbell to dissolve Parliament and call elections.

It was Bjelke-Petersen's eventual resignation from 1 Dec that ended the crisis with Campbell receiving the subsequent praise of many in the media for his handling of the undesirable situation.

After seven years as governor, Campbell retired in Jul 1992. He was appointed a Knight Bachelor in 1979. He was appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia (AC) in 1989 and on 1 Jan 2001, he was awarded the Centenary medal.

After retiring as governor, he lived out his retirement at Ascot, Brisbane and died aged 83 at his home on 4 Sep 2004.

Reference: Wikipedia and the article by Geoff Barlow and Jim F. Corkery. (2007) "Sir Walter Campbell: Queensland Governor and his role in Premier Joh Bjelke-Petersen's resignation, 1987" Owen Dixon Society eJournal.

The JJ Richards Story Part 4

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 4 of the story, written by Idwall on 4 April 2006.

Automation

S.O.L.O. (Single Operator Loading Operation)



Innovative 1980s side loader. (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

We are proud to have been deeply involved in the automation of garbage collection which began in the mid-80s following the advent of the MGB. We are indebted to the Germans for manufacturing an MGB to universal/international standards, that is, they were all the same size and shape for a given capacity. Whereas the Americans built dozens if not hundreds of models, all of which were different in size and form. Thus in America any given street may have half a dozen different types of MGBs thus making it difficult, if not impossible, to automate collection. Many years down the track they realised their mistake, especially when German companies started selling their MGBs in

America.

Even though the Germans invented the plastic MGB, we in Australia had to show them how to automate collection. Circumstances played a part in both cases. In Europe, settlement is generally much closer than in Australia and streets much narrower. Accordingly, collectors favoured rear-loading collection vehicles where full automation was virtually impossible. They did make some attempt at automation by fitting as many as 3 loading mechanisms to their rear-loading vehicles. This system still however required a large labour force.

Conversely, our situation in Australia is generally that the population is well spread with well-planned and formed streets (urban sprawl).

Recycling

When recycling of domestic waste became fashionable, we were the first to develop the divided bin and the appropriate handling equipment.

The MGB generally and the divided MGB has been a great boon to the community and had enabled an increase in the level of service at a reduced cost.



2000s side loader. (Photo: courtesy Idwall Richards)

The benefits of the divided bin are many:

1. One stop shop when you take the garbage/recycling to the bin
2. Simply sort into each compartment as you go.
3. Only one bin to store at the back door & deliver to the kerb, the same day every week, not alternative weeks and so on.
4. One pass of one truck each week collects the lot.

Yet surprisingly some States don't go for it.

To be continued next edition...

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 if you can help or would like to be sent a larger version of this image.



An early rubbish collection service in Murwillumbah. (Photo: courtesy Barbara Buckley)

Can you help with any information about this photo (apologies for the quality of the scanned image)?

There is a sign on the cart reading "Municipality of Murwillumbah" which places the photo after 1902 and before 1932 when J.J. Richards won the waste contract. Any other information would be most appreciated.

Tweed's First Postal Service

Thanks to Beverley Fairley for penning this fascinating insight into her family history and a key aspect of the development of the Tweed's infrastructure which we take so for granted today. We look forward to more great stories from her.

In this day of email, Twitter, Facebook and mobile phones that do everything but cook dinner, it may be difficult for young people to imagine communication at the speed of a young man's footsteps.

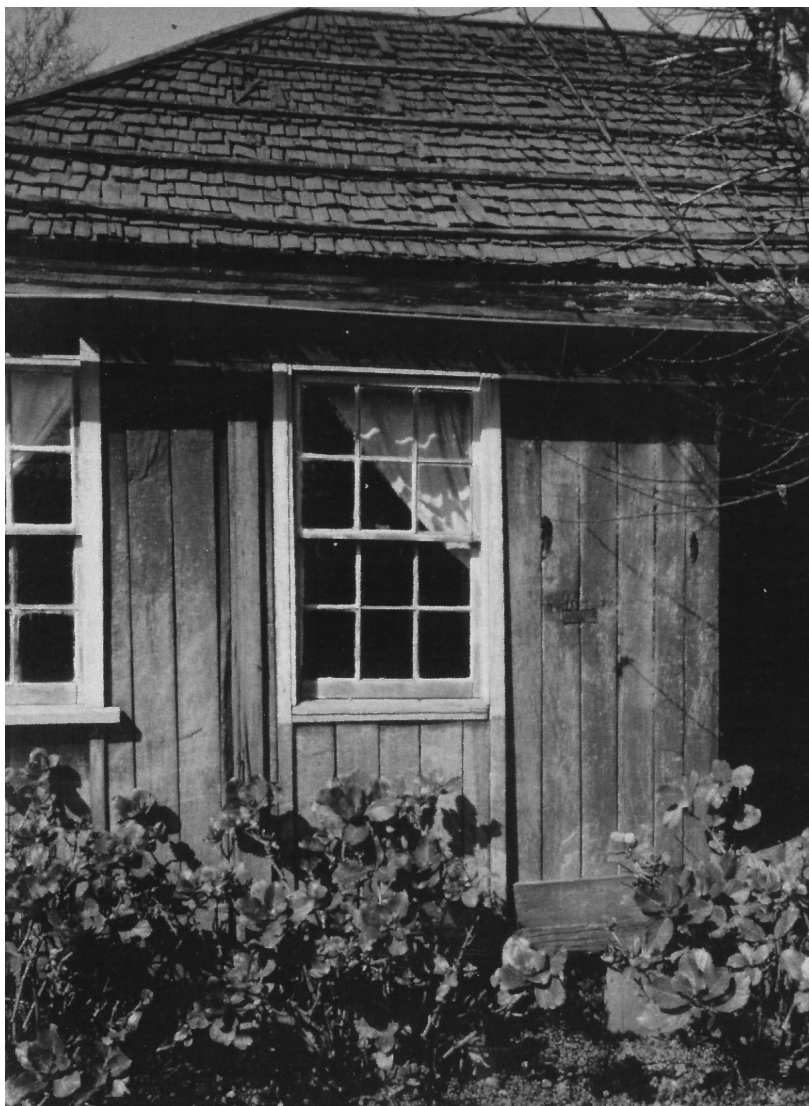
Imagine the Tweed Valley in 1863 when my great grandfather, Joshua Bray, first came here. There was no town or any roads, only the paths made by countless generations of bare feet and soft paws. And there was the river that became the highway.

By 1866 Joshua had built a house just upriver from his brother in law, Samuel Gray, his business partner and the Member for Richmond who lived at Coolamon where Lisnagar now stands. He had also planted the bamboos that served as road signs on the river. (My great uncle Percy gleefully chopped them down as he had to rake up the leaves when he was young.) Those planted at

Coolamon still stand. When Joshua felt safely established he went to Armidale to marry Rosalie Gertrude Nixon.

They arrived on the Tweed by taking a ship to Brisbane from Sydney. From Brisbane they rode down the beaches with a packhorse named Bungaree. From Terranora, Paddy Smith rowed them up the Tweed, into the North Arm (Rous) and to Kynnumboon in which Samuel Gray had stored a bumper crop of corn. The bedroom floor had slumped from the weight and the cockatoos had damaged the doors and windows by pecking to get at the corn inside.

Finally they moved into the house with all their furniture. The ship that had carried it



The first post office. The slot is boarded over just to the centre right of the middle window. (Photo: courtesy Beverley Fairley)

had sunk but every piece had washed ashore and so was saved. This home became the most well known on the river. But that is another story.

The story goes that Joshua would sometimes write to fictitious people on the Tweed to keep the service going. The Post Office was a closed off section of the veranda that went round the house.

Rosalie Gertrude carried out most of the official duties

there. The post office stamp is now held at the Museum at Tweed Heads. The two boards from the original house with the posting slot are held by me at Kynnumboon.

Eventually, the two young postmen were replaced by a contractor who rode overland to Casino. In 1869 the Brisbane to Nerang Creek coach run was extended to Kynnumboon. Things were moving fast. The post office soon joined the telegraph network. To do this it was moved to the site of Coolamon and then on to various sites in Murwillumbah to where it now is.

In just under one hundred and fifty years the postal service has come from the speed of barefoot boys to instant communication. The Post Office delivers packages ordered in an instant from anywhere. Money can be sent, bills paid and passports renewed all from your local PO. Letters can still be posted and received. Joshua would be amazed and proud.



Long Bob, the Tweed's first Postman.

Society Website



The content on the Society's website has recently been significantly updated to reflect all the latest developments in the Society and the Museum:

<http://www.murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au/>

It now also includes links to our Facebook page, the Museum's website, a page where all the past issues of Timelines can be freely accessed and even a downloadable index to all the stories featured in Timelines so far.

Please visit the updated website and 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.

Annual General Meeting

A reminder for all our members: the 2014 Annual General Meeting will be held at the Society's temporary offices at 33-35 Kyogle Rd, Bray Park NSW 2484 at 3PM on Wednesday 16 April 2014. See you there!

By the way, this will be our last AGM at Bray Park as we are looking forward to moving back in with our friends at the Tweed Regional Museum in

Murwillumbah when it reopens in the second half of the year after an exciting redevelopment and expansion!



"The lack of a sense of history is the damnation of the modern world."

Robert Penn Warren

"History is a vast early warning system."

Norman Cousins



ABOUT THE MUSEUM: Established in 2004 by the three local Historical Societies, and the Tweed Shire Council, the Tweed Regional Museum is one collection and one museum in three special locations; Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki. In 2012 The Tweed Regional Museum at Murwillumbah entered an exciting period of development involving construction of a new addition. For further information about the Tweed River Museum please visit:

<http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/> or contact the Museum Director on (02) 6670 2400.

CONTACTING THE SOCIETY:

Phone: (02) 6672 3337

Web: <http://www.murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au/>

Email: enquiries@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au

The Murwillumbah Museum is closed for extension and renovation until mid-2014 - our temporary office address is 33-35 Kyogle Rd, Bray Park NSW 2484. The Museum's other branches at Tweed Heads and Uki remain open as usual during this period.

COMMITTEE:

<http://www.murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au/about.htm>

