

TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society

January 2015 Vol. 3 No. 3



Welcome

Happy New Year and welcome to the January 2015 edition of *Timelines*, the newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society. This issue sees the first of our special stories marking the centenary of World War 1. We plan to run these stories until 2018.

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 to keep improving - your feedback, input, corrections and contributions are always most welcome.**

This edition's contents:

- Lest We Forget - Private William Kyle 5596
- Interview with Geoff Smith
- Boy Charlton's Visit Makes a Splash
- Did You Know?
- Mystery Object
- Hanna and Edmed, a great Tweed Enterprise - Part 3
- Roll of Honour
- Society and Contact Information (updated)

Lest We Forget

To mark the centenary of World War One 1914-1918, Tony Clark is compiling a short article honouring the memory of one of our fallen for each *Timelines* until October 2018. In this edition we remember local boy William "Henry" Kyle.

Born in 1889 at Tyngah, William Henry Kyle (known as Henry) was the only son of William Kyle and Elizabeth McCarthy. He was educated at the local public school and St Patrick's Convent, Murwillumbah. He then moved to Sydney and was living in Bourke Street working as a



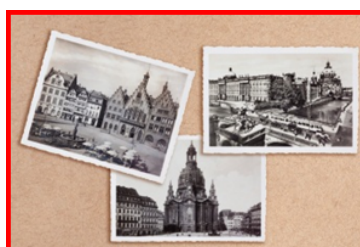
Private W.H. Kyle 5596
(TRM Ref: MUS2001.38.5)

labourer until he enlisted on 2 Mar 1916 where he was allotted to the 17th Battalion. According to his military records, he stood 5ft 5¾in (167cm) and weighed 122lb (55kg) with brown eyes and brown hair.



Henry's Death Penny & Dog Tag (TRM Ref: MUS2001.38.3 & 2001.38.7.a)

After Henry's initial training in Bathurst, he boarded the troop ship "Euripides" on



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 2493, email trm@tweed.nsw.gov.au

the 9th of September in Sydney, and disembarked at Plymouth on the 26 Oct 1916. He then proceeded to France on the "Golden Eagle" on 13 December, and joined the 17th Battalion (15th Reinforcements) on 24 Jan 1917. The 17th were stationed in the area of Lagincourt in Northern France. On the morning of 15 Apr 1917, the Germans launched a counter attack in this area. During this attack, Henry received a gunshot wound with a compound fracture to the left upper arm. He was taken to the 9th Casualty Clearing Station before being transferred to the 5th General Hospital in Rouen on the 19th of April.



Henry's headstone and entry at Murwillumbah's Cenotaph
(Photos TRM Ref: MS000247 & Tony Clark Jan 2015)

Private William Henry Kyle died in Rouen from his wounds on 2 May 1917, aged 28. He is buried in Sever Cemetery Extension, Haute Normandie, France and is commemorated at the Australian War Memorial with his name on panel 83 of the Roll Of Honour and at the Murwillumbah Cenotaph on Tumbulgum Road.

We will remember them.

References:

1. *Music, Myth & Memories, a Kyle Family History* by Dr Noelene Kyle
2. Australian War Memorial <http://www.awm.gov.au/>
3. National Archives of Australia <http://www.naa.gov.au/>
4. Tweed Regional Museum collection

Interview with Geoff Smith

As well as operating as a local Panel Beater for nearly 60 years, Geoff Smith has served the community in Rotary for over 30 years, including as President. The article was written by Tony Clark from meetings with and information supplied by Geoff and also from a earlier story by Ron Johansen.

Geoff Leonard Smith was born on 1 May 1938 in Sunnyside Hospital, Murwillumbah. He is the second eldest of 3 children (2 boys & 1 girl) born to Rupert and Thelma Smith of Eviron. Rupert, who was originally from Milton, had served in World War One in the 12th Light Horse Regiment and was part of the famous charge at Beersheba in October 1917. At the end of the war he moved to the Tweed and took up dairying.



Geoff at work (Photo Tony Clark Jan 2015)

Geoff began his education at Condong Primary School then went on to Murwillumbah High School where he obtained his Intermediate Certificate in 1953. He then found work as a cabinet maker for 12 months before securing a job as an apprentice Panel Beater with Ebbott and Fenner in South Murwillumbah. He continued working here for 13 years, becoming foreman to six Panel Beaters. During these years a Trade Train came to Murwillumbah Railway Station three or four times a year and apprentices attended several nights a week until the Tech College was built in the sixties.



Rupert Smith (Photo: Geoff Smith)



National Service days
(Photo: Geoff Smith)

Geoff started off riding his bike, rain, hail or shine, seven miles, to and from work each day before being able to purchase his first car, a Morris utility. This enabled him to take his sister, Helen to her work at Northern Rivers Finance. His brother Don was required on the farm to help milk a large herd of Durham cows and consequently was exempt from National Service. Geoff served his National Service at Holsworthy for three months and subsequently attended the 41st Byron Scottish Regiment weekly training groups for three years

with intermittent bivouacs and a final Jungle Training Camp for two weeks at Cunungra to complete the service.

In 1961 Geoff met a young lady named Glenice Harry, a Stenographer and Switchboard Operator at Wilkinson's Store situated on the corner of Murwillumbah St and Queen St Murwillumbah. Glenice was also the 1957 Tweed Banana Festival Queen. They were married on 6th May 1961 in the Methodist Church. The newlyweds rented a flat in Ewing St for a couple of years before buying a house in William St where they lived for the next 33 years. In this time they had three children, Diana (also a Banana Festival Queen in 1984), Laurence and Murray, and now have 5 grandchildren.



Geoff as a young man
(Photo: Geoff Smith)

Geoff decided to branch out with his own business in 1968 at 17 Prospero St, South Murwillumbah in conjunction with local spray painter Roy Connolly. After several years Roy retired and Geoff continued on with the paint and panel shop. He then purchased the building from Lil and Tom Lumley. Lil was formerly a Hartmann and her father had conducted a grocery business in the building from

1910. In these early days, he was working six days a week to make a living with help from another tradesman, Jimmy Gray.

Squash and Soccer were Geoff's favourite sports. He played soccer with 'United' which won the Grand Final in 1976. Later he took on coaching soccer while his sons were playing and then refereeing for a few seasons. Finally he retired after being President of the United Soccer Club for a number of years.

Geoff was invited to join the Murwillumbah Rotary Club in 1980 and became President of the Club in 1988, the 50th Anniversary Year and has also received a Paul Harris Fellowship in 1992 for services to Rotary. For over 20 years he has been one of the main organisers of the annual Rotary fishing trip to Fraser Island. With Glenice he has helped organise the Rotary Art Show since its inception.

In 1989, Geoff restored a 1930 Ford Model A Coupe which he entered and won the 1996 Australian National Ford A Concourse in Brisbane. The car is well known around town with its presence in the Anzac March and Banana Festival

parades.

By the end of the 80s conditions in the smash repair industry were changing. This forced an update on equipment plus other shop renovations. Following the update, Geoff decided to enter the 1991 NSW Small Business Awards held in Sydney and the North Coast Business Awards. Notification of becoming a Finalist in their category in the State Awards gave them great satisfaction and Highly Commended in the North Coast awards was also encouraging.

In 1996, Geoff and Glenice purchased a new property at Eungella which is where they still reside. At the time of this publication (Jan 2015) the business is up for sale and after 59 years of panel beating and spray painting, Geoff is ready to retire. We wish both Geoff and Glenice, all the best in their future endeavours.

Boy Charlton's Visit Makes a Splash

Thanks to Sandra Jones for contributing this interesting insight into what must have been an exciting event for Murwillumbah back in 1932. In between Sandra's other roles as our new Social Member and Researcher for the Society, we look forward to more great Timelines stories from her.

The Tweed Daily, Murwillumbah, Wednesday, March 2, 1932 reads.....

"Crowds Flock To See Champion

Boy Charlton in Action

Brilliant Carnival Makes Tweed History

A brilliant page in the Tweed's swimming history was written last night by the appearance at Murwillumbah swimming carnival of the Australian wonder swimmer, "Boy" Charlton.

From miles around, and from centre's outside, people flocked to the pageant to see the champion in action, making the occasion a success of dimensions that will not easily be passed for many years."

.... and, so the story goes. Who may you ask is Boy Charlton?

Andrew Murray Charlton was born and raised in Sydney. Known as "Boy", he first came to public attention in 1921 with his swimming ability and became an Australian freestyle swimmer of the 20s and 30s, winning a gold medal at the 1924 Summer Olympics in Paris, France. He set five world records and also won a further three silver and one bronze medal in his Olympic career,

which was a record until 1960.

Enroute by ship to France with his coach, Tom Adrian, who was also appointed team coach, things took a turn for the worse. Tom Adrian suffered a nervous breakdown, and threw himself overboard. Even though he was rescued, he was left in London while the team travelled to Paris without a coach.

Physiologists had become involved in sport at the time of the Paris Olympics and Boy Charlton's lung capacity was tested with a machine. It was the highest lung capacity of anyone they had rated at the time; and he was then only 16 years of age.



Boy Charlton (left) with rival Arne Borg (right) at the Olympics (Photo: Wikipedia)

After shelving his career to pursue studies and work over a period of four years, Charlton returned to swimming and gained selection for the 1932 Olympics in Los Angeles, the oldest member of the team at just 25 years of age.

Whilst in Los Angeles, Charlton was offered the chance to audition in Hollywood. American Johnny Weismuller had done twelve "Tarzan" movies and moved on to become "Jungle Jim". Charlton turned down the offer because he didn't fancy swimming around, looking for baboons and having alligators and things chasing him!

Charlton retired from swimming in 1934, opened a pharmacy in Canberra, married and settled on a property near Goulburn. He was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in 1972. He died of a heart attack at the age of 68.

Returning to the story in the Tweed Daily, Murwillumbah, dated 2 Mar 1932; the reporter paints a picture for the reader by reporting on the buzz of activity surrounding Boy Charlton's visit. An improvised swimming pool was erected in the river at the end of Wharf Street, with boats and a ferry punt carrying spectators waiting in

anticipation to witness the Olympian take to the water.

A team of officials worked energetically to bring this event to fruition including: Power House staff, local electricians, Messrs. Skinner Lowes & Co. (for the use of their river steamer), the North Coast Steam Navigation Company's loan of the S.S. Cudgen, the Municipal Council for the use of the wharf and the Tweed Shire Council for the provision of the ferry punt.

Tiers of seating were also erected on the wharf and every point of vantage on water and land was jammed with spectators.

Even the inclement weather was described, to quote "least in the thoughts of the majority of the crowd was a chance of rain and it was an unwelcome surprise that a drizzle commenced shortly before 8.30pm, thickened to a steady shower, and scattered the crowd in search of shelter. For 20 minutes the drizzle persisted and appeared to be setting in when the stars again peeped through the clouds and the rain passed".

Boy Charlton was introduced to the crowd and more than ready to please the people with his swimming demonstration over eight laps of fifty yards.

History tells us that one of the boats in the water had the worry of leaning well over to one side caused by the surge of spectators to one side watching the carnival of events.

Fine entries were received for every event on the carnival calendar, a most welcome response from swimming and surf clubs including a number of competitors from Mullumbimby.

Murwillumbah's first swimming pool was erected in the river at South Murwillumbah. In the 1930s a small in-ground pool was established on the corner of Tumbulgum Road and in 1962 the current Olympic Pool was constructed with the original pool divided into three smaller pools.

To-day we see people of all ages, particularly the younger generation, enjoying the benefits of Tweed Shire Council's fine swimming facility. Many we hope will further their ambition to be a champion swimmer, as did Sydney boy Andrew Murray Charlton some 90 years ago.

Although we cannot claim Andrew Murray Charlton as a "boy" of the Tweed, he did but pass us by during his brief visit to Murwillumbah and gave to Australia his gift as a champion swimmer of his time.

As a relative newcomer to the Historical Society my personal thanks go to Max Boyd, David Taylor, Tony Clark, Joan

Cuthel and Nick Gouliaev for their help in becoming a research team member. Research, whether it be in the past or future, will always be with us and a never-ending story it is. Last but by no means least a special thanks to Museum Director Judy Keane and her wonderful staff. I should have joined the team 10 years ago!

References:

1. Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boy_Charlton
2. The Tweed Daily, Murwillumbah, Wednesday, March 2, 1932

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 our district. This latest instalment summarises the distinguished life of Vice Admiral Sir Roy Dowling.

Vice Admiral Sir Roy Russell Dowling KCVO, KBE, CB, DSO was born at Condong on 8 May 1901, the son of Sugar Cane Inspector Russell Dowling.



(Then) Lieutenant Roy Dowling (1927) (Photo: Wikipedia)

Vice Admiral Dowling served as Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), the Royal Australian Navy's (RAN) highest ranking position, from 1955 to 1959 and as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), forerunner of the role of Australia's Chief of Defence (CDF) from 1959 until 1961.

He entered the Royal Australian Naval College in 1915. After graduating in 1919, he went to sea aboard various Royal Navy and RAN vessels and later specialised in gunnery. In 1937, he was given command of the sloop HMAS Swan.

Following the outbreak of World War II, he saw action in the Mediterranean theatre as Executive Officer of the Royal Navy cruiser HMS Naiad and survived her sinking by a U-boat in March 1942. Returning to Australia, he served as Director of Plans and later Deputy Chief of Naval Staff before taking command of HMAS Hobart in November 1944. His achievements in the South West Pacific earned him the Distinguished Service Order (DSO).

Dowling took command of the RAN's first aircraft carrier HMAS Sydney in 1948. He became Chief of Naval Personnel in 1950 and Flag Officer



(Then) Capt Roy Dowling (Photo: Wikipedia)

Commanding Her Majesty's Australian Fleet in 1955. Soon after taking up this position, in February 1955, he was promoted to Vice Admiral and appointed a Companion of the Order of the Bath.

As CNS, he had to deal with shortages of money, manpower and equipment and with the increasing role of the United States in Australia's defence planning, at the expense of traditional ties with Britain. He was knighted in 1957 and was chairman of COSC from March 1959 to May 1961.

When he retired in 1963 he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order and became Australian Secretary to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, serving until his death on 15 Apr 1969.

Reference:

Wikipedia http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roy_Dowling

Mystery Objects

Whenever space in the newsletter allows we intend to publish historical photos or historical items 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.



The mystery objects (Photos: Tweed Regional Museum)

Can you help the Museum with any information about this edition's mystery items (see below)? There's not much known except that they are both about 30cm long and came from a farm. They are thought to perhaps be blacksmith's tools but the Museum would love to know their exact purpose.

Hanna and Edmed, a Great Tweed Enterprise - Part 3

Our thanks to Ross Johnson, the coordinator of this interesting history, for permission to publish the story on another iconic Tweed enterprise, Hanna and Edmed. This is Part 3 of the story.

[The story continues from the company's expansion to South Australia....]

The work in Adelaide was undertaken by Feature Plaster Pty Ltd, which had gained incredible recognition for the skills of its tradesmen in restoration of heritage fibrous plaster. The company had gained architectural and heritage accolades for its 1978 work on the Regent Theatre in Queen Street, Brisbane. The first American-style picture palace to be built in Queensland in 1929 was 'earmarked' for demolition. Protests resulted in the huge auditorium being gutted and converted to four cinemas. Cinema One, known as the Showcase Cinema, was created using original plaster features saved and restored by this great Murwillumbah Company, Feature Plaster. (Sadly this skilled work was only recently demolished with the theatre façade retained as a street front for the new Regent Tower under construction.)

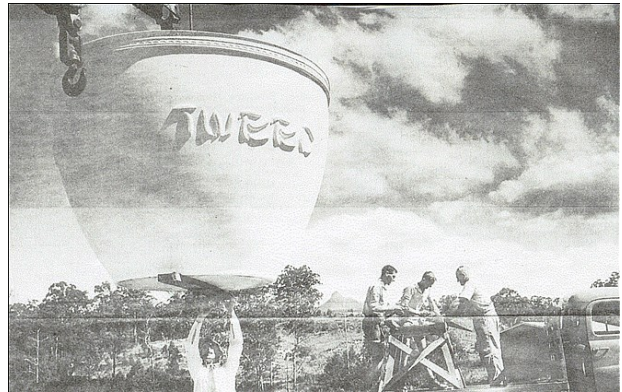


1978 Regent Theatre Brisbane plaster restoration by Feature Plaster (demolished 2011) (Photo courtesy: Hanna Family)

Due to the quality of the restoration, the company's tradesmen were sent to Adelaide for similar work on the Regent complex in Rundle Mall, Adelaide, and although the theatres were removed in 2006, much of the company's elaborate plaster work still exists in the shopping

arcade!

The tradesmen of this company created many fine examples of plaster work in private homes, resorts and commercial building across this district.



Tweed Banana Festival Banana Custard Bowl created by Feature Plaster (Photo courtesy: Hanna Family)

Perhaps one of the most recognised on the Tweed, was the large Banana Custard Bowl, manufactured at the Byangum Road workshops. It was an iconic feature of the annual Tweed Banana Festival with hundreds lined up to be served banana custard from this huge bowl.

Feature Plaster for many years sponsored a display in the Murwillumbah Showground Pavilion, lower main entry, right-hand bay, at the annual show!

Building projects completed by the Hanna and Edmed Group of Companies during the group's 38 years of existence have left their mark, many as district icons, and testimony to the quality of their construction.

MURWILLUMBAH AND THE TWEED DISTRICT:

- Motor Registry in Main Street
- Murwillumbah Ambulance Station extensions
- Former Tweed Shire Offices in Main Street
- Duranbah Surf Life Saving Clubhouse
- Greenhills Lodge
- Chinderah Motel
- Swimming Pools at Murwillumbah, Kingscliff, Tweed Heads and Club Banora
- Tweed Shire Headquarters and Auditoriums in Murwillumbah and Tweed Heads
- Maternity, X-ray, Pathology and Emergency Wing at Murwillumbah Hospital
- Respite Centre at Murwillumbah Hospital
- Tweed Catholic Church Complex (Church, Presbytery and Hall)
- Kingscliff Catholic Church
- Tweed Heads Hospital Emergency Department
- Wollumbin Street Shops, Murwillumbah

- King Street Medical Centre, Murwillumbah
- King Street Office Block. (Dept Education)
- St Joseph's Retirement Complex at Tweed Heads
- Elizabeth Morley Court at Tweed Heads
- Tweed City Extensions
- Kingscliff Ambulance and Police Stations
- Tweed Heads Police Station and Motor Registry
- Murwillumbah (Aussie) Tavern
- Numerous apartment towers (including Endeavour) on Greenbank Island
- 'Boscabel Villas', Murwillumbah
- Murwillumbah TAFE College
- Twin Towns Drive-in Theatre

GOLD COAST:

- Gold Coast Council Administrative Building at Bundall
- Southport Law Courts
- Neville Thames Building, Southport
- Karingal Place, Coolangatta
- Woodridge Retirement Centre
- Garden Settlement Retirement Village at Nerang
- Bruce Small Offices at Surfers Paradise
- Nioka Apartments, Currumbin
- 'Villa Maree', Southport
- Collangatta Post Office
- Coolangatta Surf Life Saving Clubhouse
- Underground Toilets, Griffith St, Coolangatta
- John Flynn Hospital (Plumbing)

REGISTERED CLUBS:

- Murwillumbah RSL
- Original Twin Towns and Extensions
- Club Banora
- Terranora Lakes Country Club and Time Share
- Mullumbimby RSL
- Palm Beach Bowls Club
- Currumbin RSL
- Kingscliff Bowls Club
- South Tweed Heads Bowls Club
- Tweed Heads Bowls Club
- Ballina RSL Club
- Cabarita Bowls Club
- Southport RSL
- Seagulls Leagues Club, East Wing

SCHOOLS:

- Murwillumbah Primary Extensions
- Pottsville Primary School
- Uki Primary School

- South Tweed Heads Primary Extensions
- Hollywell School
- Mudgeeraba School
- Palm Beach School
- Mermaid Beach High School

HOTELS:

- Murwillumbah (Aussie) Tavern
- Currumbin Hotel
- Burleigh Heads Hotel
- Argent Hotel, Mt Isa
- Gladstone (Qld) Hotel
- Bartlett's Barn, Nerang
- Chinchilla Hotel

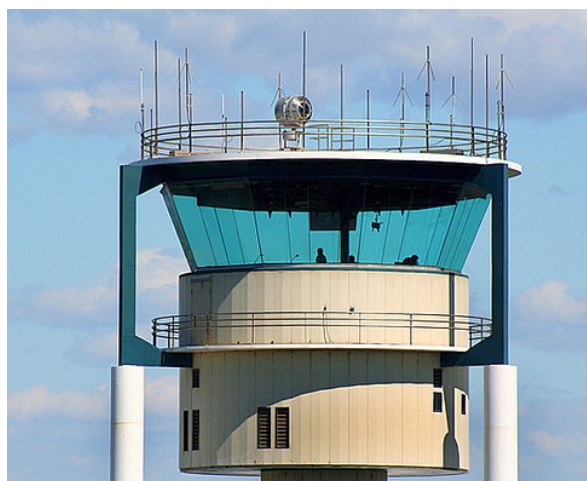
OTHER CIVIL ENGINEERING:

- Water Reservoirs at Uki, Round Mountain, Fingal, Cudgen and Woodridge (Qld).
- Bridges at Nerang, Canungra, West Tweed Heads and the Central NSW Coast.

FURTHER AFIELD:

- Feros Retirement Villages at Byron Bay and Bangalow
- Coffs Harbour Hospital Extensions
- Nambucca Heads Shopping Village
- Boggo Road Gaol Administrative Centre, Brisbane
- Library at Southern Cross University, Lismore
- Extensions to Channel 9 Television Studios in Brisbane

TWO ICONIC PROJECTS:



Coolangatta Control Tower (Photo courtesy: Hanna Family)

These two structures catch the eye of every tourist to this region, 365 days a year!

1. The Control Tower at Coolangatta Airport was set up in 1990 constructed by Hanna and Edmed.
2. To celebrate the bi-centenary of Captain Cook's



voyage of discovery along the east coast, a joint venture of NSW and Queensland, with the border line passing through the building's podium, a memorial lighthouse was designed. Hanna and Edmed took up the challenge of its construction, with it becoming one of the company's icons.

Completed in 1971, it was a world-first in the experimentation to use laser light technology for maritime safety. Due to technical problems, in 1975, the use of traditional lighting with mirrors, magnifying glass and strong lights, was reverted to.

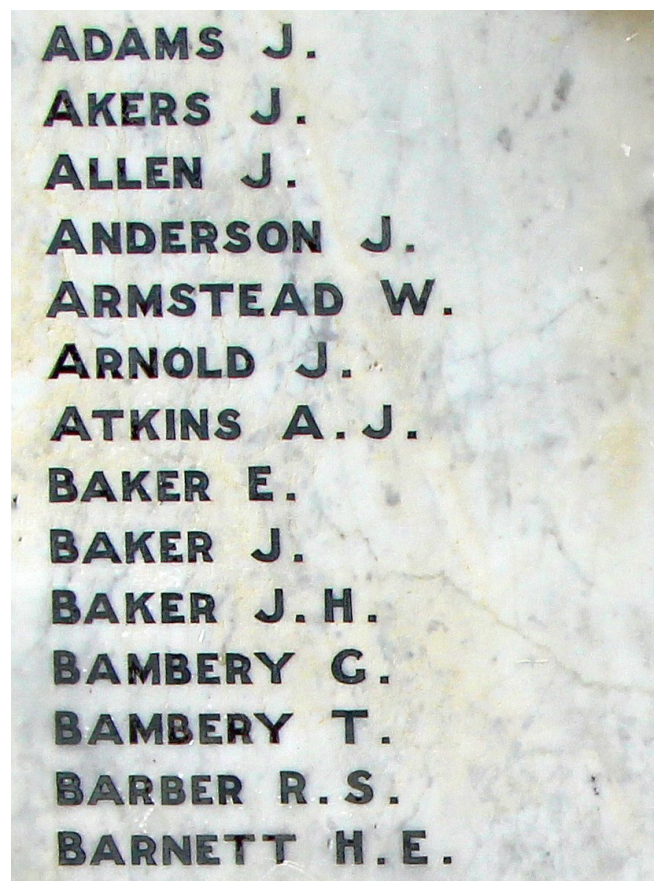
The building stands in excellent condition welcoming the thousands that visit this area and providing safety to shipping under the control of the Australian Maritime Safety Authority.

To be continued next edition...



Roll of Honour

The Murwillumbah Cenotaph lists 218 local fallen from World War One. We will publish the names of a group of them in each Timelines until the October 2018 edition. Here are the first fourteen names listed.



Lest we forget.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY: Formed 16 March 1959, the Society's aim is to research, preserve and promote the rich and unique history of the town of Murwillumbah and its surrounds in the picturesque Tweed River Valley of far northern New South Wales. The Society operates out of our Research Centre in the Tweed Regional Museum's historic Murwillumbah facility and acknowledges the ongoing generous support of Tweed Shire Council.

CONTACT US: Phone: (02) 6670 2273

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

FB: <http://www.facebook.com/murwillumbahhistory>

Email: enquiries@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au

Street: C/- Tweed Regional Museum, 2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Street: PO Box 373, Murwillumbah NSW 2484



ABOUT THE MUSEUM: The Tweed Regional Museum is a Tweed Shire Council community facility, established in 2004, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Tweed Shire Council and the Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki and South Arm Historical Societies. It is one museum that operates across three branch locations; Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki, and in association with these three local Historical Societies. The three locations connect the Tweed Shire from the coast to the mountains, providing a unique journey into the history, people and places of the majestic Tweed Valley.

For information about the Tweed Regional Museum please visit: <http://museum.tweed.nsw.gov.au/> or phone on (02) 6670 2493.