

TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society

October 2015 Vol. 4 No. 2



Welcome

Welcome to the October 2015 *Timelines*, the newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society. In this edition we'll finish our interesting stories about Murwillumbah's historic 1909 Court House and Robert Quirk's world-leading achievements. In "Lest We Forget" we learn the story of Chillingham local, Fred Vidler.

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 - Frederick Cecil Vidler
- Historic Buildings of Murwillumbah - the Court House Part 3 (final)
- Robert Quirk and Acid Sulfate Soils Part 3 (final)
- New Acquisition at TRM Murwillumbah
- Bus Trip to South Bank
- Guided Town Walks
- Roll of Honour
- Society and Contact Information

Lest We Forget

To mark the centenary of World War One 1914-1918, Tony Clark is compiling a short article honouring the memory of our fallen for each *Timelines* until October 2018. In this edition we remember the story of Frederick Cecil Vidler of Chillingham.



3502 Private F.C. Vidler
(Photo Ref: TRM TH78-08)

Frederick Cecil Vidler, known as Fred, was born in 1892, the second son and fourth child of Frederick Ashley and Jane Vidler of the Berry area in southern NSW. In the late 1890s the family moved north to Chillingham and it was here that Frederick and his siblings attended Chillingham School.

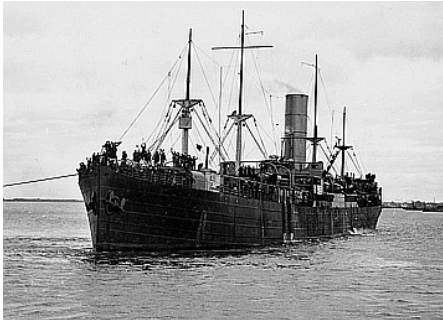
In World War 1, Frederick followed his older brother, Ashley Haydon Vidler and several first cousins into The AIF. He enlisted in Brisbane on 23 November



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

1916, soon after the defeat of the 1st Australian referendum on military conscription in October 1916. Fred went into training at Enoggera camp before embarking on the troop ship Ayrshire on 21 Jan 1917 as part of the 47th Battalion. After several weeks at sea he disembarked at Devonport in England and was sent to the Australian camp at Codford on the Wiltshire plains for further training.



HMAT Ayrshire 3 July 1916 (Photo: Australian War Memorial PB0179)

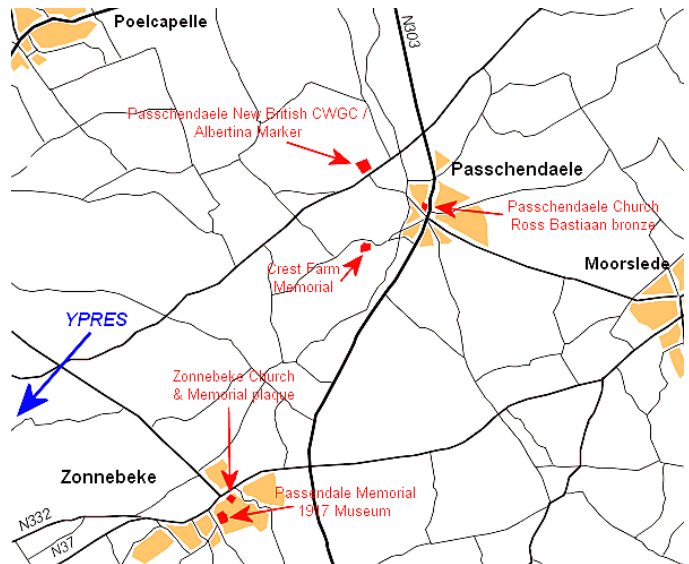
In early July 1917, Fred proceeded with his battalion to the port of Le Harve in France, and marched into the nearby camp of Rouelles. A few days later the 47th was moved to Ypres, Belgium, where the Battle of Passchendaele was raging on the Western Front. On 26 September the 4th and 5th Australian Divisions were brought in. This was a 'baptism of fire' for young Vidler. The fighting was bloody as the German concrete pillboxes were in the path of the Australians and many thousands of men fell under the heavy shelling and machine gun fire. The Australians captured Broodseine Ridge on 4 October.

However, heavy rain began to fall making the area, which had been so heavily shelled in the weeks before, a deep quagmire, and both men and beast found it impossible to move forward leading to further heavy casualties.



A 4.5 inch Q.F. Howitzer gun bogged and abandoned on Westhoek Ridge during the attack at Passchendaele. (Photo: Australian War Memorial EO1088)

On the night of 12 October the ANZACs launched another attack at Passchendaele. Frederick moved out with his Company moving towards the front line but they came under heavy German artillery fire. The next day he was reported wounded with no further details. He appeared on the gazetted list for his unit and his father was advised accordingly on 6 December, some seven



Passchendaele locations map (Link: <http://www.wwt1battlefields.co.uk/flanders/passchendaele.html>)

weeks later. On 10 December his father wrote to the Australian Army Headquarters (AAH), enquiring how his son was wounded and what hospital he was in. By this time Fred's older brother, Ashley, who had been badly wounded earlier in the year was recuperating in England.

An AAH officer advised that there had been no further information, so it was probable that his son Private F C Vidler was progressing well, but would enquire further to his whereabouts and health. A Red Cross Wounded and Missing enquiry was launched and a number of soldiers were questioned about their knowledge of Private Frederick Cecil Vidler, however no substantial information could be found until his Battalion burial records were searched and it was found that "FC Vidler had been killed in action on 12 October 1917" and had been buried "1000 yards SW Passchendaele, and 1000 yards NE Zonnebeke".

A military inquest conducted by the 47th Commanding Officer on 22 March 1918 found that "FC Vidler had been killed in action on 12 October 1917" and his family were informed accordingly.



Buttes New British Cemetery and the 5th Australian Division Memorial, Polygon Wood (Photo: Australians on the Western Front 1914-18)

His personal effects, listed as 'four photos' were packed in 'crate 112' aboard the cargo ship 'Barunga' on 21 June 1918. However, the ship was torpedoed by a German Submarine; all those on board were rescued but the cargo was lost.

With the War Graves Commission's work after the war all those lone and group graves of soldiers around Zonnebeke were exhumed and the remains brought in and buried in the Buttes New British Cemetery, in Polygon Wood. The majority of these soldiers' remains could not be identified and have unnamed headstones. However in September 1920, the War Graves Commission notified Private Frederick Cecil Vidler's parents that his remains had been identified and buried in the Buttes New British Cemetery, and asked if they had any wishes concerning wording and symbols on his headstone. The following year they received from the Commission photographs of his grave.

Frederick Cecil Vidler is commemorated on Panel 144 at the Australian War Memorial and on the Murwillumbah Cenotaph.

References:

1. Australian War Memorial <http://www.awm.gov.au/>
2. National Archives of Australia <http://www.naa.gov.au/>
3. Nola Mackey <https://nolamackey.wordpress.com/category/world-war-i/>
4. WW1 Battlefields <http://www.ww1battlefields.co.uk/flanders/passchendaele.html>
5. Australians on the Western Front 1914-18 <http://www.ww1westernfront.gov.au/>
6. Tweed Regional Museum collection
7. Australia's Fighting Sons of the Empire - ISBN 978-0-85905-568-0, (1922, 2014)

Murwillumbah Court House

Thanks to Nick Gouliaev for this story. This is Part 3 (final) of the story of this historic Main Street icon.



Clerestory windows. (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

.... More arched windows, as clerestory windows, are on the west, north and east walls, protruding above the roofs. The windows are glazed with coloured glass (pale aqua, pale apricot and clear)

set into small sized panels in timber frames. The brick work of the window arches is face brick, two bricks wide on edge and the window sills are brick on edge, finished with smooth cement render and painted.

The walls above the roofs are divided by flush face

brick columns into panels. Each panel's brick work is finished with stucco cement render, painted, with a clerestory window positioned in the center of each panel. At ground level all windows are tall, with a sill height of 1200mm from floor level, timber framed, double hung, with timber frames fitted with small panes of glass, with clear glazing. External window sills are brick on edge with smooth cement render, painted. All window heads are formed by a brick on edge segmental arch in face brick. The walls have terracotta ventilation bricks, still in original condition. The walls are face brick with stucco pebble dash panels with a painted finish. These decorative panels are above face brick, starting at 2100mm above floor level rising up to the underside of the roof eaves.

The roofs are multiple, with lower level roofs to single-storey portions of the building and a high-level main roof to the actual Court Room. Each roof has a feature gable fitted with timber ventilation louvers. The roof cladding is galvanized, corrugated metal roof sheets recently fitted, replacing the old rusting sheets.



The refurbished Court House 2015. (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

The eaves are wide, lined with timber paneling (tongue and groove planks) placed above exposed rafters and painted. The eaves to the verandas are also tongue and groove paneling but fixed to the underside of roof rafters and painted. All fascias are wide timber type, fitted with Federation-style half-round eaves gutters discharging into round rainwater downpipes recently painted Federation dark green colour. The brick chimney is visible protruding above the main roof of the Court Room and is constructed from face bricks, completing the beautiful design balance of this Federation roof.

The whole building has recently been renovated in the true Federation colors of dark greens, cream and off white.

Inside the building floors are timber framed, supported by brick piers, lifting the floor framing approximately 450mm off natural ground level.

The underside of the floor space is ventilated with wall-mounted terracotta vents all around the perimeter of the building. The floor lining throughout the original building is wide, timber tongue and groove floor boards, in the original Federation style, smooth sanded and probably painted. Today however, all floors are carpeted, except the floor of the 1957 extensions at rear of the building which was reinforced concrete slabs on ground and finished with ceramic floor tiles.

The original internal walls are brick, finished with smooth cement render and painted, fitted with 300mm skirting boards, grooved with decorative

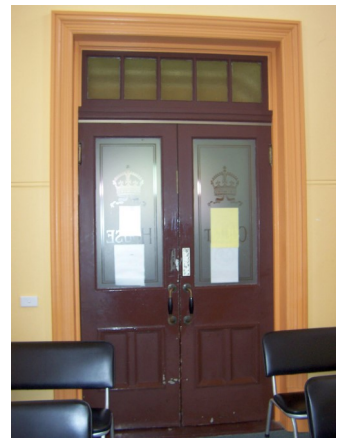


multiple horizontal grooves and painted. The door jams and window architraves are also 300mm wide. The junctions of the skirtings and architraves have a junction piece to neatly finish the timber work. The window jams are also 300mm wide to match the heavy solid feel of the interior joinery, with window sills being bull-nosed, extending past the window architraves. Original window and other features. (Photo: Nick Gouliarov) are fixed to the walls 2700mm above floor all around all office areas. Metal wall vents are fitted to all walls. Federation-style, highly-decorative vent covers, fitted with an "open or shut" mechanism, are still in original condition. Recent internal wall additions, are timber frame studs lined with contemporary plaster board, painted to match the original brick/cement rendered walls and merge quite well with the 1909 construction 270mm thick walls.

The internal ceilings vary in height from area to area with administration rooms having lower ceiling heights and corridors with a higher ceiling, fitted with wide plaster decorative cornices throughout. The ceilings also vary with decorations; some are smooth, others (such as in the Registrar office area) divided into a square grid pattern by use of decorative plaster ceiling moldings. The 1957 extension areas have ceilings of plain smooth plaster board; even the cornices are not as wide or decorative as the original.

All internal doors are of very-wide, solid-timber

paneling construction, painted Federation brown, fitted with original brass door hardware and additional contemporary high-security hardware where required. Above the doors a ventilation window is fitted, with a swivel mechanism as additional internal ventilation. The main entry doors into the actual Court Room are double doors (2 leafs) and have etched glazing inserts to each leaf with the words "Court House".



Entry doors. (Photo: Nick Gouliarov)

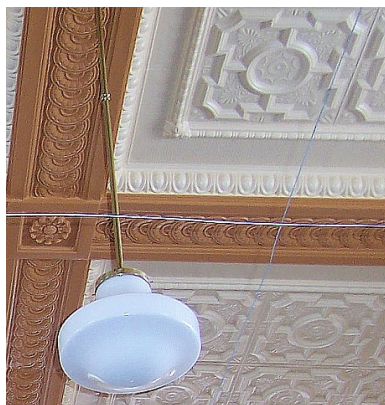
The Registrar office area contains a beautiful reception desk in original 1909 condition; a massive piece of furniture of polished local timber stained brown. The decorative mouldings paneling the front is in excellent condition with the working side of the desk modified to suit contemporary storage requirements. The top of the desk is protected by a thick glass sheet.



The Court Room ceiling with its decorative mouldings, windows etc. (Photo: Nick Gouliarov)

The Court Room is in the centre of the building with a ceiling height of 7.5m, lit by clerestory windows and glazed with coloured glass panes set in timber frames. These windows are hinged to open into the room, resulting in excellent ventilation. The ceiling is flat, highly decorated with very wide cornices to the ceiling perimeter. The internal field of the ceiling is decorated with plaster mouldings dividing the field into a series of square modules with a circular pattern ceiling rose in the centre. Outside the rose more mouldings decorate the module, creating a very intricate pattern design with almost an Italian Renaissance visual effect. The intersection of the major ceiling mouldings dividing the ceiling into square modules has a decorative square moulding junction with an

electric light fitting hung from its centre. The light fittings are of 1920s vintage in excellent condition with round lamp shades of frosted glass in the shape of a flattened bee hive. The plaster ceiling moldings are painted a combination of apricot, aqua and caramel, designed to define them from the ceiling colour. The main ceiling mouldings



Original light fitting and acoustic wires. (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

extend down the walls approximately 1.5m terminating in a Corinthian wall bracket with a horizontal roll moulding at its bottom edge spanning wall distance between each Corinthian bracket around the room. Directly under these brackets are acoustic wires, one per wall bracket with some brackets not having any, stretching across the width of the room in an east-west direction, 4 in total, plus 2 wires spanning the length of the room in a north-south direction. These wires are a unique feature of the Court Room; supposedly placed to improve the acoustics (debatable). The wires have been removed several times during renovations but replaced on every occasion, with some people convinced that the wires do make a difference. After recent repainting the wires have been placed into position again, but appear to be quite loose.

The walls are fitted with metal, highly-decorative air vents typical of the Federation style décor; an excellent solution for achieving a constant flow of fresh air. Another beautiful feature is a brick fireplace with an arched hearth. All brick work is in face brick including the fire box floor. The back of the hearth has a cast iron plate the width of the hearth with cast into its surface the letter "E", an image of a crown and a letter "R". Underneath the crown is "1909". Prior to the introduction and



Jury Box and air vents. (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

universal usage of electricity, Court Room illumination was by kerosene lamps, called Juno lamps, placed on the Magistrate's desk; apparently quite an effective lighting system. These lamps are now preserved at Tweed Regional Museum Murwillumbah.



Judge and Sheriff area. (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

The Court Room furniture is in excellent original condition; manufactured from local timbers and polished and lacquered to a beautiful timber brown color. The furniture consists of a Judge's bench and chair behind a timber paneled dwarf-wall barrier, a Sheriff's desk behind a timber barrier dwarf wall beneath the judge's area, a Witness stand, Lawyers' tables facing the Judge and a Press box to one side near



Judge's area detail. (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

the fireplace. The Prisoner's stand area is behind the Lawyers, in the middle of the room, facing the Judge, with public gallery seats behind, also facing the Judge. Behind and above the Judge is a beautiful timber structure with intricately-decorated carved panels and a crest.

Since 1968 no jury cases have been held in the Murwillumbah Court House; only Magistrate hearings are conducted in Murwillumbah because all jury cases are now held in the Lismore Supreme Court. However, in 2012 the Court House hosted its first sitting of the State Supreme Court. Presiding Justice Stephen Campbell said "Speaking for myself, I hope it will not be the last, as it was a rather splendid Court House."

The extensions of 1957 and 1968 at the rear of the original Court House building are constructed with concrete block walls, smooth cement



Our Court House complex in its early post-fire days with Hospital Hill in the background. (Photo: TRM Ref M11-16)

rendered and painted. The roofs are flat metal with wide eaves, edged with high vertical metal fascias. These additions are for toilet areas and a garage and are not accessible by the public. These new additions are not in the Federation style, however, they are not visible from the street; they are well hidden by the original building and hence do not detract from the beauty of the Federation architecture.

In 2014 major refurbishment works were carried out by NSW Public Works Department consisting of internal and external painting, replacement of the metal roof, replacement of the timber picket fence, installation of stainless steel grab rails and upgrading of the steps and access ramps as a continuing process of improving public safety.

Research and Acknowledgements

- Murwillumbah Historical Society research team: Nick Gouliarov, Tony Clark, Max Boyd, Joan Cuthel, David Taylor
- Trish Mallon – Registrar of the Local Court at Murwillumbah Court House
- Tales of our Times, Ron Johansen.
- Extracts from Early Discussions by Ron Johansen with Don Mackay, former Clerk of the Local Court and Chamber Magistrate.
- Northern Star (1876-1954) 8 Jan 1908 Page 2
- Red Sunday, Kath Pritchard, Murwillumbah Historical Society 2nd Edition 2015.
- Municipal Murwillumbah 24 Oct 1907 (Reprint of municipal announcements)
- Georgian Architecture in Australia; Uri Smith in association of the National Trust of Australia
- The Federation House, Ian Evans, The Flannel Flower press.
- Australia's Yesterdays, Reader's Digest Pty. Ltd.

Robert Quirk - Growing Sugar Cane on Acid Sulfate Soil

Research, analysis and story by Max Boyd. This is the final part (Part 3) and completes this story.

AUSTRALIAN AND WORLD PERSPECTIVE

2001 - he was awarded a Churchill Fellowship to investigate the elimination of acidity in discharge in these soils. This took him to Louisiana, Florida and Maryland in the United States and to the Netherlands.

2006 - Robert received the 16th McKell Medal for Excellence in Natural Resource Management. He became the first President of Bonsucro, a Global sugar cane sustainability organisation supported by Coca Cola, Kraft, Pepsi Go, and Unilever.

2011 - He became the first to obtain international sustainability accreditation through Bonsucro. At the time of writing some 30 other NSW growers have also received accreditation. None in Queensland.

2011-12 - He has visited the major milling company in Indonesia PTPNX, a sugar milling and growing company five times over a two year period. PTPNX had visited him a few times earlier. He then visited them to help develop practices that would increase production. He represented the company at a Governors Forestry meeting (a group of Governors from around the Globe with the aim to reduce forest clearing). His talk there was based around increasing productivity on existing land to reduce the need to clear more rain forest.

2013 - In March he visited Cali Colombia Expocana to speak on the topic of "How to reduce inputs while increasing productivity by increasing soil carbon". In May, he visited Bangkok, Thailand to speak at Sugar Asia on the subject of "Increasing productivity in the developing countries". In July, Robert attended the Bonsucro Board Summit in Mexico City which dealt with Mexican Millers to encourage sustainability. In September he was in Brazil attending a Bonsucro Board Meeting following which he spent one week engaging farmers on how they might reach Bonsucro production standard. In November he spoke at the Bonsucro AGM in New Orleans USA.

2014 - During February, he was in Lucknow, India attending the Sugar Conclave. There were 3,000 participants to hear him speak on "Increasing production in Sugar Cane in Developing Countries". Following this he worked for the World Bank on a project where he ran 20 seminars for mill extension workers and farmers on how to improve soil health by increasing soil carbon. He directly engaged with over 400 and through this influenced the 200,000 farmers in the project. On May 10th he was in Cali Colombia Expocana and spoke on "A farming system to reduce the cost of production in sugar cane". Robert attended the Smart Plantations conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia on the 18th and 19th and spoke on "Developing innovative strategies for efficient plantation management". In June he spoke at the

Bureau of Meteorology bi-annual Conference on "What farmers need from the Bureau". From 8th to 10th July he was in Ho Chi Minh City to speak on the topic of "Low cost of Production in Australia and how to achieve it". On a number of holidays in Fiji he has responded to a request from the Director of the Fiji Institute to give lectures to his 40 staff on how they may improve the production of sugar in that country. Additionally he spent a day with the extension staff talking to the farmers.



Visiting Lucknow, India. (Photo: Robert Quirk)

GENERAL

Recently he has been invited to join the La Isla Foundation to assist in trials to find a solution to a chronic kidney disease in Nicaragua; a disease which is affecting sugar mill workers in that country.

Robert is a member of the International Union of Soil Sciences working group for Acid Sulfate Soils. He has been fortunate to be a speaker at their international conferences in Australia and China and to be a Key Note Speaker at their conference in Finland.

He has a broad knowledge of many topics and has spoken around the globe on topics as diverse as Acid Sulfate Soils remediation, reducing the cost of production in sugar cane by increasing soil carbon, the use of bio char to the global sugar cane industry, Bonsucro and how far reaching their improved production standard can help growers with long term sustainability both financially and environmentally, mechanisation to address the shortage of labour in developing countries, climate variability and what agriculture can do to reduce its effect on production. The global community want to hear what Robert has to say so most of the travel and attendance at conferences is done at no cost to himself.

AWARDS

Robert is a Jaycee Senator, life member
Bonsucro Life Member
Soil Care Life Member
Churchill Fellow

Paul Harris Fellow

16th McKell Medal winner

The Australian Society of Sugar Cane Technologists awarded him the President's Medal for the most useful research to the Australian sugar industry for his work with Acid Sulfate Soil remediation in the sugar cane industry.

He was runner-up as the Australian Farm Industry Leader of the Year

Robert was named the Carbon Cocky of the Year in 2014

He has authored or co-authored 30 peer reviewed papers and he has written two book chapters entitled "Black is the new Green" on bio char.

Compiled with information and photos supplied by Robert Quirk and details supplied by Tweed Shire Council and Professor Mike Melville.

Recent Acquisition

We will regularly include photos and information on interesting new items the Museum has acquired recently. Come and see all the interesting displays at the Museum.

A mounted photograph of the staff of the Murwillumbah branch of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney in 1939 was spotted for sale online by Society President Tony Clark and purchased for the Museum's collection. Our thanks go to Tony for being so proactive.

The mount around the photograph has been signed, presumably by the staff in the photograph; another two signatures are on the back, dated 1940. One wonders what the occasion for the photograph was, and why two staff didn't sign until the following year?

The Commercial Banking of Sydney first opened a branch in Murwillumbah in 1880, in premises rented from the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company. This original building only accommodated two staff. The bank's new premises, erected in 1899, was sacrificed during the fire of 1907, in order to stop the fire spreading. After the fire, it was one of the few buildings to be re-built in brick.



Detail from the photo. (Photo: TRM Collection)

Bus Trip to South Bank

The Society is pleased to announce the third in its series of Bus Trips for 2015.

Our destination will be Brisbane's famous SOUTH BANK offering access to.....

- Queensland Art Gallery (QAG)
- Gallery of Modern Art (GOMA)
- Queensland Museum & Science Centre
- Queensland Maritime Museum
- Parklands, Cafes and more.

The day will be for you to fill as you please the cost will only cover the bus transport.



SUNDAY, 18th October.
Cost, \$35 per person.

Departure: 9am (NSW) from
Murwillumbah Railway
Station

Returning: 4pm (NSW) from Southbank

Please contact Sandra Jones 02 6672 2746 to make a booking. **Please share this with your friends as these trips are a great day out!**

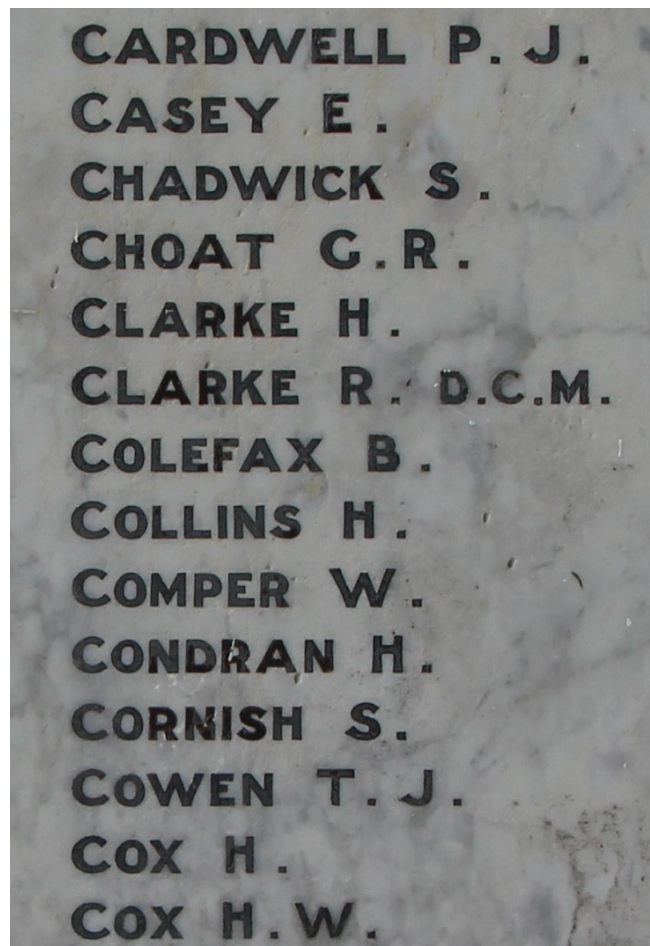
Guided Town Walks



Don't forget our guided town-centre historical walks, led by Tony Clark, leave Tweed Regional Museum Murwillumbah (2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah) at 1pm on the first Saturday of every month.

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 fourth set of 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

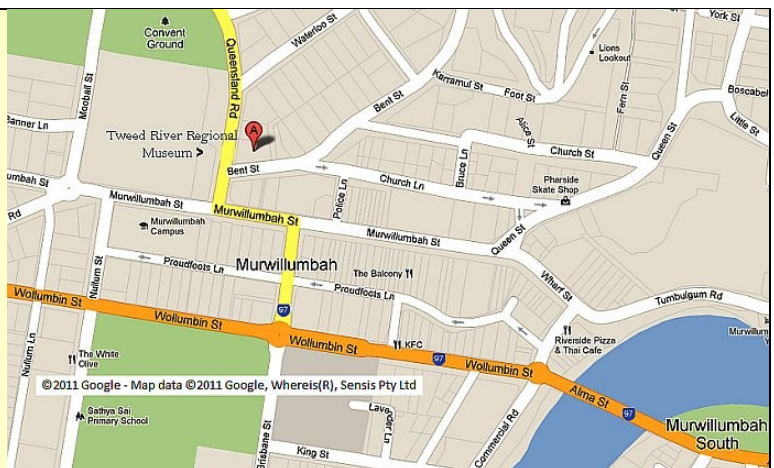
Web: <http://www.murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au/>

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.