

# TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of Murwillumbah Historical Society Inc.

January 2016 Vol. 4 No. 3



## Welcome

Welcome to the January 2016 *Timelines*, the newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society. In this edition we begin the exploration of our historic 1909 Police Station, are introduced to local family the Harbisons and learn about the amazing organ at All Saints Anglican Church. In the ongoing "Lest We Forget" series we meet Tumbulgum man, Charles Morrison.

The aim of these newsletters is to introduce some of the rich historical heritage we share here in Murwillumbah and environs. **Please keep helping us to keep improving - your feedback, input, corrections and contributions are always most welcome.**

This edition's contents:

- Lest We Forget - Charles Morrison
- Historic Buildings of Murwillumbah - the Police Station Part 1
- The Harbison Family Part 1
- The All Saints Organ Part 1
- Mystery Item and "Building on the History of Bricks" Talk
- 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 Charles William Lawrence Morrison of Tumbulgum.

Charles William Lawrence Morrison was born in 1898 to William Morrison and Janet Dinsey and was one of nine children raised on the family farm, Abbottford, at Tumbulgum. He attended Murwillumbah Public Primary School and after leaving became a farm hand.



3845 Private C.W.L. Morrison  
(Photo Ref: TRM TH107-15)

He enlisted in the AIF as a private (no. 3845) on 8 May 1916 claiming to be 21 years and 8 months of age, when in reality he was only 17. This avoided the requirement for his

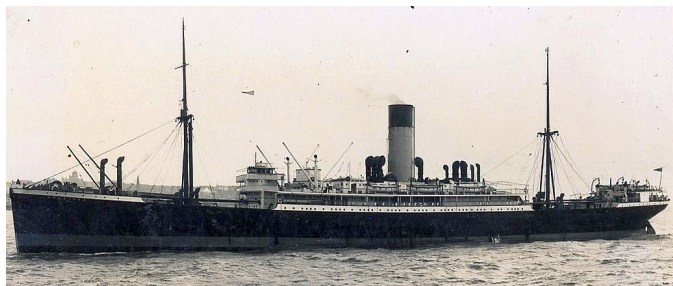


## WE WANT YOUR OLD PHOTOS!

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](mailto:trm@tweed.nsw.gov.au)



parents to approve his enlistment. He initially gave his next of kin as his aunt, Mrs Dyce of Petersham. Charles enlisted in Sydney and began training at Liverpool, then completed training at Kiama, NSW.



S.S. Anchises (Photo Ref: Wreck Site <http://www.wrecksite.eu/wreck.aspx?115889>)

At the time of his enlistment he was 5ft 9¼in (1.77m) tall and weighed 158lbs (71.5kgs) with blue eyes, light hair and a light complexion. He sailed for England on 10 Aug 1916 on the 'Anchises' arriving in Plymouth on 11 October. He then proceeded on the 'Princess Victoria' from Folkstone, England to France on 5 December as part of the 9<sup>th</sup> Reinforcements for the 30<sup>th</sup> Battalion AIF. Charles was



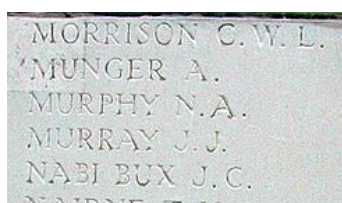
Australian artillery in action at Passchendaele October 1917 (Photo Ref: AWM E01 209)

taken on strength by the Battalion on 8 February, but by 16 February he was evacuated due to mild frostbite on his toes (the winter of 1916-17 in Belgium/France was one of the coldest on record). He was firstly evacuated to Rouen, then back to England on the 'HS Panama', not returning to France until early June and then joining the 45<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 23 Jun 1917.



Menin Gate Memorial (Photo: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

The focus of the AIF's operations now switched to the Ypres sector in Belgium and the 45<sup>th</sup> took part in a major battle near Passchendaele on 12 October. On the following day, Private Charles William Lawrence Morrison was killed by an artillery round and his body was never recovered. He was only 19 years old.



Menin Gate Memorial Inscription (Photo: Commonwealth War Graves Commission)

Charles William Lawrence Morrison is commemorated at the Menin Gate Memorial, Ypres, Belgium. He is also remembered at the Australian War Memorial's Wall of Remembrance on panel 140, and at the Murwillumbah Cenotaph.

#### References:

1. Australian War Memorial <http://www.awm.gov.au/>
2. National Archives of Australia <http://www.naa.gov.au/>
3. Marvin & Samme Templin <http://www.findagrave.com/>
4. Mark Rogers <http://www.wikitree.com/>
5. Commonwealth War Graves Commission <http://www.cwgc.org/>
6. Tweed Regional Museum collection
7. Australia's Fighting Sons of the Empire - ISBN 978-0-85905-568-0, (1922, 2014)

## Murwillumbah Police Station

*Thanks to Nick Gouliaev for another excellent installment in his series on our historic buildings. This is Part 1 of the story of this Main Street icon and dovetails well with the previous article on its neighbor, the Court House.*



The Murwillumbah Police Station in 2015 taken from Police Lane (Photo: Nick Gouliaev)

#### Murwillumbah Police Station

- Federation style
- Murwillumbah Street, Murwillumbah (opposite the Court House Hotel)
- Dates: Design 1908, Tenders Dec. 1908, Construction - 1908-09
- Developer/Owner: NSW Government
- Architect - Walter Liberty Vernon, NSW Gov.
- Builder - D.M. Mitchell, Redfern NSW
- Construction cost: £6,968 (Court House and Police Precinct total cost)

Murwillumbah's Police Station is a single-storey building with an attached 2-storey house on its eastern side as viewed from Main Street. This house is a Police residence for an on-site presence of a police officer at most hours, whose duty is to supervise the welfare of people locked up in the police cells within the Police Station.

These two buildings form the Police Precinct and





*The Murwillumbah Police Station residence in 2015 (Photo: Nick Gouliarov)*

are closely associated with the Court House next door. The Court House is separated by a vehicular driveway, accessed from Main Street, to the rear of Court House car parking.

An additional security fence at the rear of the police residence on the common side boundary extends to the rear boundary of both precincts, keeping the 2 precincts apart. The Police Precinct, together with the Court House, form the NSW State Government Justice Department Precinct, a very important landmark in Murwillumbah.

The Police Station has its own car parking area, a fence enclosed courtyard at the rear of the Police building with a roofed garage and open parking housing all operational and other related vehicles. This courtyard also features an original brick walled double garage with metal roller doors (these being a later alteration to the original building). This beautiful building was constructed in 1909 and was originally designed to be used as stables for Police horse drawn vehicles, but now is used as a storage area for police equipment. Today all Police vehicles access this courtyard from Police Lane, a side street which runs off Main Street on the west side of the Police Station.

The front boundary facing Main Street has a common property timber picket fence of 1200mm high planks painted in Federation Style, incorporating gates to each precinct. The fence and all the entry gates have been recently reconstructed in 2014, replacing the original 1909 fence which consisted of a dwarf brick wall at the base with brick columns at 1800 mm centers, penetrated by two or three horizontal timber fence rails to a height of 1200mm above ground.

The current 1909 Police Station replaced the original 1879 Police Station which was extensively damaged in Murwillumbah's Great Fire of 15 Sep 1907 which destroyed 66 business houses in the

central business area of Murwillumbah, including the neighbouring Court House which was also constructed in 1879. Prior to this fire, the Court House and the Police Station were both located 3600 mm above the Main Street, cut into the side of "Court House Hill", facing Main Street below.

The driveway from the street to the Police Station and Court House connected the public accessing the justice facilities with additional public stairs closer to the main entry of the Court House itself.

The Police Station was separated from the Court House by approximately 4500mm and had a 1200mm to 1500mm lower floor level, which was enough to reduce the fire damage it suffered. The cells didn't suffer total destruction with part of the roof remaining. The brick walls stood up to the sweeping flames but the rest of the police station was destroyed. All prisoners were safe but the Police records were all destroyed and the Police Sergeant at that time "Sergeant Kane" set up a tent on the ruins of the Court House allowing Police to continue working. Many law breakers were delighted with the total destruction of all the Police files, allowing them to start afresh with a clean sheet.



*Main Street in ruins after the fire, showing the remains of the Court House and Police Station among others. (Photo Ref: TRM MS000056)*

A major clean up of fire debris commenced, including demolishing remnants of any brick walls, especially at the Court House and adjoining Police Station. Bricks were harvested from the ruins and neatly stacked to reuse them on the proposed new Police Station and Court House.

Later that year the Attorney-General wrote to the Murwillumbah Municipal Council that preliminary plans and budget were being prepared for the construction of a new Court House and Police Precinct with Police quarters. Council wished the new complex to be located on a new site away from the Main Street however the State Government insisted the Main Street location be retained.



Council excavated the site (sloping land at the bottom of Reservoir Hill) as far as Broadway (Queen Street) to bring the new complex down to street level and so be more easily accessible by the public and also to improve the street alignment to that which we see today.

The design plans became a reality when the NSW Government Architect, Walter Liberty Vernon released his documentation in 1908 for tendering by selected builders. The successful tenderer was D.M. Mitchell of Redfern, Sydney who took possession of the site on 5 Dec 1908. Construction began on the brick buildings in Federation style, consisting of the Court House, Police living quarters and Police Station with lockup cells and with a paved courtyard at the rear. All internal and external walls of the new buildings were constructed using locally made bricks as well as bricks salvaged from the fire, recycled to keep costs down as much as possible.



*A historic brick held at Murwillumbah Police Station (Photo: Nick Gouliarov)*

The police residence is a two-storey building containing 4 bedrooms plus living, dining, kitchen, and bathroom with laundry downstairs next to a single vehicle garage with timber stairs and two fireplaces; a very comfortable house for 1908, fitted out with all the necessities suitable for resident police officer.

The front of the residence at ground level has a patio with metal roof over, supported by timber patio posts on brick columns decorated with Federation trimmings overhead and beautiful timber fretwork extending to the soffit of the roof. The bay window facing the street has a timber framed skillion roof with galvanized corrugated metal roof sheets.

The main roof is framed with timber rafters clad with galvanized corrugated metal roof sheets and featuring a high pitched roof with gable roof ends, typical of this architectural style and decorated with timber battens. The stair tower rises at the east side of the residence while the front door is



*The ground-level patio detail at the front of the Police Station (Photo: Nick Gouliarov)*

still the original timber door, complete with Federation timber moldings and paint colours.

The external brickwork is in original excellent condition, laid in stretcher bond with flush struck mortar joints and fitted with terracotta air vents, also in excellent condition. The face brick work on the ground floor extends up to the level of the first floor where it has been cement rendered to be "pebble dash surface finish", painted and extending to the eaves above. The eaves have exposed rafter with the ends exposed, lined on top with tongue and grooved wooden boards, all surfaces painted.

Most windows at ground level are original, however some windows have been replaced with anodized aluminum frames coloured to match the original timber framed windows at the first level and ground floor level.

The rear of the residence is in original condition with minor additions since 1908, but using brickwork matching the original construction. A roofed walk-way at the west side of the residence connects to the Police Station near the



*The two-storey section of the Police Station and the driveway separating it from the Court House (Photo: Nick Gouliarov)*



Detectives Interview room and offices. These are used as storerooms today but were used by Highway Patrol Command for a time, until the Command was transferred to Tweed Heads.

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.

*To be continued next edition...*

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## The Harbison Family

*Interviews, research and story by Max Boyd. This is the first part of a fascinating human story which will span several parts.*

What began as an attempt to record the impressive story of a man who has been a quiet achiever in the Tweed during his lifetime provided me with an insight into a family dynasty about which I had previously but a superficial knowledge.

I had approached Brian Harbison about an interview with him to learn more about his long-term association with the land at Cowell Park outside Mooball off the Mooball Pottsville Road. As



Brian (S.B.) Harbison (Photo: Brian Harbison)

a person with a rural background myself, I couldn't help but be impressed with the beautiful property on which Sidney Brian Harbison has lived since completing his education at Gatton College in 1950 when he went to live there with his grandparents, Mr and Mrs S.G. Steel.

When Mrs Effie Steel died in 1951, his grandfather went to live with Dr Harbison, Brian's father, a practising General Practitioner in Murwillumbah, leaving Brian to live alone on the property until he married Alison Brown from New Zealand on 26 May 1956. They had four children: John Cowell Harbison born on 30 Jul 1957; Dianne Ruth on 26 Jun 1959; Michael Brian on 30 Nov 1960 and Sally Anne on 5 Sep

1962.

Whilst Brian had had a good grounding in agriculture, having gained a Queensland Diploma in animal husbandry and another Diploma in Agriculture, the challenge of running a 320 hectare farm which involved two dairy farms, sugar cane and bananas at the age of 20 was quite daunting. But he said he was given much good advice from Mr Geoff Steel, his uncle with whom he established a close relationship.

Brian's early schooling had been at the GPS Armidale Demonstration Primary before going on to the Armidale school from 1942-1946. At school he excelled at rifle shooting, rugby union, swimming and boxing. He was the Murwillumbah Rifle Club Champion for 1963 and 1964. He has played golf at Murwillumbah for a number of years and still enjoys the game.

He joined Lodge Tweed in 1953 and was installed as its Worshipful Master in 1962 and in 1972 was appointed District Grand Inspector of workings for Lodges in District 66 for 2 years. He joined the Murwillumbah Lions Club in 1953 and served as its president for the year 1960/61.

He served on the Moobal/Crabbes Creek Drainage Union from 1964 to 1981; from 1964 to 1981 as its chairman. He was appointed to the Board of Tick Control by the Minister for Agriculture as a Government nominee for the Tweed-Lismore electoral division on 1 Jan 1973 and served 6 years on that board.

The Tweed-Lismore Rural Lands Protection Board consisted of eight members elected from four divisions and covering an area from the Tweed to the Clarence. He served on that for 37 years; eight years as Deputy Chairman from 1974-82 and 25 years as Chairman from 1982 - 2007.

He served as Chairman of the Tweed Catchment Management Committee from June 1993 for 3 years but did not seek re-election.

Brian told me that there are many sections in the sugar industry and over the years he has served in all of them. They include Crabbes Creek branch of NSW Canegrowers, Tweed Executive on the Tweed Council, NSW Canegrowers Council, Australian Sugar Producers Association, NSW Sugar Milling Co-operative and Manildra Harwood sugar refinery.

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## The All Saints Organ

*Our thanks to local historian and valued Timelines contributor Ross Johnson for this story. Ross wrote an illustrated history of this worthy organ in 2014 to celebrate its 88<sup>th</sup> anniversary of gracing our local Anglican Church, in two buildings over the years. This is the first part of a multi-part story.*



The All Saints Anglican Church buildings 1906-1960 (left) and post-1960 (right) (Photo of 1960 Church: Ross Johnson)

Undoubtedly one of the great musical treasures on the Northern Rivers of New South Wales is the C.W. Leggo Pipe Organ installed in All Saint's Church. It had its beginning in August 1923 when the Parish Council met to consider three proposals: 1) To renovate and paint the 1909 church. 2) To renovate and paint the 1909 church and install a pipe organ. 3) To build the first portion



1926 Organ in the 1909 Church (Photo thanks to Ross Johnson)

of a new building. It must have taken great courage to approve the second option as there was still a debt on the piano and the funds were in debit balance. The \$2,630 cost of the instrument was met by generous donors of the wider community. Renovations to strengthen the west end of the building to house the organ cost \$278. The church was situated in Murwillumbah Street on the site of the current TAFE College. The organ was built in the Manly (Sydney) workshop of Charles William Leggo in 1925-26 at a cost of \$2,630. Originally apprenticed to Charles Richardson, he began in his own business in 1917. Leggo had an extensive tuning and maintenance business, including St Andrew's Cathedral and the Sydney Town Hall as well as his vast organ building business.

At the time, tenders were also submitted by Whitehouse Brothers, Brisbane, Richardson Ltd, Sydney and Roberts Ltd, Adelaide.

The organ was the concept of two Murwillumbah businessmen, organist and choirmaster at All Saint's, Victor Worley and Frank Fellows who were used to this type of instrument to enhance worship in their homeland, England. Victor Worley drew up

the organ's specifications.

It arrived in Murwillumbah by steamer in March 1926 and was stored at the North Coast Steam Navigation Company's warehouse at South Murwillumbah until installed and commissioned on 12 Jun 1926. The opening recital was given by Victor Worley and included his own composition written for the occasion, "Romance in D". The debt on the organ was cleared by March 1929.



1926 Organ in the 1909 Church (Photo thanks to Ross Johnson)

During the planning of the 1960 church, the organ was almost 'lost' to the parish with the trend towards electronic instruments. Commonsense prevailed and it was installed in its same format in



The organ in the 1960 Church (Photo thanks to Ross Johnson)

time for the dedication of the new building on 1 November, All Saints Day, 1960, by H.W. (Bert) Jarrott of Brisbane.

Originally of tubular-pneumatic

action with two manuals and 18 ranks of pipes, the action was converted to direct electric action by H.W. Jarrott in 1973. At the same time the console was removed from within the casework to a detached position at the front of the west gallery, two additional pedal stops, borrowed from the great, were added and additional couplers provided. To accommodate the organ, the roof line of the west gallery was altered, resulting in the



pipes being in a rather unsightly configuration. To better suit the architecture of the new building the operative show pipes were re-arranged. The work cost \$9,000. At a recital given in 1995, a former organist and teacher, who had played the organ since its installation, Miss M.J. Martyn stated:- "The instrument is truly beautiful. The parish could not really afford it but were determined to bring an instrument of this quality to the town. I am delighted to think it is still in use and in excellent repair. Mr Worley was a man of his own mind in its design."



*The organ in the 1960 Church (Photo thanks to Ross Johnson)*

After discussion with organists, church officials and the knowledge of his work in Queensland and New South Wales, W.J. Simon Pierce, of Pierce Pipe Organs, was engaged to maintain the instrument from 1996.

In 1998, a major restoration was undertaken by W.J. Simon Pierce. Jarrott's direct electric action was converted to electro-pneumatic action, the chests were refurbished and wind pressure was restored to the original levels. The bellows were re-leathered and new keyboards supplied to the 1973 console.



*The organ pipes in the 1960 Church (Photo thanks to Ross Johnson)*

The work, costing \$60,000 was funded by the All Saints Pipe Organ Fund. This fund was established during the incumbency of the Reverend Dick MacFarlane in 1964 by Ross Johnson into which all his wedding and funeral fees were deposited to ensure the upkeep of the instrument. Other contributors were Mrs Maryblane Outridge, Mrs Margot Anthony, Mrs Pat Hayden and Mrs M. (Tuppy) Stainlay.

In 1998, the organ attained national recognition when it was the recipient of a visit by members of the Organ Historical Trust of Australia.

The work enhanced the organ's capabilities and extended its use beyond regular worship. The instrument has been regularly used for the benefit of the wider community through a variety of recitals. It has the versatility to be used as a

theatre organ as well as a church organ. A popular series being "From Pops to Classics", with the comment:- 'For an Edwardian



*Dr Phillip Gearing (Photo thanks to Ross Johnson)*

instrument built at the height of the British Empire, coupled with modern technology, to be able to handle such a variety of music is a feat worth hearing."

*To be continued next edition...*

## Mystery Object

*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 Museum has in its collection three bricks stamped with the name Martin and the abbreviation M-bah. Despite the best efforts of researchers, nothing has been found about any local brickmaking businesses called Martin's. The bricks will be on display at the Murwillumbah branch of the Museum from late January, as part of the display of a Truline brickmaking machine, used by the Hood family to build their house in Charles Street, Murwillumbah in the 1950s. If anyone has any information that could shed some light on the origins of these bricks, we'd love to hear about it.



*TRM collection Ref: MUS1997.56*

As part of the Truline brick machine display, the Museum will be hosting a talk by Maurice Potrzeba, a Brisbane-based brick restoration specialist, who has worked on restoration and conservation of many heritage listed buildings.

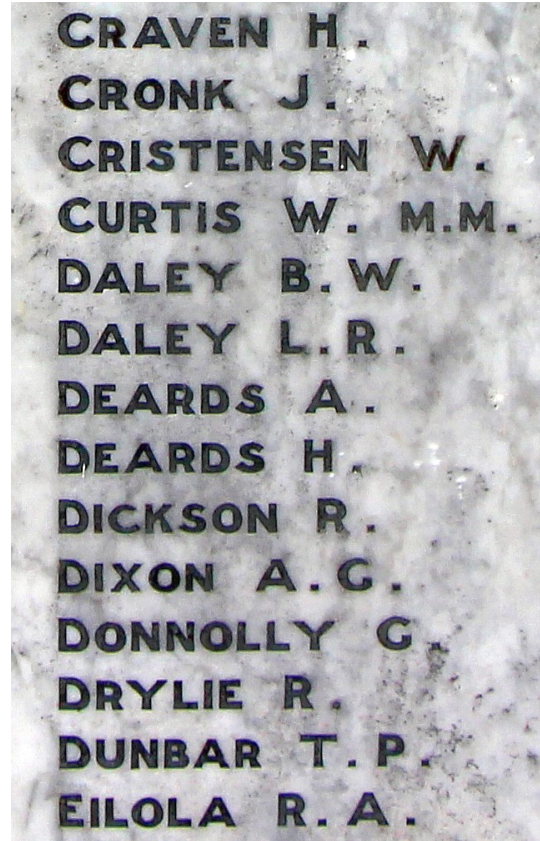
Maurice comes from four generations of bricklayers and has worked on landmark buildings such as the old Queensland Museum in Bowen Hills, the Workshop Rail Museum at Ipswich and historic buildings at Saint Helena Island and Fort Lytton. Maurice will talk about his craft, and some of the historic bricks in the Museum's collection.

This event, "Building on the History of Bricks", is on Wednesday 23 March, 5:30pm for a 6pm start, at TRM Murwillumbah, 2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah. All welcome; no booking required.

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## 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 Timeline until the October 2018 edition. Here is the fifth set of fourteen names listed.

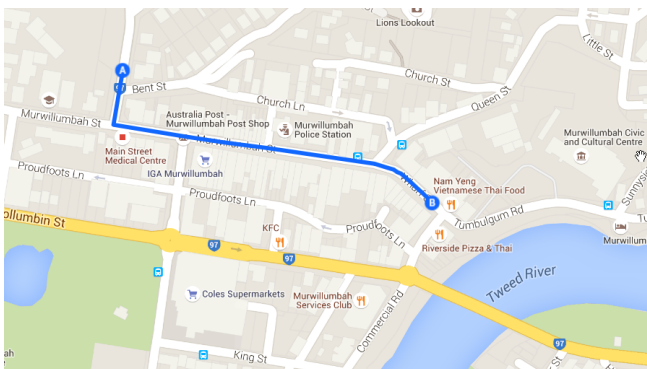


*Lest we forget.*

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## 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.

**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

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**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.

