

# TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of Murwillumbah Historical Society Inc.

ISSN 2208-1909 October 2018 Vol. 7 No. 2



## Welcome

Welcome to the October 2018 *Timelines*, the newsletter of the Murwillumbah Historical Society. Highlights include our final "Lest We Forget" story, completing the series of quarterly articles begun back in 2015 by our late friend and President Tony Clark and ably continued by Sandra Jones and Marie Fletcher. We also meet "Hopping Dick" and learn about Dr Bob Bellea and a couple of pieces of interesting, and very necessary, Murwillumbah architecture, past and present.

This edition's contents:

- Hopping Dick - Richard Kaye
- Dr Robert Bellea - Our first Aboriginal Judge
- A Matter of Convenience
- Murwillumbah's First Bridge
- Lest We Forget - Charles Morley
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## Hopping Dick

Thanks to Di Millar for this interesting story about former convict and early Tweed cedar getter Richard Kaye, the origin of his nickname and his fascinating connection with the naming of Limpinwood.

During Colonial times the Tweed became home to many colourful characters who earned a living as best they could. One such man was Richard Kaye.

Richard Kaye was a Yorkshireman who was convicted at the York Civil Quarter Sessions in Apr 1822 of a crime for which he was given a term of seven years in the Colony of New South Wales. The convicted felon departed his homeland in Jul 1822 along with 160 male prisoners on the *Eliza* and arrived in the colony in November of that year.

After serving out his time at Newcastle, Richard Kaye was granted his Certificate of Freedom in May 1829.



Bullock team & wagon hauling cedar logs on the Richmond River (Photo: TRM CH4-09)



## WE WANT TO COPY YOUR OLD PHOTOS!

If you have come into possession of any old family or historic photos, please lend them to us to copy! Please contact the museum on (02) 6670 2493 by email at [trm@tweed.nsw.gov.au](mailto:trm@tweed.nsw.gov.au)



Assigned convicts who had worked under supervision as fellers, sawyers and general labourers in the timber industry, endured a hard life in appalling conditions and survived on meagre rations. On receiving their freedom, some former convicts hoped to ply their trade in the rich timber industry for their own benefit. Other convicts who had little knowledge of felling timber also decided to try their luck in this ever expanding industry.

Cedar getters followed the timber trail north from the NSW South Coast and arrived on the Tweed in the 1840s. It is not specifically known when Richard Kaye set foot on the Tweed however an article written in the Australian Town and Country Journal in Jun 1871 covering the early days of the Tweed stated in part, "The pioneer cutters of the Tweed River were Burgess from Moreton Bay and Paddy Smith, Jack Wright, Richard Kay and another, from Sydney." The article further stated that another party from Sydney had found Burgess and his party camped on the Tweed and surrounded by about 400 local Indigenous inhabitants. On the appearance of the reinforcements who were armed with a couple of old matchlocks the local people vanished "and the demolition of cedar began." The year given for this event was 1844.



*Cedar getters at Kunghur Creek. Circa 1910 (Photo: TRM UF20)*

Richard Kaye, the former convict now cedar getter, worked at various timber camps on the Tweed. Life was still hard and precarious. Accidents happened frequently and sometimes resulted in death. It was said that Richard Kaye was injured in a felling accident, but luck was on his side and he survived to have a long life.

During his lifetime Richard Kaye's surname was also spelt as Keys, Keyes, Key and Kay. The multiple misspelling of names and surnames was a frequent problem in colonial times due to literacy and transcription issues. There was, however, one name that was attributed to him due to a physical disability and so a gammy leg earned him the name of Hopping Dick.



*Cedar getters in action at Burger's farm. Kunghur Creek, featuring Jack Kettle and Harry Lange in the 1920s: going, going, gone (Photo: TRM UF21)*

In Oct 1876 the Australian Town and Country Journal, in its Tweed River notes, reported on Richard Kaye's demise.

"The last tribute of respect was paid to the oldest inhabitant last week. Richard Keys, a native of Yorkshire and the last survivor of the first party who settled on the Tweed 31 years ago as timber getters, the then, and comparatively still, staple industry of our river. "Old Hopping Dick" (as he was called), after being incapacitated from following his occupation, found a home under the hospitable roof of Mr Boyd, for the last few years, where having succumbed to old age and other natural infirmities, he breathed his last, aged 78 years, and was buried at Terranora."

The death registration in 1876 on the Tweed River is for Richard Key.

The Tweed Herald and Brunswick Chronicle reported in September 1909 that two camps were claimed in the valley as the last occupied by Hopping Dick. One on Mr R Munro's farm and the other on that of Mr H Baker. Mr Thomas Lillie of Chinderah stated that he was a cedar getter with Hopping Dick and said, "the camp was on a knoll at the bend in the creek and near a flat on the south side." This was pointing to Munro's selection. (Mr Robert Munro was a dairy farmer at Hopping Dick Creek during the early 1900s.) Mr Lillie also stated that when Hopping Dick died, he made his coffin.

There was renewed interest in the old timer in 1909 because the selectors and residents of Hopping Dick Creek were petitioning the Minister for Lands for the opening of 500 acres of "splendid cedar scrub land situated at the head of Hopping Dick Creek, parish Chillingham, county Rous, Tweed River."

The narrow valley drained by Hopping Dick Creek had been opened for selection around 1906 and

was fast becoming an important dairying area. Residents were keen to promote further settlement to induce badly needed road construction. The new roads would enable the expanding dairy farms to send their cream to the local factory.

In 1973 Mrs Flo Hunt (nee Boorman) contributed a story to The Tweed Daily on the evolution of Limpinwood. In the article she wrote that the Hopping Dick Creek Progress Association had met in 1909 to consider a request from the postal and shire authorities to change the name of the creek as confusion had arisen because of the proximity to Hopkins Creek just across the hills in the Numinbah Valley.

Mrs Holt also repeated the unsubstantiated information that Hopping Dick's name was Dick Wood.

Back in the early 1900s the residents had come to believe the oft repeated story regarding Hopping Dick's name being Dick Wood. Mrs Holt recalled that when a vote on the name change took place, the community once known as Hopping Dick became known as Limping Wood, then Limpinwood.

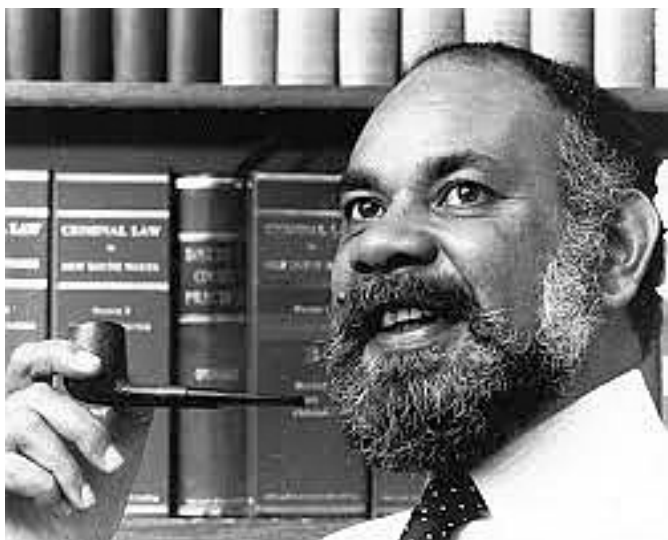
Happily Hopping Dick holds his place in the pages of our Tweed history and the small creek that flows out of Limpinwood way still bears his name.

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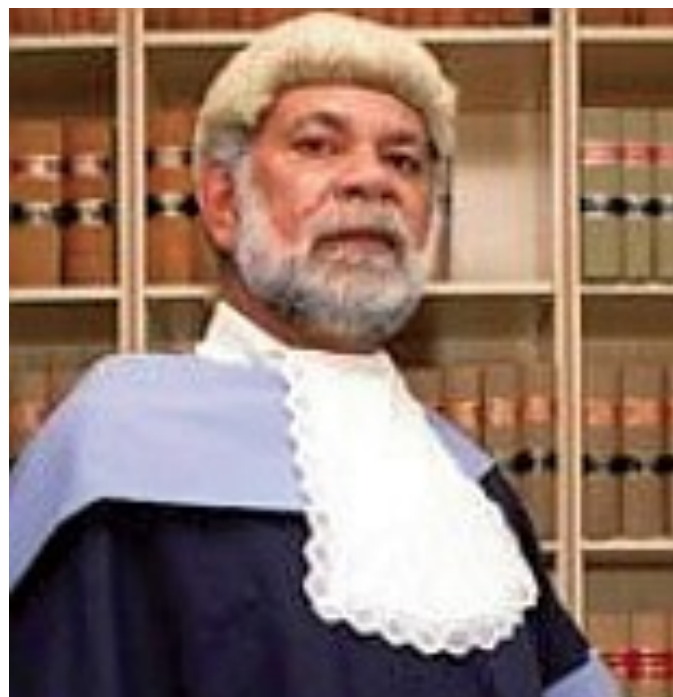
## Dr Robert Bellear

*Max Boyd provides us with this story of Dr Robert Bellear, Australia's first Aboriginal Judge.*

Robert Bellear was born in the village of Billinudgel near the town of Mullumbimby but local Aboriginal members remember him spending some of his earlier years around Chinderah in the Tweed. He left school early, couldn't get a job and joined the Royal Australian Navy at 17 where he was



*Judge Bob Bellear (Photo: [http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/heroes/biogs/bob\\_bellear.html](http://www.kooriweb.org/foley/heroes/biogs/bob_bellear.html))*



*Judge Bob Bellear (Photo: <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/>)*

trained in mechanical engineering and clearance diving. He became the first Aboriginal to attain the rank of Petty Officer. He left the navy in 1968 with several qualifications including masonry and fitting and turning. He was then able to find a job easily. For some time he lived in Redfern with his wife Kaye Williams, whom he had met while in the navy. The suburb had a substantial Aboriginal population at the time. Bellear established the Aboriginal Housing Corporation there in 1972 and throughout the 1970s was a Director of both the Aboriginal Medical Service and the Aboriginal Legal Service. Bellear was the leader of a campaign to prevent landlords in Redfern from evicting Aboriginal tenants and his work led to the Whitlam government transferring ownership of the block to the Aboriginal Housing Commission. In 1972, Bellear decided that he would study law. He completed his higher school certificate studies at Sydney Technical College and entered a law course at the University of New South Wales. He graduated in 1978 as the second Aboriginal person to graduate from that university, after Pat O'Shane. He was admitted to the New South Wales Bar in 1979. As a barrister, he represented many Aboriginal people in criminal trials and was often instructed by the Aboriginal Legal Service.

In 1987, Bellear was appointed as an Assisting Counsel to the Royal Commission into black deaths in custody. In 1993, Bob became Dr Bellear with the award of an honorary doctorate from Macquarie University.

In 1996, he became the first Aboriginal person to be appointed a judge. From the benches of district courts around NSW, Bellear worked for eight years bringing fair and compassionate justice to those



before him. He also worked to help young Aboriginal high school students to join him in his court. He opened the court to national Indigenous legal studies students from Trenby College.

Sadly, Bob Bellear died in 2005 at the age of 60, having been diagnosed with peritoneal mesothelioma, contracted during his service in the navy. As a mark of respect in which this great man was held, the NSW government granted a state funeral which was held in Sydney town hall and attended by some 2,000 mourners, including the Governor of NSW, Marie Bashir and the former Chief Justice Laurence Street.

His legacy lives on in the Judge Bob Bellear "legal career pathways" program established in 2007 by Legal Aid New South Wales. He remains a role model for his people and all Australians by demonstrating the qualities of a natural leader, a man of charm, conviction, humility, common sense, humour and ambition. He wore his extraordinary achievements with great humility.

*This article has been put together by Max Boyd with extracts from information from St Patrick's Institute of Education, Wikipedia, Legal Aid NSW and the Indigenous Law Bulletin.*

## A Matter of Convenience

*Thanks to Di Millar again for this history of our wonderful, if closed, art-deco-influenced, Queen Street toilet block.*

Lavatory, loo, dunny, privy, latrine, water closet or call it what you will, a toilet has a necessary function in our daily lives and anyone who has been "caught short" away from home knows how important public toilets are in any community.

As a group of educated men and women, monastics understood the need for sanitation and cleanliness and installed washing and toilet facilities in their ecclesiastical institutions.

Such names as garderobes, rere dorfer,



*Photo from Queen Street in Nov 2010 (Photo: Di Millar)*



*Side view showing stairs leading up to the gents (Photo: Di Millar)*

lavatorium and (my favourite) necessarium were given to these medieval facilities that were installed long before scientists realised that bacteria were a major source of contamination.

Murwillumbah's well-known public facilities at Broadway have had a chequered existence in recent years and in 2010 came under fire for their shabby appearance and for being a target for vandals.

I remember the newly opened facilities being attractive, fresh and clean. The interior walls, floors and handbasins were spotless thanks to constant cleaning and maintenance. In the 1950s I felt a child's importance in finally being considered old enough to walk up the path, unaccompanied, to pay a visit to the ladies' side.

Women, who in those days dressed in stockings, hats and gloves for a trip to town, were pleased to have an acceptable, centrally located public convenience. For assorted reasons some ladies preferred not to enter the town's hotels which were the main source of women's toilets at the time and cafes usually only allowed paying customers to use their facilities.

Tweed Shire Council decided to call tenders for the public lavatories at the rostrum site in Broadway on Wednesday 14 Apr 1948. Plans for the proposed structure were drawn up and the Medical Health Officer for the Richmond -Tweed area inspected the proposed site with the Tweed Shire Health Inspector.

A second site was inspected at the corner of Alice Street and Church Lane, but the site was considered by the Medical Health Officer, Dr Donnellan, to be too close to existing buildings so he approved the rostrum site.

Tweed Shire Council decided to make an immediate application for a loan for the work, as well as calling tenders to carry it out.

It wasn't until 14 Mar 1956 that Tweed Shire





*Closeup showing dilapidated state and the vandalism that occurred on the old structure (Photo: Di Millar)*

Council finally approved a loan for 5,000 pounds at a special meeting for a toilet block to be built in Murwillumbah at a site known as the rostrum near the junction of Church Lane and Queen Street.

The Chief Health Inspector, Mr H F Capper, announced that preliminary plans and specifications for the toilet block had been prepared. The block, constructed of bricks, would have an entrance on the level of Church Lane for women and another on the Queen Street level with steps leading up for men.

One shire councillor had suggested the block be set on the Queen Street level and set into the bank of the hill. It was pointed out, however, that the hill was "creeping" and would probably affect the block if it was built in that way.

Once finished, the block became a prominent feature at Murwillumbah's Broadway.

## Murwillumbah's First Bridge

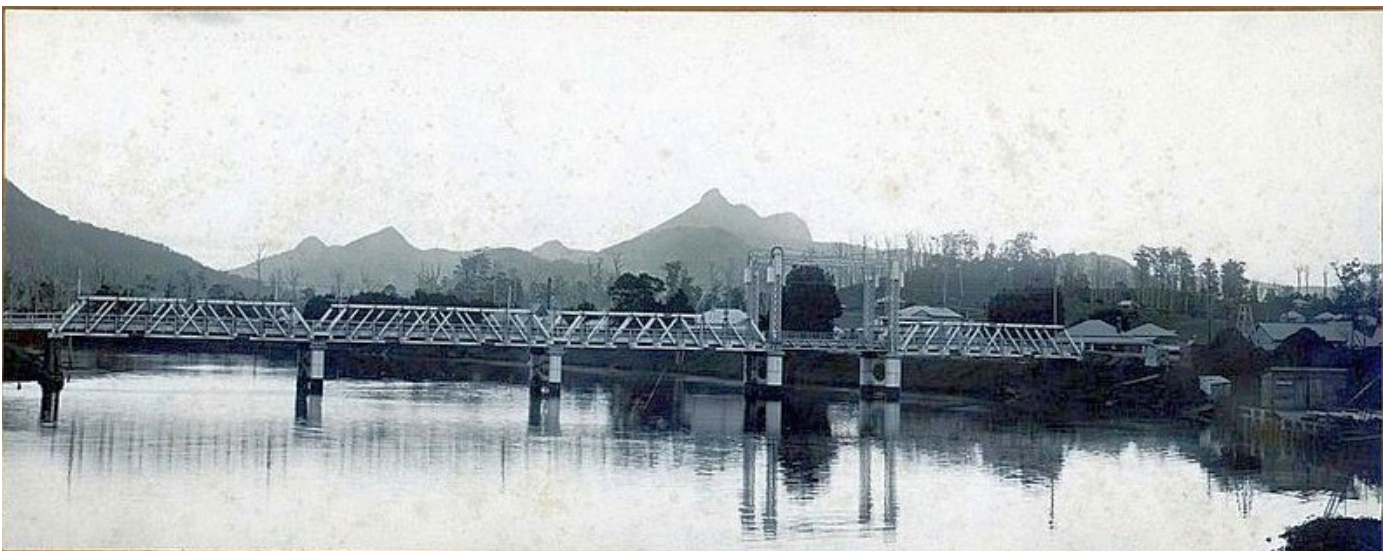
*Before the construction of the first bridge in 1901, traffic into Murwillumbah across the Tweed River was by ferry. This piece from the Clarence River Advocate was first published on 10 May 1901 and marks the opening of this engineering "great leap forward" which was pivotal in the modern development of our town for the dizzying cost of £3,000.*

The following are the particulars of the new bridge over the Tweed at Murwillumbah, opened for traffic recently. The structure is composed of four truss spans, 90ft 6in, 92ft 9in, 92ft 3in, and 93ft in length respectively: three approach spans, two of which are 35ft and the other 30ft; and one lift span 54ft 1in — the total length of the bridge is 520ft 7in.

The cylinder piers 1 and 2 are 6ft in diameter and sunk 54ft below water level, piers 3 and 4 are 4ft 6in in diameter and 60ft below water level. All cylinders below water level are cast iron, the remainder being wrought iron with elliptical bracing between. All told there are 220 tons of cast iron in the cylinders.

The lift span, situated over piers 1 and 2, is made entirely of steel and can be raised to a height of 41 feet above high water. A channel of 48 feet clear is provided for steamers, and a roadway of 16ft 6in for traffic. The lift span weighs 32 tons, and is counterbalanced with 21 tons of lead melted into cast iron boxes, which are attached to steel wire ropes, these going round the drum wheels for a complete revolution. The lift is raised by means of a winch fitted into one of the towers, and can be worked by one man from the deck and raised to its full height in about 15 minutes.

There are 950 lineal feet of round timber in the piles and girders, 930 feet of hewn timber in the piles, and 2300 feet of hewn timber in the girders and wales. All the round and hewn timber used was supplied by Mr. T. M. Boyd, and gave complete satisfaction. In regard to sawn timber,



*The full bridge in 1911 featuring its lift span and with Mt Warning as a scenic backdrop (Photo: MUS2015.48)*





*The bridge in operation in the 1950s (Photo: M4-34)*

there were 3500 cubic feet in the trusses and 9300 cubic feet in stringers and decking. The decking and hand-railing are of tallow wood, the remainder being of ironbark. The whole of the sawn timber was supplied by Mr. W. E. Oxenford, and was likewise of a first-class quality.

The width of the roadway between the kerbing is 18 feet on the truss spans, the deck being covered with tar and sand to prevent slipping.

The contract price for the structure was £3,000.

## Lest We Forget

*To mark the centenary of World War One [1914-1918], each edition of Timelines from April 2014 until Oct 2018 has presented an article honouring the memory of one of our fallen whose names are engraved on the Murwillumbah War Memorial. This final instalment tells of Light Horseman Charles Reginald Morley. The series, originally conceived and written by Tony Clark, has been continued to completion by Society members Sandra Jones and Marie Fletcher.*

It will be 101 years in November since Charles Reginald (Reg) Morley died on the battlefields of Gaza during the First World War, and while he is buried at Beersheba War Cemetery in Egypt his name is listed on the Australian War Memorial and on the Murwillumbah Cenotaph.

Records show his place of birth as Mackay in Queensland on 25 Dec 1894 to parents Charles and Annie. In 1910 they moved to Tweed Heads where Charles Snr. opened a chemist store and emporium in 1910.



*Lt Charles Reginald (Reg) Morley in Australia's Fighting Sons of the Empire: Portraits and Biographies of Australians in the Great War from <https://trove.nla.gov.au/>*

Reg worked as a clerk in his father's business prior to enlistment at Lismore on 21 Sep 1914 with Regimental Number 129. He was attached to the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment (LHR), B Squadron, for service in the AIF.

Sailing from Sydney on 21 Dec 1914, the regiment disembarked from transport A34 "Persic" in Egypt on 1 Feb. 1915.



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

PB0837

*Members of the 37th Battalion line the rails of the troopship HMAT Persic (A34) prior to her departure for England (Photo: AWM PB0837)*

The Light Horse were considered unsuitable for the initial operations at Gallipoli, but were subsequently deployed without their horses to

reinforce the infantry. The 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse played a defensive role for most of the campaign but was involved in several minor attacks before leaving the Gallipoli peninsula in Dec 1915.

During Morley's service with the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse 1914-1917 he suffered several bouts of ill health. By 7 Nov. 1915 our soldier came down with Enteric (possibly enteric fever) and was admitted to Hospital Tigne, Malta. His health did not improve and he was subsequently sent home to Australia on 9 Feb 1916 to recuperate.

On 3 May 1916 he re-embarked with the 18/85<sup>th</sup> LHR at Brisbane on the ship A49 "Seang Choong" and taken on strength as a Sergeant with the 2<sup>nd</sup> Light Horse Training Regiment at Tel-El-Kebir, Egypt, a training centre for the First Australian Imperial Force (Mounted Corp).

By Aug 1916 Sgt Morley was back with his old unit the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse and in Jan 1917 transferred to the Cavalry School of Instruction at Ge'ella. Promoted twice during the course and commissioned as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in July, he marched out as a qualified Hotchkiss Machine Gun Instructor.

Meanwhile, the 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse Regiment's work predominantly continued to be patrols and raids until the advance stalled before the Turkish bastion at Gaza. The regiment participated in three battles aimed at capturing the town, most



*Mounted soldiers from the 4th Light Horse Brigade in Palestine (Photo: SLQ The WW1 Diaries of Ion Idriess <http://blogs.slq.qld.gov.au/>)*



notably the first abortive attempt in Mar 1917. On this attempt the 5<sup>th</sup> LHR attacked Gaza from the rear and was fighting through streets and gardens when ordered to withdraw.

With the fall of Gaza on 7 Nov 1917, the Turkish position in southern Palestine collapsed. By now Charles Reginald Morley was a Lieutenant, dangerously wounded and subsequently died of his wounds (in action) on 8 Nov at the 1<sup>st</sup> Australian Light Horse Field Ambulance Station in Palestine. Lt. Morley was buried the same day on the western edge of Wadi bank just 700 yards (640 metres) from the railway line. His remains were exhumed on 13 Nov and re-interred in the Beersheba War Memorial Cemetery.

The 5<sup>th</sup> was involved in the pursuit that followed and spent much of the first half of 1918 holding the west bank of the Jordan River. With raids and attacks continuing throughout the year. In September, 4,500 Turks surrendered to just two squadrons at Ziza. The 5<sup>th</sup> Light Horse was employed one last time to assist in putting down the Egyptians revolt of early 1919. It sailed for home to Australia on 28 Jun of the same year.

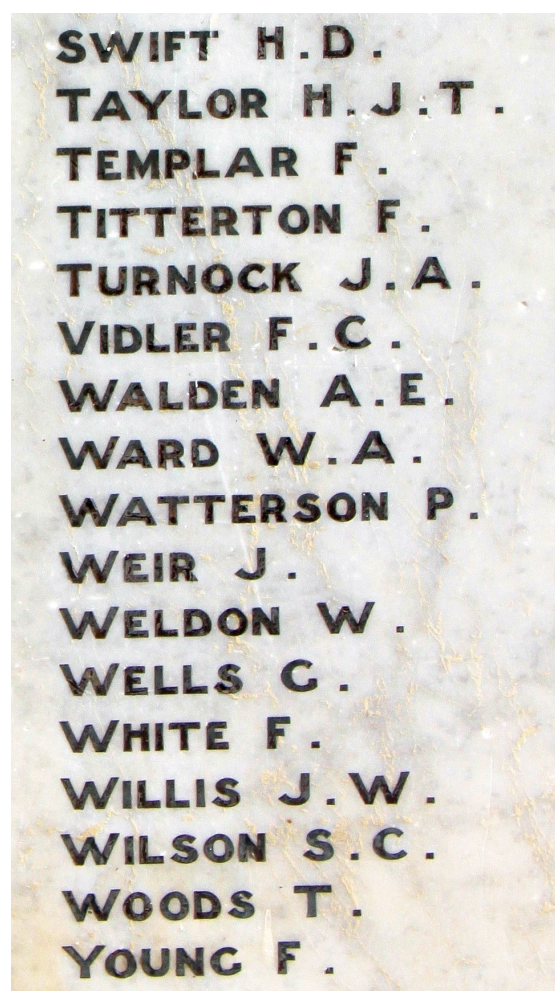
Although the late Lieutenant Charles Reginald Morley was continually on the move during his time as a soldier, suffering many an illness, he was obviously well deserved of his promotions. A life cut short, too soon. He was just 23 years old.

Medals awarded were the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and the Victory Medal.

**Sources:** Australian War Memorial, National Archives of Australia, Beersheba War Cemetery, 5<sup>th</sup> Australian Light Horse Regiment, Tweed Regional Museum, Murwillumbah Cenotaph.

## Roll of Honour

The Murwillumbah Cenotaph lists 218 local fallen from World War One. We have published the names of a group of them in each Timeline during the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary period. Here are the final seventeen names listed.



*Lest we forget.*

**ABOUT THE SOCIETY:** Formed on 16 March 1959, the Society's aim is to research, preserve and promote the rich and unique history of our 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. The Society is proudly supported by the Tweed Regional Museum, a community facility of Tweed Shire Council.

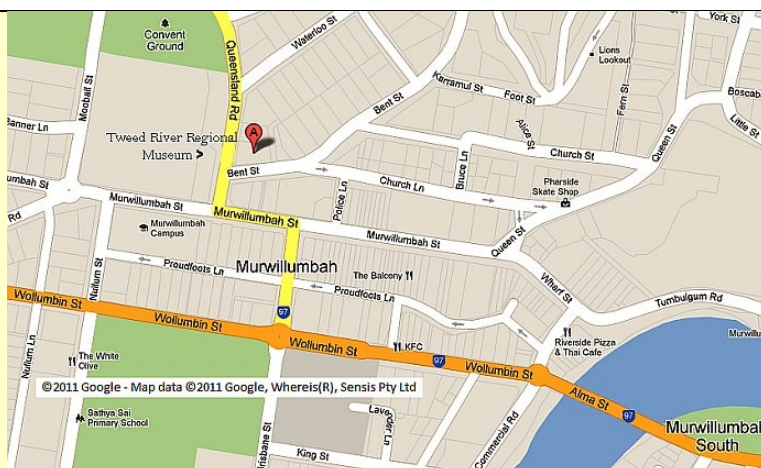
**CONTACT US: Phone:** (02) 6670 2273

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

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

**Email:** [enquiries@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au](mailto:enquiries@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au)

C/- Tweed Regional Museum, 2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah NSW 2484 or 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.