

TIMELINES

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Welcome

Welcome to the latest edition of *Timelines*, the newsletter of Murwillumbah Historical Society.

This edition's contents:

- Wollumbin Street
- West End Street
- Early Doctors of the Tweed (Part 1)
- The Back Page...

Timelines returns...

It has been a long time between drinks!

After a hiatus of more than a year, *Timelines* is back. This edition has a distinctly medical flavour. Diana Eriksen, Dr William Stanley Williamson's daughter shares her memories of Wollumbin Street, with a moving digression on the rigours of war suffered by her father. West End Street began its existence as a property subdivided by Dr James Aiken. The subject of 'Early Doctors of the Tweed' is self explanatory. Finally, the back page article captures a moment when naming names was seen as a way of clearing the opprobrium endured by all of the doctors of the Tweed District Hospital due to the actions of one of their number.

Thanking David Taylor


With this edition, *Timelines* has a new editor. Long-serving editor, David Taylor, handed over the reigns in late 2022. They were not picked up until June, 2023, and then only in the form of the post-committee meeting *Timelines* *In fifteen minutes*. This edition should be the recommencement of the quarterly cycle of publication.

On a personal note, beginning my time as editor, I would like to thank David for the work he has put in to *Timelines* for so many years. He has set a high standard in its publication, worthy of emulation and difficult to match.

Finishing this introduction, I would like to extend an invitation to researchers and writers to contribute to *Timelines*. Share your memories of Murwillumbah and the wider Tweed Valley. Turn the ephemera of social media comments into a more long-lived *Timelines* article.

Māris Bruzgulis, Editor.

editor@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au



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

Wollumbin Street

In the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s

Thanks to Diana Eriksen for her memories of Wollumbin Street. They were recorded by Belinda Neilson.

My name is Diana Eriksen. I was born on 6 July 1937 to William Stanley Williamson and my mother, Ruth. My father was a local doctor. We lived at 48 Wollumbin Street and next door to it was a little cottage hospital called St Margaret's. St Margaret's was more or less where the bottle shop is now in Sunnyside. This is where I was born, which was terribly handy for my mother. Our house would have been where the foyer of Sunnyside is. I have a few times been asked questions when I visited up here (because I went away for about fifty-four years), and I would say, "Yes, I was born in the bottle shop."



The Williamson residence on Wollumbin Street. The side of St Margaret's Private Hospital is visible on the left.

Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Item 41047.

The Tweed District Hospital was what the Murwillumbah hospital was called. It hadn't been going very long when I was born. It was built during the depression and gave valuable jobs to many unemployed men. There were still about four little cottage hospitals around the town. St Margaret's would have been the biggest one, it had a maternity ward and an operating theatre right along the side of our fence, so when I was playing with the local children we would hear moans and groans of the poor women giving birth and quite cold heartedly we would say "that lady is having a baby".

It's quite interesting because Wollumbin Street has changed a lot and yet a surprising amount has stayed the same. The most interesting and arresting building has always been the Austral building as you come off the bridge. That was built by a man called Con Vlismas, who started the Austral Café, which was a marvelously glamorous café. It was just beautiful. It was in a different building to the Austral building. The original café

was where the antique and bric-a-brac shop is now, and everything that Con built had an art deco theme. He was a young Greek who came out here at the age of fifteen not speaking a word of English—just one of those success stories. He built this beautiful café and also, as an investment, built the Austral building. There were some people who thought that it was a silly place to site it at the entrance to the town. But it was beside the Australian hotel which was the most popular hotel at the time. Why was it called the Austral? I think that is a Greek word actually, which means somewhere in the south.

In the Austral building there was the most marvelous emporium run by a Chinese family called Tong. The front section, which was on Commercial Road, had Chinese napery, lovely, embroidered table cloths, serviettes, beautiful crêpe de chine underwear and ladies blouses as well as small items of elaborately carved furniture. It was very exotic, and I used to love going in there. The back of it was a grocery shop and over the years the emporium shrank down to just the grocery shop, because locals preferred to drive to Tweed Heads to the new department stores. The original Tongs died and the younger family didn't want to run a shop.



The Austral Building in the 1930s. When the last shop was opened in the Austral Building complex in 1935, the Tweed Daily wrote that '[with] the entire block of shops now practically in active use, the way is well paved for further expansion along Wollumbin Street, giving Murwillumbah ultimately a shopping square'.

Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Items 39397, 39396, and 37996.

On the other side of the road, right at the entrance to the town was a very big garage and service station run by a family called Hewitson. They were

pillars of the Methodist Church. Strangely enough, where I live now the dwelling next to mine is the old Hewitson house, and the Methodist manse is the nice building up behind me beside the motel on the Wollumbin Street and Byangum Road corner.



Hewitson Motors garage (the bottom photo is dated by the Tweed Regional Museum as 'circa 1930s').

Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Items 39381 and 46340.

The other interesting building that was very significant to me in my street was the Presbyterian Church. I was christened there, married there, my father's memorial service was there, my daughter was christened there, but my son was not. He was christened in Norway. So, my daughter is a Presbyterian, and my son is a Lutheran. They're both terrible nonbelievers, sceptics. I didn't do the slightest bit of good with either. Yes, it's a lovely old church but it's been rather defaced. The newer generations painted all the beautiful mellow woodwork inside white to brighten it up, and all the stained windows instead of being restored had new ones installed, so it's not much physically original and it's not my church anymore.

Our house was directly opposite the back of Budds in my childhood days. They were mainly seed merchants and had farm supplies, and they had an enormous neon sign on the top of the building. According to my parents the first word I ever said was "Budds". So that's my connection to Budds. It was a great shop and if we wanted to go into the Main Street we would often duck across Proudfoot Lane and in the back door. There was also vacant land on the opposite side of the street to us in Wollumbin Street. Budds had a big container, I don't know how to describe it, with warm lights over the top and it was full of day old chicks. As you passed by you would hear chirp, chirp, chirp, and I always had to stop and look at the chicks. It was something that really caught my young attention. Opposite us was also a boarding house.

It looked like something from the wild west, two storeys, with iron lace verandahs, and it was called Claremont. Then where the Regent is, there were saleyards, and that was very rural, and I still remember it used to get a bit smelly. I think it was on Wednesday, there was the cattle auction and another day would be the pigs. The auctioneer's name was Pat Smith, and you would hear his voice rising and falling. Never could work out what on earth he said. It is quite an expertise to be able to do that.



Back of Budd's in Proudfoots Lane (this item is dated 1930-1950).

Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Item MS000199.

Knox Park has changed hugely. There was just a strip of bitumen through the park and that was the way I walked to primary school. However, the area that is the car park and a bit more was just a meadow, and several local people kept a milk cow there. I could remember in Brisbane Street we could see the back of one of the houses where an old Chinese man lived, I have a feeling his name was Mr Lee, I'm not sure, but you could see his back as he went over to milk his cow. I just loved walking through there and saying a hello to the cows on the way to school. It's changed a lot.

At the top of the hill there was a very impressive house, very much like a rambling old Queenslander, that belonged to a well-known family called the Stuarts. Dad's accountant Dudley Kay Lucas was married to one of the Stuart girls.

We used to go up there quite often to parties, and they always had local friends up on Christmas morning for a drink. I remember one Christmas post-war, it was an incredibly hot day and after looking at the sky turning green we hurried home. Mum wasn't going to torture us with hot turkey, so we just had cold chicken and a nice salad and plum pudding with tokens hidden in it. Just as we finished our meal the most enormous hail storm erupted, and the stones were the size of cricket balls. Cars parked out on the street got dented badly and we even suffered damage to our place. St Margaret's hospital next door had a bullnose verandah and hail stones would hit the curved roof of the verandah and ricochet straight through our windows. The noise was just unbelievable. Anyway, it was all pretty dreadful for the Stuarts, who had just finished the morning party and had sat down to the most sumptuous hot Christmas dinner. A hail stone came through the window and shattered glass all over the dinner so they couldn't eat it. There were all sorts of little tragedies that day.

This would have been definitely after the war because Dad was home, back in his practice again.



*Diana with her parents, William and Ruth.
Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Item 41055.*

He was in New Guinea for two years, just behind the lines at the battle of Milne Bay, and at Buna. He was there at the battles and the casualties were coming to him. Although this has got nothing to do with Wollumbin Street, I think it's worthwhile recording. He had to operate on a wooden trestle table, he had no gloves, he had only an orderly to help and very few instruments. I think he might have had anaesthetic; but nothing to actually clean the instruments except a bucket of Lysol. After about eighteen months of dipping his bare hands into this Lysol, all the skin on his hands had been burnt off, he was getting down to the tendons. They had to evacuate him, because if it got any further he would have had to have his hands amputated. So, he spent two years on active service and the next two years in a military hospital. I think it took nearly a year for him to get the skin growing back. When he was discharged, the hospital unit immediately put him on the staff. By this time the war had finished and everybody else had come home, but they kept him on at the hospital because they had so many patients. After that he was sent down to Sydney to do a refresher course because he hadn't done any medicine to do with women or children for years. He eventually came back and started his practice up again. The patients that had gone to other doctors while he was away were then sent back by the doctors to Dad, so he did not have to start from scratch.

The Stuarts' house was a lovely old house. At some stage I think after old Mrs. Stuart died they pulled it down and rebuilt a rather substantial brick place up there instead.

Things that happened in the street that sort of stick in my mind. We think the traffic in Murwillumbah is dreadful now, but Wollumbin Street was always busy. All day, every day, huge trucks with enormous logs from the timber stands used to be thundering down the street. This was because we had three sawmills, and so they'd be trundling over the bridge to the sawmills. You really had to watch your p's and q's crossing the street. The other thing that really sticks in my mind was that during the cane cutting season a lot of men lived in town, and obviously cut cane from the winter up until Christmas. Then I don't know where they went for the next six months. You would see them leaving in the morning on their bicycles and then coming home at night, black from head to toe from working in the burnt cane. There would be a steady stream of them that used to come into the surgery, with dreadful cuts from when they had missed when they were cutting and would slash themselves, or with snake bites. It was a very tough life and on a Friday night they would all congregate at the pub. I remember the Courthouse had an area out the back where all these men could drink because

they couldn't go into the front bar. They were just the regular life cycle of the town.

I don't know how many circuses Australia had in those days. Five, maybe even more travelling circuses. There was Wirth's, which was the biggest one, and Silvers, and others. They used to set up in Knox Park and I would watch them putting the tents up and feeding the horses. Wirth's had their own circus train, so they would come with their own carriages on the train and they would get off at the station. The girls would be in their spangles, and the men and the elephants would be pulling the tent, and then the lion in its cage. The whole thing going straight down Wollumbin Street. It was a great advertisement.



Elephants on the Tweed. Top: Going down Wollumbin Street. Middle: Along Prospero Street, across the bridge from Wollumbin Street. Bottom: Wirth's elephants at Tweed Heads. (These photographs appear to date from the 1950s.)

Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Items 38756, 33717, and 40736.

Luckily my dad liked the circus, and my Mum too, so we often went. I don't think we had been this particular night when I remember waking up close to midnight and hearing a faint jangling in the street, like chains. I went out on the verandah. The circus was leaving, and the elephants were pulling the tent again, and it was the chains on their legs clinking on the cement. I remember this ghostly sight of the elephants walking past in the dim light. Life was quite colourful.

The street still had areas that you would call wasteland, no one looked after them. I don't know who owned them but there was always a little path through the weeds to get to Proudfoot Lane. One of our neighbours across the street was a Mr Gregor and he had a bakery at the back of one of these wastelands. I remember one of his daughters telling me that they would knead the dough and throw it into great big bins that were zinc-lined to let it rise overnight. Anyway, we had a flood, quite a decent one, I think it was the '49 one. Water got in the bins. So, in disgust Mr Gregor threw all the dough out into Proudfoot Lane, hoping it would get washed away into the river. But it didn't. It sat in the middle and rose and rose. He was so embarrassed.

We certainly had our floods.



*Flood waters around the Williamson residence.
Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Item 41048.*

I must have been quite small because I can remember being carried. The first flood that I experienced was in 1945. I would have been about seven but they carried me. We started to get water in the house. The house was only about three feet off the ground, and I suppose it was Dad who carried me over to St Margaret's which was considerably higher. We stayed the night there. Dad was still in the army, he wasn't discharged until '46 or '47, so he stayed behind in the house. He put Mum's piano up on the dining chairs, and the lounge on the dining room table, and he managed to save quite a lot. Except I think Mum's greatest sorrow was that he didn't do anything about her hats. So, they all had to be tossed out.

All my kiddies' books were tossed out, it was very sad. Anyway, we went to stay with Mrs Glennie, and they would have had patients there as well. I can't remember where we slept. We must have been short of food as I can remember Muriel Glennie (one of the nursing sisters there), leaning through the railings of the verandah and grabbing a drowned chook that was floating past. So of course, we had chicken for dinner that night and she said to me "don't say a word". I don't think I was capable of eating it but everyone else did as nobody knew where it had come from. Amazingly, it didn't make them all sick, but then it was only a recently drowned chook and once the feathers were taken off and the chook boiled or roasted, it was okay to eat.



*St Margaret's Hospital, Wollumbin Street Murwillumbah, with children playing in flood water and people on steps.
Tweed Regional Museum Collection, Item 39660.*

In 1949 we had a really serious flood but by that time Mum and Dad had used his army pay to lift the house up nine feet above ground level. There was a terrible shortage of building materials, it was almost impossible to get them. Even though they had the money, you just couldn't get building materials. So, the local builder, who was a great friend of Dad's, had just learnt how to make cement bricks, so we all made the cement bricks, and we had rows and rows of them drying in the sun in the back yard. The extension, or lift, was a double row of cement bricks, and we had cement floors in there. Dad had his surgery and waiting room under there. So, at the first sign that the river might break they would take up all his books and patient records, all the instruments, linen, and typewriters. You could also take the doors off quite quickly and let the flood waters flow through. After the water had receded they would go down with the hose and hose down the walls and use squeegees to push the water out. We were back in business in a couple of days. We were very resilient really.

My mother had a very good camera. I don't know how or why but the official school photographer who used to travel around and take class photos didn't come in 1954. Mr Goode, who was the headmaster, asked my mother if I could take the school photos. A dear old man called Cecil Snow had started a camera club. He had sort of corralled his granddaughter into joining. She was not at all keen, and he thought if she had a friend maybe she would enjoy it more. So, I was the friend! I was so nervous, and the camera was a very complicated thing, nothing like anything we have today. It was on a bellows that you pulled out, then you fiddled with the focus, you had to work out the distance, then open up the aperture. I did all those things perfectly, but I was so nervous that every photo ended up on a slope. Anyway, I developed them. Cecil had a little lab under his house, and we adjusted them so that they were straight again. It was the most gruelling experience, I was so nervous about it. Somewhere along the line I lost that camera. My Mum was not at all pleased. She was really quite keen on photography and there was a very good chemist shop called Whittles, which I am very sad to say has been closed down in favour of another chemist. Mr Whittle was a camera buff, so we went to him and asked him what a good camera would be to get. She got a Zeiss Ikon. I still have the receipt. It would have been in about 1950 and she paid one hundred and twelve pounds for it. Mr Whittle would have given her a hefty discount. Dad sent all his dispensary things to him. I still have the camera. It used to take fantastic photos and I have been saving it up to give to one of my grandsons if we can get the film. I remember my daughter going on a school trip once and I showed her how to use it. She took it with her and took lots of photos. Everyone else just had a little box brownie, and they all came to her asking if she could make copies, because hers were just so much better. She was quite chuffed about that.

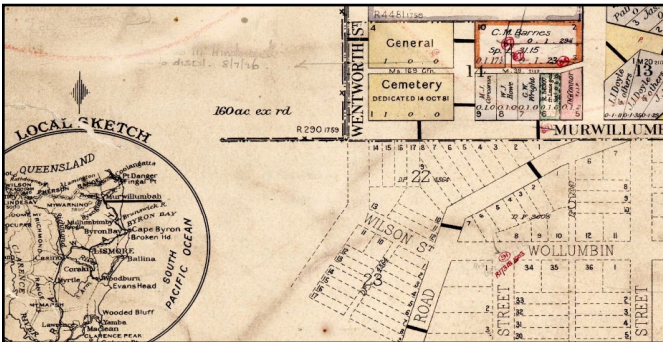
So that was life in Wollumbin Street in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s.

Editor's note: We sought to have contemporary photos for this story. Unfortunately, many locations mentioned by Diana Eriksen were not represented in the Tweed Regional Museum Collection for the period of the story. There are no images of St Andrew's Presbyterian Church for the 1930s, 1940s or 1950s at this time. Diana also mentions other places for which images cannot be located. Among these are the 'Claremont' boarding house (though there is a photo of it's sign in flood waters), the sales yards (other than in town panoramas), the Stuart residence, timber trucks on Wollumbin Street, and the circus in Knox park. If any of our readers have any photographs of these places, please lend them to the Society for copying by the Tweed Regional Museum, and inclusion in the Collection.

West End Street

This is the first of what, hopefully, will become a series. A recent research enquiry requested photographs of houses on West End Street. Presently we have not found anything in the Tweed Regional Museum's Collection, but the request did prompt research into the street itself. In carrying out this research, we discovered that the grandparents of our chief researcher, Joan Cuthel, lived on the street and she has a photo of their home.

Let's begin, however, by locating Westend Street on old maps of Murwillumbah.



From the Fifth Edition, Map of the Village of Murwillumbah and Suburban Lands, Parish of Murwillumbah, County of Rous, Land District of Murwillumbah, NSW, 1924.



From the Sixth Edition, Village of Murwillumbah, Municipality and Suburban Lands, Parish, Land District of Murwillumbah. Date of Map, 28th November 1933.]

NSW Land Registry Services, Historical Land Records Viewer.

West End Street was land subdivided by Dr James Aiken (Deposited Plan 13309). Beginning at Wentworth Street. Later, Wilson Street, between Wentworth Street and Byangum Road became an extension of West End Street, so that it met Wollumbin Street. Aiken had purchased the land in 1924, and sales of blocks begin to be recorded from 1925 (Certificate of Title, Volume 3199 Folio 101).

Searching for references to West End Street between 1914 and 1949 in the *Tweed Daily*, one of the earliest articles was a list of requests made by Cecil Snow (in 1929) for improved access to West End Street from Murwillumbah Street via

Wentworth Street. He also asked for his rates to be halved, arguing that his two blocks of land should be treated as one. Snow turns is one of the more notable resident of the Street, being the last Mayor of the Municipality of Murwillumbah before it was amalgamated with Tweed Shire in 1947. The family is also notable for its military service. Cecil Snow served in both World War I and II, and his son Quentin distinguishing himself in the Royal Australian Air Force during World War II.

The street also had its share of newsworthy experiences. A girl living on West End Street played with axes and injured herself when playing with an axe (Helen Ross in 1943). Another was bitten by a copperhead snake (Joan Rokesky, aged 16, in 1945). There were also broken limbs (James Connolly, aged 6, in 1942, and Lynfaye Mulhare, aged 8, in 1945). Adults were also had accidents, at home or at play (Colin Harrison, footballer, in 1945, and Frederick Atkinson, timekeeper for Murwillumbah Cycle Club's races, in 1948). Sadly, deaths in the family also occurred. These moments of sadness were recorded by the *Tweed Daily* and *Northern Star* (Thomas Henry Forster in 1942, NSW Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages death registration 20139/1942; Annie Tagget in 1950, registration 4961/1950; and James Charles and Ruth May, in 1953, the press reporting both deaths 'were due to phenobarbital poisoning', New South Wales registrations 23275/1953 and 23276/1953,).

As for Joan Cuthel's grandmother's house, her photo of this home appears below.



Joan's mother, Mary Davis, stands on the steps, and she believes that the children at the foot of the stairs are her aunts Gene and Beryl Davis.

If you have any stories or photos about West End Street that you can share with us, please send them in to the Society.

Early Doctors of the Tweed (Part 1)

From about 1889 to 1927 the Medical Board of New South Wales required doctors applying for registration to provide a signed photograph. Of the nineteen doctors who gave a Tweed address for the Register of Medical Practitioners for New South Wales to 1920, and another eight whose names appeared as the medical attendant on a death certificate issued in the District of the Tweed over the same period, twenty have photographs in the Museums of History New South Wales collection. Biographical information about the first nineteen is published below, along with photographs of twelve. Additional details gleaned from contemporary press reports or obituaries have also been included. (A list of the full title of medical qualifications appears at the end of the article.)

Richard Tresilian Sullivan, (1843-1891)

Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1867;

Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin. 1867.

Registered in New South Wales on September 13, 1882.

Listed in the Register from 1883 to 1892. Shows a Tweed address from 1884 to 1892.

A 1939 *Tweed Daily* article, written on the occasion of the official opening of the new Tweed District Hospital, assigns Sullivan the honour of being the second resident doctor on the Tweed, at Tumbulgum. The writer names the first as Daniel George Rowland (Rowlands on his death certificate). This may be, but if so, his name did not appear on the New South Wales Register. As for Sullivan, the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported his death at Tumbulgum in 1891: 'He was last seen alive yesterday morning. He was found lying in bed in a perfectly natural position. It is supposed he took an overdose of morphia.' The inquest, held by Joshua Bray recorded death as 'natural causes'.

Armitage Forbes, (1846-1912)

Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Irel. 1878;

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1879.

Registered in New South Wales on November 12, 1879.

Listed in the Register from 1880 to 1901. Shows a Tweed address from 1886, then 1888 to 1889 (in 1887 gave his address as 'Europe').

In 1904 Forbes was charged in Queensland with the murder of

Mary Hope 'by administering certain drugs'. In addition, he was also charged that he 'unlawfully used force to one Ellen McKenzie, with intent to procure a certain event'. The former charge was dropped in 1905 but he was he was convicted of the second and sentenced to five years' imprisonment with hard labour. In 1912 he was working as ship's surgeon on the steamer *Taiyuan*. He was washed overboard and lost at sea between Port Darwin and Thursday Island.

John Alfred Pybus, (1856-1937)

Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1878;

Lic. Soc. Apoth. Lond. 1878;

Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin. 1878.

Registered in New South Wales on January 11, 1885.

Listed in the Register from 1886 to 1905. Shows a Tweed address from 1886 to 1892.

Pybus' marriage to Josephine Carpenter was registered in Sydney in 1892. The birth of their son Jack was registered in Glebe in 1893. Josephine's death was registered in the same place that year. Pybus himself died in 1937. His epitaph reads: 'He had travelled far by land and sea, His experience of life and death, Was full and strange, And his sympathy and understanding were great.'

Roderick Macdonald, (1861-1940)

Medical qualifications:

M.B. Univ. Glasg. 1884;

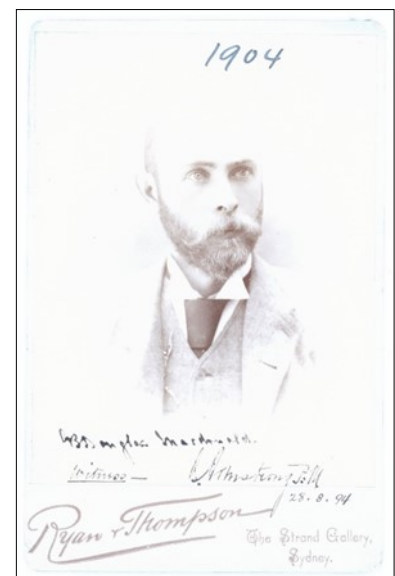
Mast. Surg. Univ. Glasg. 1884.

Registered in New South Wales on October 12, 1887.

Listed in the Register from 1888 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1889 to 1900, then 1919 to 1920 (from 1901 to 1918 gave his address as 'Queensland').

Roderick Macdonald, described as 'one of Queensland's best known doctors and pastoralists' in his obituary, died in 1940. While too long to publish here, the contributed eulogy appearing in the *Tweed Daily* on 10 February 1940 merits reading as an example of a rebuttal of Marc Antony's assertion in Shakespeare's *Caesar* that '[t]he good is oft interred with [the] bones' of the dead.

George Bothwell Douglas Macdonald, (1866-1913)



Medical qualifications:

M.B. et Mast. Surg. Univ. Aberd. 1887.

Registered in New South Wales

on August 8, 1894.

Listed in the Register from 1895 to 1913. Shows a Tweed address from 1897 to 1899.

George Macdonald died in Orange. The *National Advocate* in Bathurst, republishing the notice of his death printed in the *Orange Advocate*, praised him as an 'English gentleman and a medical man of the highest repute and attainments'. It painted a picture of a man who came from a family heavily invested in the imperial project (family members survived the Mutiny, settled an account with 'Thibet', and died at 'Usoga, Uganda, East Africa, during a native rising'). He himself suffered injury in protecting his livelihood when '[h]e rushed into the burning building to save his valuable instruments, but was caught in the flames and so severely burnt that his right arm was for ever afterwards maimed') but overcame this to become a well known oculist, his reputation '[bringing] patients here [to Orange] from various parts of the State'.

Joseph Albert Goldsmid, (1869-1955)



Medical qualifications:

M.B. Univ. Sydney 1895.

Registered in New South Wales on June 12, 1895.

Listed in the Register from 1896 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address

from 1899 to 1920.

When Goldsmid left the Tweed in 1927, his valedictory function was reported by the *Tweed Daily* in the following terms: 'In the early days of its rapid development, he was foremost in every progressive movement and was responsible, in no small measure, for the stability of its many public institutions. He was in every sense a pioneer, and the older residents of the district fully appreciated the hardships he had to overcome in his lone-hand attendance to the medical requirements of the district at a time when travel was only accomplished under most adverse circumstances'. In his reply he took the opportunity to praise the support he had received from his wife: 'Hardships had certainly fallen to his lot in that time, but in these he had always the hearty support and encouragement of Mrs. [Martha] Goldsmid. For any success that had been his, she was mainly responsible. Few understood the nature and extent of the duties of a doctor's wife, who, in times of stress, such as the epidemic of 1919, had not the time to attend to her own affairs.'

Thomas Massey Harding, (1826-1910)

Medical qualifications:

Mem. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1848;

Fell. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1868.

Registered in New South Wales on June 5, 1876.

Listed in the Register from 1877 to 1910. Shows a Tweed address from 1901 to 1903.

Harding died in Balmain in 1910 aged eighty-three. His funeral left from Oliveto, 4 Rose Street Balmain. He had practiced in Grafton, Ryde, Richmond, Thargomindah, Gulgong, Wickham, Moree, and Aberdeen, before his three years in Murwillumbah. From 1904 to 1907 the Register does not record his address. Settling in Balmain, he nominated for a seat on the local council in 1906. He received 86 of the 658 votes cast. He also had a substantial property portfolio, six

cottages in Balmain and a brick house in Redfern were auctioned following his death.

Hugh Thomas Symes Bell, (1872-1921)



Medical qualifications:

Mem. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1896;

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Lond. 1896;

Fell. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1898.

Registered in New South Wales on December 12, 1900.

Listed in the Register from 1901 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1902 to 1919.

Bell worked in Murwillumbah for eighteen of the twenty years his name appeared in the Register. In spite of this, the *Tweed Daily* provided only the briefest of notes about his death, describing him as 'very well known in the Tweed district' and 'a highly popular medico'. It was left to the Sydney and Brisbane newspapers to provide more information about his family connections. To wit: 'He married the widow of the late Mr. Walter White, of Dallandene station, Queensland. She is a daughter of the late Mr. Bishop Lyne, of Narrabri, brother of the late Sir William Lyne [a former Premier of New South Wales who just missed out on becoming the first Prime Minister of the Commonwealth of Australia].' Like many doctors, Bell aspired to serve in the Australian Imperial Force during World War I. He was

appointed Captain in the Army Medical Corps on April 16, 1917, the appointment terminated on August 18, 1917.

John Smith Guthridge, (1866-1955)

Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1899;

Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin. 1899;

Lic. Fac. Phys. Surg. Glasg. 1899.

Registered in New South Wales on April 10, 1901.

Listed in the Register from 1902 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1908 to 1914.

In contrast to Bell, when Guthridge left the Tweed, his valedictory on June 23, 1913 was a 'magnificent send-off', over 150 people were present, among them Bell himself. This was 'a record for such a function in Murwillumbah'. Guthridge was praised as 'a skilled professional man who possessed one of the best natures that could be found in anyone'. He left the district with 'a very handsome illuminated address and a large purse fairly bursting with golden contents'. (He was to return to the district in 1923.)

John Edward Pratt, (1880-1913)



Medical qualifications:

Mem. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1905;

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Lond. 1905.

Registered in New South Wales on Jan. 12, 1910.

Listed in the Register from 1911

to 1916. Shows a Tweed address from 1911, then 1915 to 1916 (from 1912 to 1914 did not give an address).

Pratt announced on December 27, 1909 that he had commenced his practice at Tweed Heads. From an article that appeared in the *Queensland Times* in 1913, it appears that he subsequently moved to Roma, and then returned to England. There he died 'under somewhat pathetic circumstances ... death was due to heart-failure, brought on Bright's disease'. His New South Wales registration continued after his death, and gave his address as Tweed Heads in 1915 and 1916. Clerical error?

Richard Howard La Barte Cummins, (1876-1955)



Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1907;

Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin. 1907;

Lic. Fac. Phys. Surg. Glasg. 1907.

Registered in New South Wales on Nov. 10, 1909.

Listed in the Register from 1910 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1913 to 1915.

Cummins' personal life was complicated. His work on the Northern Rivers precipitated his divorce. In 1910 he was headquartered in Sydney and 'took practices in different places'. He said his wife 'refused to join him there'. When he was working at Glen Innes and he asked her to

join him, she said 'she was tired of married life'. He unsuccessfully petitioned for restitution of conjugal rights. The decree nisi was granted in 1914. He remarried in 1915. Sadly, this marriage also ended in divorce in 1930. He remarried in 1931. For all of this, his profession conferred on him a high status. In 1914 alone, he sat on the Police Court Bench as a Justice of the Peace; headed a Tweed Heads deputation to make representations to the Works Committee of the Tweed Shire Council, and farewelled local men off to join the Australian Imperial Force at the beginning of World War I. He was also President of the Tweed Heads Chamber of Commerce, and had to endure some jibes from the Shire President in explaining why the Council had not done drainage work because it had no engineer: 'If we attempted to undertake the drainage ourselves, and it turned out a failure, you would hold us up to ridicule, in the same way as if a quack attends a patient and he dies, the quack has got to stand his trial for manslaughter, but if Dr. Cummins was to attend to him, and he died, no such thing would take place.'

Walter Crosse, (1887-1957)



Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1910;

Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin. 1910;

Lic. Fac. Phys. Surg. Glasg. 1910.

Registered in New South Wales on July 10, 1912.

Listed in the Register from 1913

to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1913 to 1920.

During World War I medical practitioners also wanted to serve their country. Crosse enlisted on August 19, 1918 and arrived at Suez on October 19 or 20, 1918. He left for the United Kingdom on July 23, 1919. There he was on leave (with short breaks) until December 16. He returned to Australia on December 18, 1919. His wife and child, who had in the interim gone to the United Kingdom, returned with him, disembarking in Australia on February 7, 1920. His war service earned him the British War Medal and Victory Medal. (As an aside, Goldsmid, who also enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force and served from October 20 or 21, 1916 to October 14, 1917, was only awarded the British War Medal; he was ineligible for the Victory Medal because 'he did not serve on the establishment of a Unit in a Theatre of War ... , was not a Draft Conducting Officer ... , nor did he serve on the permanent strength of a Hospital Ship'.)

David Aiken, (1887-1974)



Medical qualifications:

M.B., Bac. Surg. Univ. Edin. 1909; Registered in New South Wales on Feb. 12, 1913. Listed in the Register from 1914 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address

from 1914 to 1916.

Aiken and his older brother, James, established themselves in Murwillumbah soon after the start of World War I. David moved to Queensland in 1916. He enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force on May 9, 1918. He had two periods of illness and hospitalisation before the end of the war: five days on the transport with tonsillitis; and another hospital admission from October 23 to November 5, 1918 after arriving in France with influenza. Due to return to Australia in mid-May, 1919, he was granted leave to further his medical studies, qualifying as a Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh. His appointment was terminated on 8 December, 1919 on his return to Australia. His posting to France, a 'Theatre of War' entitled him, to the Victory Medal in addition to the British War Medal. From 1925 he again listed Murwillumbah as his address with the Medical Board, having in the interim qualified as a Doctor of Medicine, University of Edinburgh in 1922. He moved to Sydney in 1939, the Medical Board last lists his address as Murwillumbah in 1940.

Robert Macfarlane Brown, (1887-1918)



Medical qualifications:

M.B., Bac. Surg. 1913, Univ. Edin. Registered in New South Wales on June 10, 1914. Listed in the Register from 1915

to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1916 to 1917.

Brown also wanted to serve his country during World War I. He left Tweed Heads for Ballina, and then went to Beenleigh, in Queensland, to commence a new practice. His Australian Imperial Force enlistment application dated August 10, 1918 notes 'his General Physique below Standard', though the recruiting officer provisionally accepted him for enlistment. He died on August 31, 1918. A notice of his death stated that he had attempted to enlist on 'no fewer than three occasions'. (It is another vagary of record-keeping that the Medical Board listed him on the Register in 1919 without an address, and in 1920 with the address 'Victoria'.)

James Aiken, (1882-1964)



Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin. 1909; Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin. 1909; Lic. Fac. Phys. Surg. Glasg. 1909. Registered in New South Wales on Oct. 14, 1914.

Listed in the Register from 1915 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1916 to 1920.

James Aiken was David's older brother. The Medical Register gives his address for this period as Murwillumbah, though he was overseas for most of the time. He left Australia on October 11, 1915, and served in Egypt, where he aggravated a pre-existing (tennis)

injury to his knee. He was to be repatriated for a '[six month] change', and boarded the *Neuralia* for Australia on May 21, 1917. He disembarked at Capetown on June 16. While he 'intimated' to the authorities that he would wait for a later transport to Australia, he re-embarked on the *Willochra* for London, where he was discharged as 'unfit for War Service at home or abroad' on August 23, 1917. The Staff Officer Invalided and Returned Soldiers, 1st Military District, only found out that that he had returned to London in March, 1918, and in London the Pensions Officer, Australia House was advised on August 24, 1917 and June 4, 1918 that his new address was Victoria Bridge, Strabane, County Tyrone, Ireland (his father's address). It is also interesting to note that according to the contributed eulogy for Roderick Macdonald, James Aiken, his nephew, served with him when the former was 'Superintendent of the largest Australian Base Hospital in Cairo,'.

John Joseph Stuart McEvoy, (1876-1929)

Medical qualifications:

M.B. Univ. Sydney 1900.

Registered in New South Wales on February. 14, 1900.

Listed in the Register from 1901 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1917 to 1920.

McEvoy's obituary painted a picture of an all-rounder. At another time he would have been worthy of the title of a renaissance man. He was extolled as a 'prince of banter and raconteur', with a prodigious memory, and a sporting bent—he was an A grade football player and a cricketer during his university days, a boxing referee in Murwillumbah, and an 'ardent' bowler in later years. His importance to the local community was summed up by the representative of the Hibernian Society (a friendly society) at its annual Communion breakfast, which fell on the day of

McEvoy's funeral: 'It was a great advantage for a group of Catholics to have within reach a Catholic Medical officer, for he was a man holding the same religious philosophy. He mentioned, amid other matters, Dr. McEvoy's skill and knowledge in midwifery, and dealt at some length on the Catholic attitude in this direction. Dr. McEvoy's death was a deep loss to the medical profession, to the community and especially to Catholics'. His brother, Rev Dr McEvoy conducted the church and graveside services, assisted by the Bishop of Lismore (Dr Carroll), and local clerics Archdeacon Quinn and Dr Walsh.

Harry Charles Costello Shaw, (1860-1937)



Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Lond. 1884;

M.R.C.S. Eng. 1884.

Registered in New South Wales on Feb. 14, 1917.

Listed in the Register from 1918 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1918 to 1918.

Shaw's presence on the Tweed was a consequence of the disruption of the World War I. His arrival was described as follows: 'Dr. H. C. Costello Shaw has taken over the practice of Dr. Macfarlane Brown at Tweed Heads, as from 1st January. Dr. Shaw is well known in Brisbane, and for some time carried practice

on a lucrative practice on Wickham Terrace, which he disposed of prior to going to the war. His term with the Defence Department having now expired, and being unable to take up his old practice, he has now decided to settle at Tweed. Heads.'

Harry Alexander Legge Willis, (1867-1945)



Medical qualifications:

Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Lond. 1897;

Mem. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1897.

Registered in New South Wales on March 13, 1901.

Listed in the Register from 1902 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1919 to 1919.

Willis succeeded Shaw at Tweed Heads, buying his practice in 1918. He was the doctor who dealt with the first cases of pneumonic influenza (the Spanish influenza) on the Tweed, identified in late February 1919. The outbreak occurred among the Aboriginal people at Fingal (also called The Caves). The Aboriginal settlement was quarantined and a police guard posted. Moreover, the community had adopted what were called 'Christian Science beliefs' and in the words of a contemporary press report 'loll about the filthy camp all day praying for deliverance from the fell scourge, but treat all offers of medical assistance with contempt'. Willis took a 'firm

stand', and everyone in the 'camp' was inoculated (a dubious prophylactic at the time, and in hindsight completely ineffective, as the illness was viral, not bacterial, the basis of the inoculation). Hospitalisation of the seriously ill at the District Hospital at Murwillumbah was denied, and there were no qualified nurses attending the patients. There was difference of opinion among the local doctors as to whether the illness was pneumonic or ordinary influenza. Dr James Dick from Newcastle was called in to investigate, and confirmed Willis' diagnosis. One man died during this outbreak. Regetty Morgan suffered 'agonising torture, which forced him to lapses of semi-deliriousness and unconsciousness for about 48 hours before he found relief in death.' His funeral, if it can be called that, was the final insult of this episode. 'The burial took place on Saturday morning a fair distance from the camp, but inside the quarantine barriers, and was a gruesome affair. The body was wrapped in a blanket, lowered into the grave and covered deeply in quick lime. Morgan's fellow missionaries did not hold any rites nor offer any prayers over the grave, which was partly filled before any were allowed to approach.' The outbreak was considered to be over at the end of March. One month later Willis left the Tweed. His departure was described by the Tweed Daily

under the title 'A 'flu fighter': 'Dr. H Legge Willis, who has already had some 'flu fighting experience locally, has, been appointed to the command the Lytton quarantine station. He leaves for Brisbane under strict segregation, being locked in a carriage freely adorned with scare quarantine signs, and on arrival at Park Street will be met by an ambulance car, also duly marked in yellow, and taken to the Lytton depot. Dr. Willis should consider himself highly honored to be thus able to cross the land where bookmakers fear to tread — the Tweed-Coolangatta buffer area.'

Milward Edmund Dovaston, (1857-1934)



Medical qualifications:
Mem. R. Coll. Surg. Eng. 1883.
Registered in New South Wales
on Oct. 9, 1918.

Listed in the Register from 1919 to 1920. Shows a Tweed address from 1919 to 1920.

When Dovaston died at Coorparoo in 1934, the Tweed Daily noted that he had 'practised at Murwillumbah for about three years, occupying premises now replaced by Messrs. Worley and Fellows' brick shop in Prospero Street, Southside'. When he left the Tweed in 1921, a note in the 'Personal' column of the *Tweed Daily* recorded that he was dissolving his partnership with Dr Pritchard and going on a trip with his wife to Java. (Robert John Pritchard's address with the Medical Board at that time was Canowindra.)

The next article will look at eight doctors whose names appeared on death certificates issued for the District of the Tweed. It will also include the names of other doctors working on the Tweed, but not registered as such by the Medical Board, who have been named in the newspaper reports used for this article. Robert John Pritchard (above) is a case in point.

As mentioned above, the provision of signed photographs by doctors on registration ended in 1927.

The publication of the Register of Medical Practitioners was discontinued in the early years of World War II.

Note: The full form of medical qualifications is provided in the following table.

Abbreviation	Full Title
Fell. R. Coll. Surg. Eng.	Fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons of England
Lic. Fac. Phys. Surg. Glasg.	Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow
Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Edin.	Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh
Lic. R. Coll. Phys. Lond.	Licentiate of the Royal College of Physicians of London
Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Edin.	Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh
Lic. R. Coll. Surg. Irel.	Licentiate of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland
Lic. Soc. Apoth. Lond.	Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries of London
M.B. Bac. Surg. Univ. Edin.	Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries of London
M.B. Univ. Aberd.	Bachelor of Medicine, University of Aberdeen
M.B. Univ. Glasg.	Bachelor of Medicine, University of Glasgow
M.B. Univ. Sydney	Bachelor of Medicine, University of Sydney
M.R.C.S. Eng.	Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England
Mast. Surg. Univ. Aberd.	Master of Surgery, University of Aberdeen
Mast. Surg. Univ. Glasg.	Master of Surgery, University of Glasgow
Mem. R. Coll. Surg. Eng.	Member of the Royal College of Surgeons of England

The Back Page ...

Name and Shame!

It is hard to imagine how a hospital was operated over 100 years ago. In 1920 there were 26 beds in the Tweed District Hospital, 16 for ordinary patients, 6 for infectious patients, two in a tent, and two for private patients. During the year 679 patients were treated, 632 discharged, 23 died, and 24 were still in hospital at the end of the year. Funding was by means of subscriptions and government subsidy. This paid for the wages of the nursing staff and running costs. Donations in kind were an important part of the hospital's operations. In October, for example, a call went out for sheeting, with 'any donations ... thankfully received'.

Into this mix came the matter of fees to be paid by patients who could afford it for the treatment they received at the hospital. A meeting between the Committee and the Honorary Medical Officers ostensibly solved the issue, with the doctors agreeing 'that where patients were received into the general ward, hospital fees must be paid before the doctor received his fees'. Unfortunately the *Tweed Daily* also included mention by Mr. F.E. Nicholl of a case where a patient paid nothing for treatment at the hospital, including the use of very expensive drugs, but the doctor was paid £20 by someone on the patient's behalf.

Well, this set the cat among the pigeons. On January 15, 1921 the *Daily* published a letter from four of the six honorary medical officers: (JJS McEvoy, ME Dovaston, RJ Pritchard, and HLA Shorter):

'In your report of a meeting of the Hospital Committee, the President reported that a conference between the Honorary Medical Officers and some members of the Committee had been held. This is only partially accurate, since there are six Honorary Medical Officers and four only attended that meeting, and their signatures are appended below. In reference to the statement. that a patient on-whose-behalf £20 is reported to have been paid to one of the Honorary Medical Officers while the Hospital fees for the said patient remained unpaid, in justice to ourselves we consider that any ambiguity as to which Honorary Medical Officer was referred to should be cleared up, as we do not feel disposed to bear the odium cast upon the Honorary Medical Staff by such a statement'.

Everyone knew who the other two doctors were—JA Goldsmid and J Aiken. In the end, just as in the present day, names were never named. The 'odium', however, had been shifted—from four Honorary Medical Officers to two.

To preserve maximum space in Timelines for content, sources and references will not usually be listed. These are available upon request to:
editor@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au

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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.

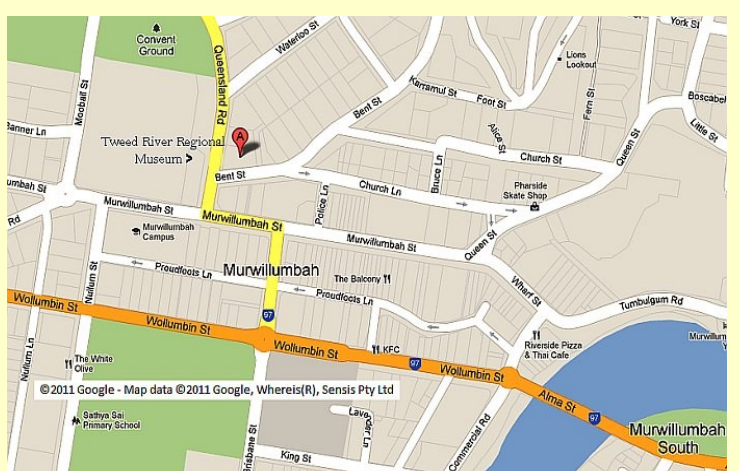
CONTACT US: Phone: (02) 6670 2273

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

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

Email: editor@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au

Mail: 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.