

TIMELINES

The Quarterly Newsletter of Murwillumbah Historical Society Inc.

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Welcome

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

This quarter, Henry James writes about what he styles as 'perhaps the greatest controversy in the history of the development of Murwillumbah'. Before the bridge across the Tweed, passengers and vehicles had to be ferried across the river. Would it be fair to say that, as is often the case, when public interest meets private needs, the former comes out the worse for wear. Those who used what is now Old Ferry Road would appear to have had grounds for such unkind thoughts.

The Court House Hotel's 125th anniversary next year is the subject of our next article. In February 2025, the Court House Hotel can look back on 125 years of serving the citizens of Murwillumbah. Our article provides images from the administrative records of Tooth and Company 'yellow cards' that cover the period the 1920s to the 1970s.

Peter Border, the Tweed Shire Engineer/Town Planner from 1969 to 1994, is remembered by Max Boyd and his colleagues, along with an

addendum by Ian Batten, noting his work with the Murwillumbah Rotary Club and in bringing 'Speed on Tweed' to the Shire.

Modern times (or perhaps post-modern times), are the subject of Kerry Stelling's reflections on Murwillumbah in the new millennium. Kerry visited the Society's display at the recent Murwillumbah Show and accepted the challenge to write about the town in more recent times. A big thank you to her; and an invitation to more of our local researchers to turn their work into history that can be published in the Society's newsletter.

Enjoy! And see you again in 2025.



Saturday 30 November 2024, 2:30 PM - 7:30 PM
1 Railway St, South Murwillumbah NSW 2484

Drop in and have a chat with the Society!



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

'Perhaps the greatest controversy in the history of the development of Murwillumbah...'

Henry James gets his feet wet writing an article about the siting of the Murwillumbah ferry in the late nineteenth century and the genesis of Old Ferry Road.

The location of the government ferry was perhaps the greatest controversy in the history of the development of Murwillumbah.

The town had a ferry service that commenced in 1882 and was in use until a bridge was opened on 17 April 1901.

The NSW government announced a site for the ferry crossing in October 1881. The northern landing was to be at the river end of present-day Wharf Street. In 1881 it was a short stroll from the landing, across flat ground on an existing track to what was already the main street of the village (Murwillumbah Street). The post and telegraph office and the only bank were within steps of the proposed landing site. The police station and court house had been built a number of years before on the main street. The public school had been nearby in Bent Street since sometime shortly before 1874. Other facilities then in plan for the main street precinct were the School of Arts, the Church of England, and the Roman Catholic Church. The government had also recently auctioned urban lots in the vicinity of the intersection of Murwillumbah and Queen Streets.

By March 1882 it was reported there had been a change of mind in Sydney. The location was now to be downstream a little, with the northern landing at the bottom of present-day Old Ferry Road. Works were already well underway on a sizable cutting that had to be dug in the riverbank for the southern landing place of the new location. Objectors held meetings and representations were made to move the location back upstream, but to no effect. A correspondent to the *Northern Star* reports using the new ferry in an article dated 8 May 1882. (This and some other writers of the time distinguish between 'punts' and 'ferries', the latter being mere rowboats.)

The downstream location was clearly a bad choice. Its many disadvantages were forcefully and often colourfully described by locals and visitors in

newspaper articles for years following. An early example from a local was published in the *Northern Star* of 13 May 1882. (A reader who is not familiar with the early days of Murwillumbah should know a few things. What the correspondent called 'the Byangum Road' is the present-day Tweed Valley Way in South Murwillumbah. 'Doherty's Point' is approximately the southern side of the present-day bridge. The hotel referred to was downstream near the intersection of Buchanan Street and Tweed Valley Way.) Another letter of complaint from a local was published on 25 April 1883, also in the *Northern Star*. There are others penned by visitors.

When the ferry service commenced there was a rough horse track from the landing back to the main street of town, but no road. A visitor describes using the track and crossing the river at the downstream site in a 'ferry' (rowboat) when he visited in early 1881, about a year prior to the commencement of the ferry service. His horse had to swim the river.

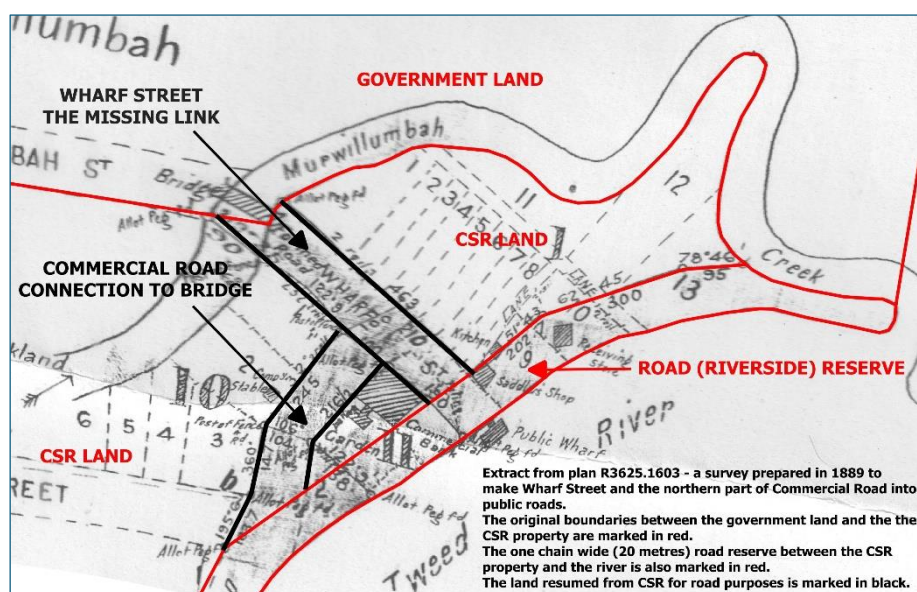
It was years before a road back to town along the river was built (what is now Tumbulgum Road), though the correspondent to the *Northern Star* observes that it was possible for sure-footed pedestrians to take this route, crossing a creek along the way on a fallen tree. A tender for construction of a road from the ferry landing up over the hill back to town (Ferry Road) was accepted in October 1882, six months after the service began, and was not completed until the following year. This road was itself the subject of much complaint. A typical example was published in the *Freeman's Journal* 3 March 1883 and another in the *Northern Star* on the 25 April 1883.

So what is the explanation for the sudden change of location and seemingly poor decision? The correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal* offers two options: (a) 'official bungling or incapacity' or (b) 'a little jobbery' (political corruption). He seems to favour the latter when he declares that he does not trust the local member, Samuel Gray, to further a parliamentary inquiry into the matter. Given the style of writing and passion for the topic, the correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal* is likely to be the same as the author of the article in the

Northern Star of 13 May 1882. In the latter article he explains the 'official bungling or incapacity'. The existing track from the landing of the upstream option to Murwillumbah Street (present-day Wharf Street) crossed land owned by the Colonial Sugar Refining Company (CSR).

The correspondent declares that the reason for not choosing the upstream site 'could not be because the CSR would object to a road through their property - as a public right of way has been here for years'. He goes on to observe that if lack of cooperation on the part of the CSR was the problem, government had powers to acquire the land and that the CSR could not set its own price. It is not clear if lack of co-operation on the CSR's part was the problem. If so, it may not have been the road that was the problem, but the potential for clashes between the ferry terminal and the CSR's existing cane-loading jetty.

Outsiders had observed it at least as early as 1886 that the CSR had a great opportunity to make profit from urban subdivision of the cane land they owned on the southern edge of the main street. When Wharf Street was eventually resumed from the CSR in 1889 (see the figure below) the plan surveyed for government was based on a plan of urban subdivision that the CSR already had underway. The resumption included an additional section of its land – the northern end of present-day Commercial Road - linking Wharf Street to the location on the river bank that was to become the town side of the bridge within a few years.



1889 survey plan of proposed creation of Wharf Street and Commercial Road on CSR land.

And what of the 'jobbery'? By early 1886 one commentator observed that '[the ferry's] removal [downstream] has caused a new settlement to spring up lower down the river and now that there are vested interests at stake it is hardly likely it will be removed, as some anticipated'. (See the accompanying 'Early East Murwillumbah' story for an account of early photos of the 'new settlement'.) The land in question was owned by Joshua Bray.

Joshua Bray was undoubtedly a man of influence. He was one of the original white colonists in the Tweed. He owned a lot of land apart from the 100 acres surrounding the northern ferry terminal. He also held a number government posts for many years including Police Magistrate, Clerk of Petty Sessions, Crown Land Agent and Registrar of Births, Deaths and Marriages. His brother-in-law Samuel Gray was also an early coloniser and an influential man. Gray remained an owner of large areas in Tweed and Currumbin Valleys even after he moved back to Sydney and became a member of the Legislative Assembly for Illawarra, a position he held until 22 June 1880. He did not seek office at the 1880 election but re-entered politics when he contested and won the seat of Richmond at the election held on 9 December 1882.

Charles Fawcett was the local member at the time decisions about the position of the ferry were made. (Murwillumbah was then in the state seat of Richmond.) Fawcett did not contest the next election in December 1882, but soon after took up a temporary post as Police Magistrate at

Murwillumbah while Joshua Bray was away in Sydney. Before Fawcett stood for parliament he had been the Police Magistrate at Tabulam for many years.

It is not hard to find records of accusations that Joshua Bray used his influence with government to further his own interests at the expense of others. Around the time of the ferry controversy there were complaints that money voted for 'improving the navigation of Tweed River' was instead used for clearing Mayal (or Murdering) Creek of trees that had been

felled into it by Joshua Bray and his neighbours. There was also resentment that priority was given to the construction of a bridge over the north arm of the Tweed River at Kynnumboon. It was the first bridge over any of the three arms of the Tweed River, was near Bray's home, and greatly improved his passage to Murwillumbah. In 1873 there had been similar discord over where to spend public monies on the improvement of routes for mail from Murwillumbah to Queensland. Joshua Bray favoured a route via Tomewin and then down Currumbin Creek to an existing road to Nerang. He and Samuel Gray had cedar-getting interests in Currumbin Valley and Gray had leases over large areas there. Others favoured a route to Tweed Heads via Tumbulgum and Terranora. The dispute was aired via a series of letters to Brisbane newspapers after it was discovered that Bray had secured government funds for the Tomewin project and along with Samuel Gray and Walter Hindmarsh had been appointed to administer their disbursement. Walter Hindmarsh was the father-in-law of Thomas Bawden, then the local member for the seat of Clarence (which then included the Tweed).

The CSR was of course also very influential. It was a major player in the sugar industry in Australia from the mid-1850s. It had set up a mill in Condong in 1880 which was far larger than the few earlier-built mills. By 1880 it had acquired large areas of land that it leased to sharefarmers. Edward Knox, one of its founders, longstanding chairman and major shareholder, was also a longstanding director of the Commercial Banking Company of Sydney. He was a member of the Legislative Council of NSW from 1856-57 and 1881-94. In 1880 his son George Knox was a barrister practicing in Sydney. His son Edward William Knox became the general manager of the CSR in 1880 and had been the manager of the company's operations on the north coast of NSW since 1870. Not everyone in the Tweed was a fan of the CSR, especially some canefarmers, but that is a story for another time.

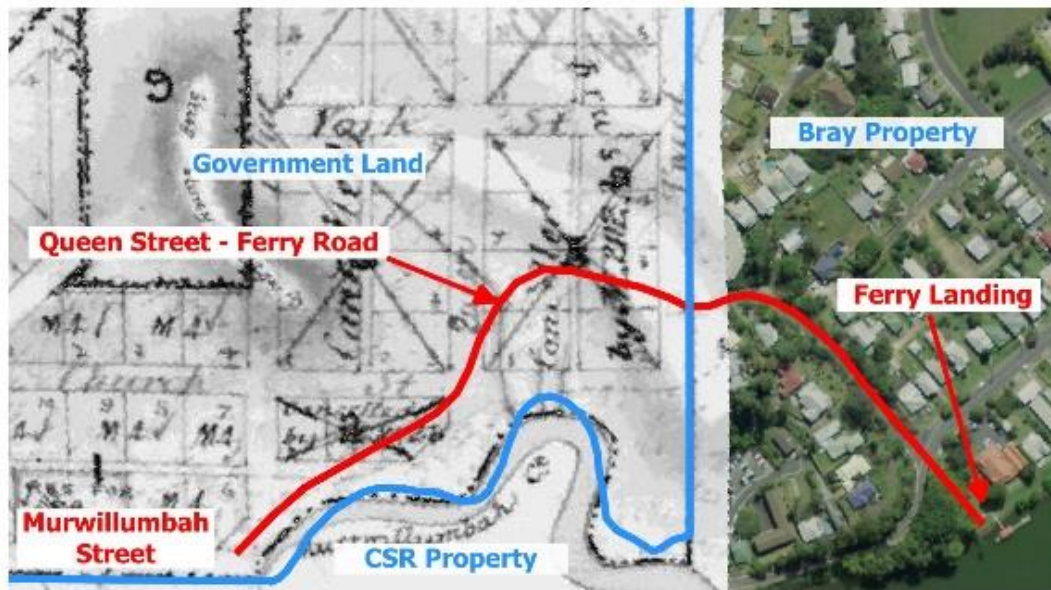
It has been claimed that Joshua Bray did not lobby for the ferry terminal to be located on his land, but that it was moved there entirely because of CSR's lack of cooperation. The claim is made by M J Martyn in a master's thesis submitted in 1947. No evidence for the claim is cited in the thesis, but there

are records that accord with at least one part of Martyn's account. Martyn claims that the supervisor of government roads in Murwillumbah at the time, Mr. Matheson, was so intimidated by the local manager of the CSR, W. R. Isaacs, that Matheson went bush until he was offered a transfer to Casino. This account is consistent with the already-mentioned theories of 'official bungling or incapacity' in failing to use the considerable powers of government to force the opening of a public road across the CSR land. It was and still is standard practice. The Minister for Public Works at the time, John Lackey, was quite prepared to use these powers in other instances. In the same issue of the *Government Gazette* in which the upstream location was announced, the Minister announced the resumption of thousands of acres of land in the Nepean and Hunter River basins to secure town water supplies.

It is somewhat surprising that the upstream location was ever published, because at least a year before the notice in the *Government Gazette* on 21 October 1881, government officials had given consideration to the downstream location. The evidence is in an amendment to the town plan that was prepared for the government by surveyor Thomas Ewing and sent to the Surveyor General on 31 October 1880. It was much like the previous plan prepared by surveyor Donaldson in 1877, the main difference being the provision for a road within the township that took the most sensible route from Murwillumbah Street, up over the hill, to a downstream location of the ferry (see the figure on the next page). The decision to have the new plan prepared would have been made weeks or months before it was completed in October 1880. Unbeknownst to most of the community, the powerful were already at work behind the scenes by at least mid-1880.

As already mentioned, at the meeting in Tumbulgum on 25 February 1882 the unhappy attendees observed that works were well underway at the downstream site just four months after official notice of the upstream site had been made. Not surprisingly, it appears that no official notice of the change was ever made in the *Government Gazette*.

It seems clear that Joshua Bray did not stand in the way of the downstream site and would have been aware of the advantages for himself. It is not clear



Plan for Murwillumbah township 1877 - Route for Queen Street & Ferry Road crosses lots proposed for sale



Plan for Murwillumbah township 1880 - Route for Queen Street & Ferry Road within proposed road reserves

1877 and 1880 survey plans. The later plan shows changes made to provide for a reserve for a road to the landing for a downstream site of the ferry.

if he lobbied for the downstream site. The CSR was probably opposed to the upstream site, and if so, did not see the advantages of an upstream site for itself at the time. It was only the public interest that was not served with the choice of the downstream site.

There may be records somewhere that explain why the Minister for Works, John Lackey, was persuaded to ignore the public interest and reverse

his earlier decision. There could, for instance, be a record of response to the letters sent by people at the Tumbulgun meeting. An historian's task might have been made easier if only there had been the parliamentary inquiry that was called for by the correspondent to the *Freeman's Journal*.

Henry James' comprehensive footnotes are available in a hyperlinked version of this article, available from the editor on request.

Early East Murwillumbah

The ferry gave rise to the first 'suburb' of Murwillumbah. Henry James tells us more...

The earliest photo in the collection of the Tweed Regional Museum of the land in the vicinity of the northern ferry terminal was taken after the initiation of the ferry service and depicts the emerging settlement.

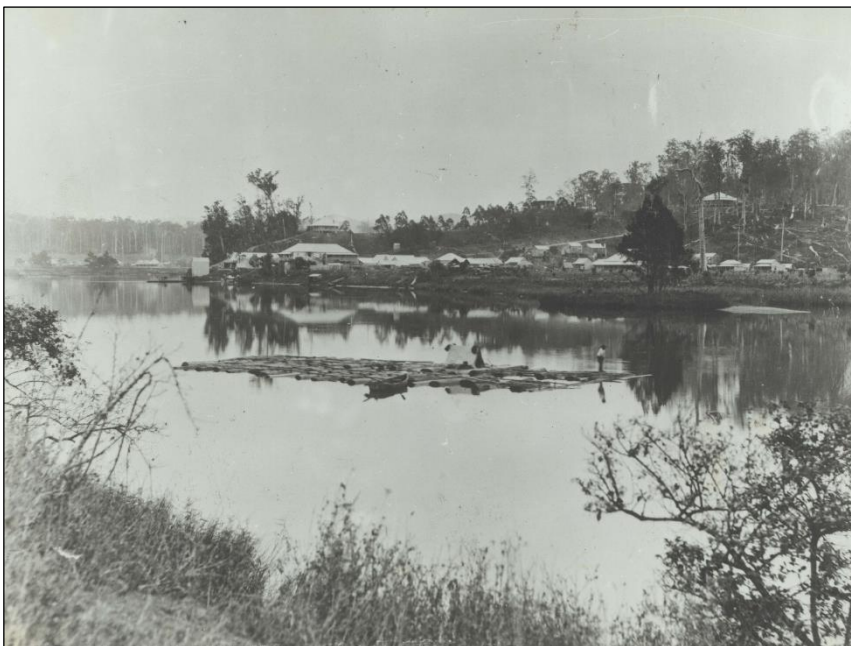


Date – 1884-5. Kelly's Cosmopolitan Hotel and Gillies' blacksmiths and wheelwright to right of landing. Solomons' store to the left of landing and house on hill above.

An artist's rendering of this photo was published in the *Sydney Mail* on 16 January 1886. The photo was clearly taken some time before then, but after Ferry Road was completed in the early months of 1883. Kelly's Cosmopolitan Hotel (the two-storey building to the right of the landing) is referred to in the *Brisbane Telegraph* of 17 March 1884. In the *Sydney Mail* of January 1886, the hamlet is described as consisting of only Kelly's Cosmopolitan Hotel, Gillies' blacksmith's and wheelwright's establishment, Solomons' store

and Solomons' house on the hill above the store and to the left, with 'scrub and tall trees' close behind. Kelly and Solomons bought lots on which their hotel and store were located in 1884-5.

By the time the photo on the left in the collection of the Tweed Regional Museum was taken around 1892 four more house lots had been sold. A considerable number of buildings in the 1892 photo were on land still owned by Joshua Bray and were presumably on leasehold land.

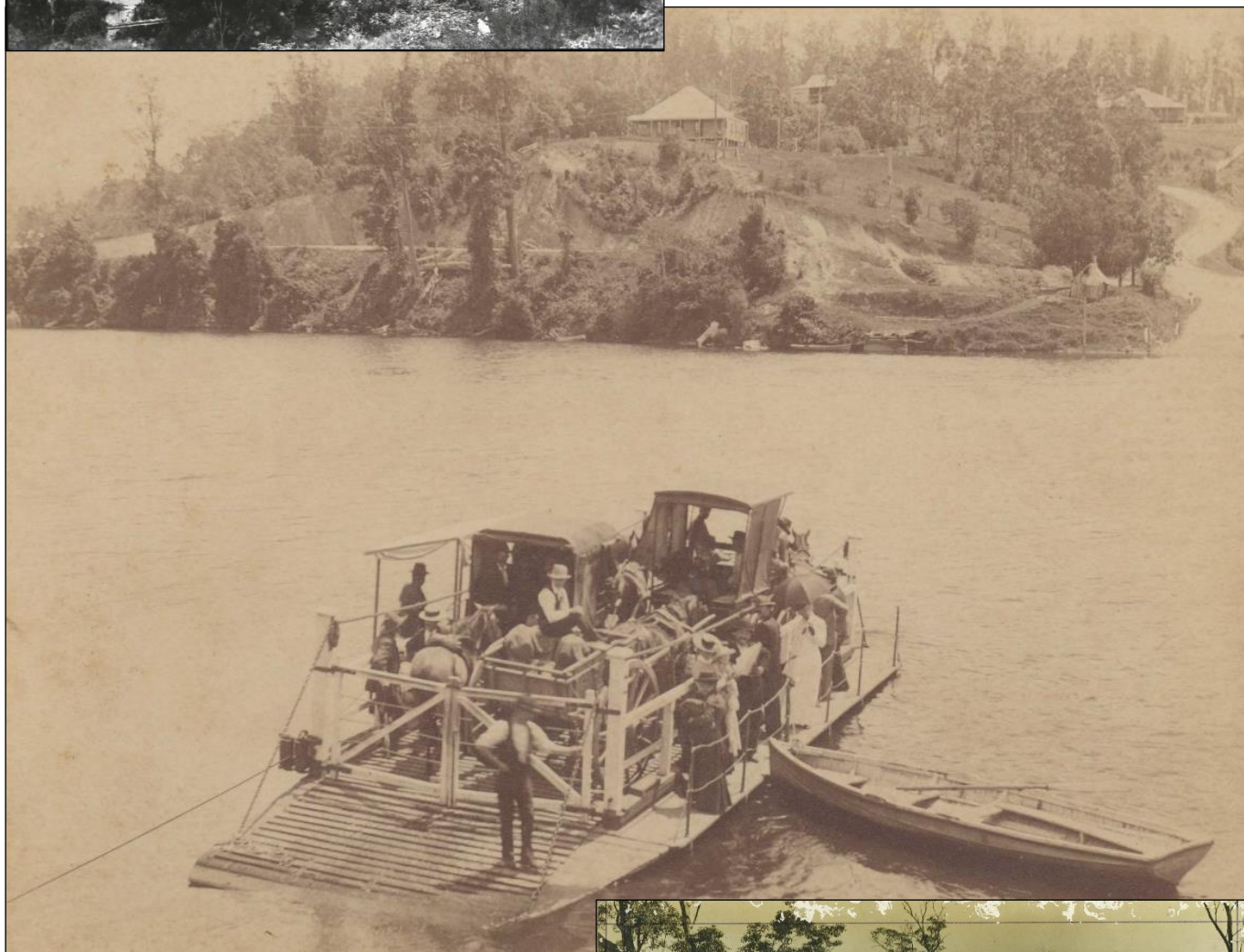


View of East Murwillumbah in 1891-2.



Date – pre-1892. Log over Murwillumbah Creek – bottom left. A short cut for pedestrians from the ferry to town.

The government sought tenders for a new ferry in 1896, just two years before it sought tenders for the bridge. There are at least two very nice photos of the new ferry in the collection of the Tweed Regional Museum, which also illustrate the start of the Tumbulgum Road cutting.



Date – 1898-9. The “new” ferry. The rear cart contains cans of cream on the way to Murwillumbah Buttery which opened in December 1897. Works on the cutting for Tumbulgum Road are visible.

Other photos in the collection depict the Tumbulgum Road cutting soon after its completion in 1899 and the log across the mouth of Murwillumbah Creek prior to 1892.

Date – 1899. Newly opened section of Tumbulgum Road from the ferry to town.



The Court House Hotel – 125 years



On 22 July 1899, the *Northern Star* reported that at the Murwillumbah 'Mr. G. Skinner's application for a publicans' license for premises to be erected in Murwillumbah was granted.' Further it was observed that '[the Licensing] Bench's decision was the cause of much comment locally'. Such is the fate of gossip and rumour, that it is swept away by the passing of time. Nevertheless, in mid-November, after noting the probable success of the Tweed, Brunswick, and Border Pastoral and Agricultural Society's second annual show, the

newspaper recorded that 'on the north side of the river Mr. G. Skinner's new hotel is being rapidly pushed on, and when completed will be an ornament to the town'. (On the south side a new building was replacing the old Terminus Hotel.) Finally, in February 1900 the big day arrived, the Murwillumbah correspondent of the *Northern Star* reporting on 11 February: 'Mr. G. Skinner's fine new hotel will be opened next week. It commands a good position, and should do a good business. The building will be lighted with acetylene gas.' The period of the license began on 13 February. George Skinner relinquished the license a year later in favour of his brother Benjamin Skinner (the former publican of the Club House Hotel). He held the license until 1919. In 1909 he changed the name to Skinner's Hotel. The Court House Hotel regained its name in 1920 when the licensee became George B McClymont. His taking over the hotel was accompanied by a death in the family, his wife being a victim of pneumonic influenza in June 1919. The McClymont's were in the process of taking over the hotel when Jessie McClymont fell ill and died at the age of forty-one. The premises McClymont took over was the hotel rebuilt following the disastrous 'Red Sunday' fire of 1907.



The images on this page are from the Tweed Regional Museum Collection. They show the hotel before the conflagration (top of page), what remained after the fire (above), and the rebuilt hotel (right).

The images on the next page are from the Tooth and Company yellow cards collection held by the Australian National University Archives Noel Butlin Archives Centre. These contain photographs of the exterior of most hotels in New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory.



The Court House Hotel, 1924-1959



1924

"When you received a summons to appear at the Court House at 10 a.m., did you mistake the place, for the Court House Hotel?" said Mr. E. A. May, P.M., to Harry Marshall, in Murwillumbah police court yesterday, when the latter was charged with having used indecent language in Main Street, Murwillumbah, on May 30.

"I was only having a drink and did not think it was quite 10 o'clock," was the reply.

1930

Licensing Court...

An order was made for the premises to be within two and a half years.



1934

The 'reconstructed and remodelled' hotel.

1939

Additions and remodelling work to cost £5.000 will be completed at the Court House Hotel, Murwillumbah, in a couple of weeks... Spacious, well-lit and well-carpeted corridors impress. They give access to the modernly furnished rooms...The bathrooms are done out in cream and green tiles.



No date.



1959



Peter Border, Tweed Shire Engineer/Town Planner 1969 – 1994

Written in 2022 in recognition of Peter Border's work by: Max Boyd, Trevor Wilson, Mike Rayner, Garry Smith, and John Henley.

Peter Border came from Warren in western NSW to joined Tweed Shire Council as its Shire Engineer/Town Planner in 1969. He remained in that dual role until 1991 when Garry Smith became Council's Chief Town Planner.

At his retirement in 1994, Peter was widely acknowledged amongst his colleagues as having played a pivotal part in providing infrastructure and establishing a planning framework that shaped the future growth of the Tweed Shire.

At the time of his appointment the Shire population was 24,000. High annual growth occurred throughout his time. In the inter census period between 1972 and 1976 there was a 50% increase in population from 26,000 to 39,000. And in 1994, the population had climbed 250% to 63,000. The consequence of this growth represented a significant challenge for

Peter as Shire Engineer. He had to ensure essential infrastructure such as roads, water, sewerage and drainage kept pace with population growth. It was also necessary to construct community services such as libraries, swimming pools, cultural facilities and parks and gardens to ensure quality community life was maintained. Peter's record over this time in overseeing the planning, designing and construction of this infrastructure was exceptional.

Peter convinced Council in early days that developer contributions would need to be put in place if necessary infrastructure was to keep in step with growth. Plans were adopted for drainage, the

arterial road network, water and sewerage. The significance of this was that essential infrastructure must precede development. For example if sewerage capacity is not available in a catchment, then development approval cannot be granted. Council built the infrastructure and then recouped the cost as the growth occurred. The philosophy was to protect Council's rate base that did not have the capacity to fund those works. This is really the untold reality of how Tweed Shire Council remained

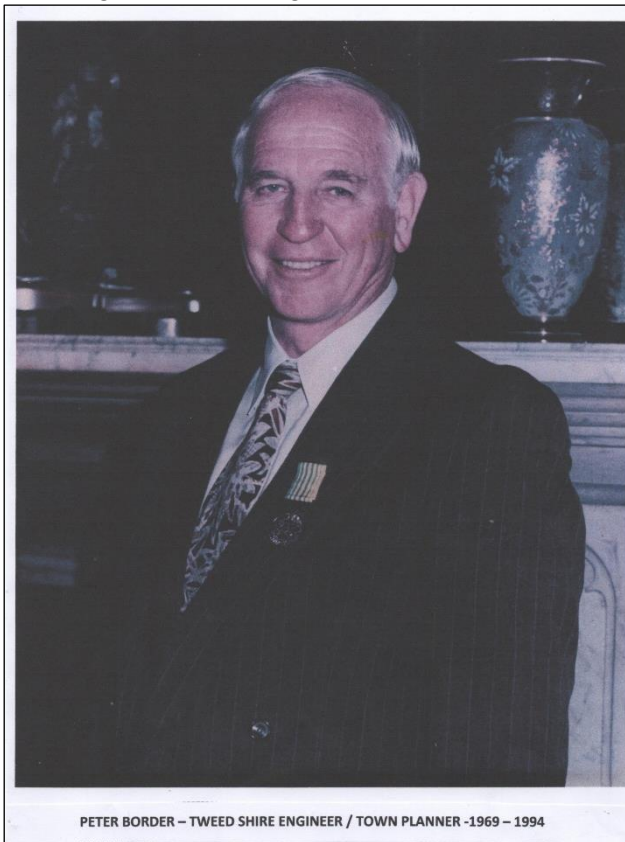
fiscally sound over those 25 years and retained a level of community life expected by its residents old and new.

Beautification became a component of the Shire's works program, involving gardens in prominent locations and providing many more parks and playing fields dotted throughout the Tweed. He had been a keen sportsman in earlier life and showed his interest in cricket by introducing turf wickets to the Tweed. His influence extended to include the mowing of roadsides along most of the major roads in the

district but especially the former Pacific Highway between Murwillumbah and Chinderah (now Tweed Valley Way). Extra care was given to mowing much of the Tweed River banks to give more views of this beautiful waterway.

Peter Border was the lead player in all of this. Despite the revolving nature of Tweed politics and the make- up of Councillors, Peter's leadership and respect at Council and State Government level ensured the overall strategy was never compromised.

Peter was a wonderful supporter for Council's day labour organisation. His preference was always to



use local residents rather than tender out major works to contactors. Over the years, this resulted in Council building significant expertise within the organisation. In the mid-1970s and 1980s, Peter convinced Council to commence a long-term timber bridge replacement program, borrowing \$500,000 to \$1 million a year for 20 years. At the time of his retirement, the number of wooden bridges had been reduced from around 135 down to about 30. Almost all of the bridges had been designed in house and built by Council's own highly skilled special bridge gang.

Around 1980, Council began a major upgrade of its water supply network known as the Tweed Shire Water Augmentation Scheme. This project cost \$32 million in 1980 or \$112 million in today's dollars. The NSW Department of Public Works managed the construction of the Clarrie Hall Dam, but the balance of the program (50%) was managed by Council. Its component included construction of heavy infrastructure such as a major upgrade of the Bray Park Filtration Plant, five megalitre concrete reservoirs at Terranora, North Tumbulghum, Duranbah and Kingscliff, pumping stations at Bray Park, North Tumbulghum, Bilambil, and Eviron, and large diameter pipelines across the Tweed Coast to Pottsville and Burringbar and north to Tweed Heads. The NSW State Government wanted most of this work to go to tender but Peter lobbied, and eventually Ministerial approval was given for Council to undertake all of this work in house. Council employed additional professional trade and construction workers, many of whom remained on staff after the works were completed, becoming valued long term Council staff. Electrical switch gear was designed and installed using Council's electrical staff, with drives up to 250kw. This was unheard of in local government in regional NSW. Tweed Shire was the only regional council in NSW undertaking works of that scale in house at that time and that has continued through until today. Peter was a consistent advocate for the employment of local staff and operators which resulted in numerous locals, young and old, gaining employment and extremely valuable experience as designers, construction workers, surveyors, project managers, trade apprentices, planners, plant operators, local transport companies, sub-contractors and owner operators.

Tweed Shire had a long record of flooding and Peter became heavily involved in this component of his responsibilities. With 80% funding supplied equally from the Federal and State Governments, Council constructed flood levees to protect South Murwillumbah, Murwillumbah and South Tweed Heads under a 1963–1967 program as a consequence of floods in 1954 and 1956. A further flood mitigation program was introduced by the Federal and State governments under a similar funding arrangement in the 1969–1976 program but the works were largely stalled until 1973. Neighbouring Councils were undertaking drainage works in the farming areas because that was what their farmers wanted but Tweed Shire already had a very efficient drainage network in its farming areas due to its long-established drainage unions. In 1973 Tweed Shire varied its flood mitigation program to carry out just one major drainage work in each union area, in line with what each union most wanted. Subsequently the East Murwillumbah levee was constructed, and the Murwillumbah and South Murwillumbah town levees were raised largely due to the impact of the 1974 flood. Peter as Shire Engineer and as Director of Engineering was an enthusiastic supporter of the flood plain management programs including those that also covered voluntary acquisition of homes most affected by flooding and also that applied to raising of floor levels of homes in flood areas.

Peter's appointment in 1969 included the role of Town Planner and in this regard he had the ability to think strategically whilst also using the practicality of his engineering skills. The Shire had very basic planning controls in 1969 that had been adopted in 1966 and although some amendments had been made after that time, Peter identified the need for a comprehensive review of the approach to planning, particularly with regard to the pressure the Shire was experiencing from Queensland to the north.

The first significant step involved the production of a contemporary planning document in 1973 with the appointment of consultants to work with Council staff to prepare a Strategic Plan to identify growth options for urban, commercial and industrial development while maintaining important rural, scenic and environmental lands. The plan was adopted in 1974 and identified growth areas to accommodate a population of over 100,000 people.

These growth areas have either been largely implemented or remain available. This is strong testament to Peter's planning vision.

Following the works involved with solving the problem of providing water for Tweed Heads, Peter was confronted with the major issue as to what land was appropriate to use for what inevitably would be needed to house a rapidly growing population. Much of the red basaltic soils of Banora Point, Terranora and Bilambil were still being used for dairying, vegetable and banana growing and the local representative of the Department of Agriculture strongly opposed, at first, any moves to cover these lands with houses. But he eventually agreed for that to occur, on condition that the Cudgen/Duranbah, red soils plateau would be retained for intensive farming in Council's strategic planning. The result of that vision is that Tweed Heads has grown from a small coastal village to a modern city of some 50,000 people. The Cudgen/Duranbah land is now zoned and classed as 'land of State significance'.

In 1979 the State Government made significant changes to the State Planning system. Under Peter's direction, because of the earlier adoption of Council's Strategic Plan, along with its subsequent reviews, and together with his standing in his profession, Peter was able to convince a number of State Government Departments to carry out or assist Council in ground breaking studies relative to rural and regional areas that could feed into its future Local Environmental Plan. This Plan was one of the first to be approved by the State Government in rural and regional areas of New South Wales.

When Peter was appointed, development pressures were limited and there were few private developers. The development of Greenbank Island at Tweed Heads that had been almost completed by Council prior to his appointment proved to him that Council had both the capacity and skills to undertake such an important activity. He identified opportunities for Council to become involved with land development and use the skills of Council's workforce to generate an income separate from rates and government grants. The Anchorage at Tweed Heads, urban development at Kingscliff, together with industrial developments at Tweed Heads, Chinderah and Murwillumbah, were examples of Peter's positive involvement. Two

other urban land development opportunities were also identified at Terranora and Kielvale but did not proceed because the owners of these properties decided, very belatedly, not to proceed to contract.

Peter's reputation spread beyond the Tweed. The high esteem in which he was held by his peers resulted in him receiving the first and most prestigious award ever given by the Institute of Municipal Engineers, Emeritus Member of the IMEA. Peter had held the position of President of that organisation for 2½ years prior to being honoured in this way. From 1989 to 1991, Peter was President of the NSW Local Government Engineers Association. In 1994 Peter's outstanding career in local government was recognised when he was awarded the Public Service Medal.

Colleagues, friends and workmates who had the privilege of working closely with him during his term with Tweed Shire, will remember Peter as a thorough gentleman and a man of highest principles and integrity. His honesty, his professionalism, his great sense of humour, his loyalty, his commitment to his family, his wife Sheila, and his church, all stamped him as a person of exceptional qualities.

Peter passed away on 22nd September 2010, aged 78. He had lived and raised his family of 7 with wife, Sheila, in Murwillumbah during his term of 25 years with Tweed Shire. In that time he had established himself as a most valued member of the community and his church.

Ian Batten, with Max Boyd's permission, has written the following addendum highlighting Peter Border's work with the Murwillumbah Rotary Club.

Beside Peter's involvement with his Church, he devoted a lot of time to the activities of the Murwillumbah Rotary Club. He became a Rotary member in 1966 in Warren, serving there as President in 1967/68. He joined the Murwillumbah Rotary Club in 1969, serving as President in 1979/80 and 1998/99. In all his involvement Sheila was firmly behind him.

Most people involved with 'Speed on Tweed' know that the Murwillumbah Rotary Club helped make the dream become reality, but few people knew that it was Peter who smoothed the way with both residents and churches in the area for the event to run.

Truly a good man with his community at heart.

Murwillumbah in the new millennium - some reflections

Kerry Stelling shares her impressions and experiences of life in Murwillumbah in the current century, nearly a quarter of which has already passed...

The first traffic crisis

In the earliest years of the new millennium, Murwillumbah's traditional locals were having to get used to the ever-increasing influx of new faces, including mine. After my early decades in Melbourne, and my latter decades in heady but torrid North Queensland, I was wanting to retire to more human-friendly latitudes. In 2002, I found a perfectly situated home in scenic Murwillumbah. My relocation project began in 2002, while the new Highway One route was bypassing Murwillumbah. This bypassing did not shrink the local retail economy as locals had feared. In fact, while it was easy to park all along Main Street at the time, the increasing local traffic from newcomers led to a crisis which was solved by bringing in restricted CBD parking in 2006. Murwillumbah's first and so far only set of traffic lights was installed, also in 2006, at the Wollumbin Street crossing in front of the Sunnyside centre.

Murwillumbah 'on the map'

Back around 2002 I heard that the Murwillumbah locale had been named one of Australia's fifty best places for retirement. The traditional Tweed demographic and economy had been diversifying. There was already a visible community of enterprising Sikhs who had immigrated in the '50s, initially to farm bananas. Then Hare Krishnas started arriving in 1977 to farm at Eungella and offer beautiful vegetarian cooking to the community. As indicated in the 2011 Tweed Regional Museum publication, 'Caravans and Communes', Nimbin's 1972 Aquarius festival led to the Tweed Valley hosting a number of multiple occupancies, farm house shares and other intentional communities with self-sufficiency as a goal. Throughout the '90's, permaculture co-founder Bill Mollison promoted permaculture from his Tagari property, the world's first permaculture farm, on the South Pumpenbil Road. As the new millennium approached, the Murwillumbah region, was becoming a refuge from the increasingly expensive coastal tourist traps of Northern NSW, and refuge also for a wave of tree-changers. Many of these were able to escape

heavily populated cities, thanks to computers and to property proceeds boosted by rapidly climbing urban real estate values. Beautiful, affordable Tweed valley real estate was attracting many incomers, young and old, including single senior females, from a variety of backgrounds. They brought with them many diverse skills from professional and entrepreneurial to alternative, along with arts and music. While these new settlers were hoping for peaceful, harmonious living in a healing environment, inevitably they also needed to own and drive cars.

Murwillumbah grows its assets

It should be said that even after the closure of Sydney-bound rail north of Casino in 2004, Murwillumbah remained a relatively good node for public transport such as government subsidised interstate, regional and local bus services. It should be mentioned also that excellent district hospital services were being offered from an impressive premises built in the '30s. Another substantial build in the next decade was the Murwillumbah cinema, badly fire damaged in 1983 but kept operational at a reduced scale and offering quality movies into the new millennium's early decades.

There were other circumstances as well, which I believe helped raise the profile of Murwillumbah and surrounds. In 1987 health facilities developer, Doug Moran, a controversial entrepreneur, had proposed the establishment of an environmentally intrusive mega resort and health retreat on Mount Nullum. The proposal was withdrawn within a few years when the newly formed Caldera Environment Centre successfully opposed council rezoning for the project. In 1988 Moran had supported the establishment of the Council's new Tweed Riverside Gallery with Australia's richest art prize, the Doug Moran National Portrait Prize, acquisitive, of \$150,000, which was also the world's richest portrait prize, awarded biennially for the best traditionally recognisable portraits exhibited at the riverside gallery. In 2003, Moran withdrew the prize when conflict arose as preparations got under way to relocate the gallery. In the same year, a major aquatic centre was opened on the old community pool site and its surrounds next to the Murwillumbah Civic Centre. The following year saw the opening,

with artist Margaret Olley, of the first stage of the Tweed Regional Gallery's new venue at its present spectacular Mistral Road site donated by ex-deputy Prime Minister Doug Anthony and his wife Margot Anthony, both Murwillumbah-born. Margot in particular had been an active, long-time patron of the arts.

The price of growth

By 2010 Murwillumbah had become a self-assured, asset-rich, and welcoming regional centre. It was then reputed to be one of the ten best Australian tree-change destinations, with a pleasingly diverse demographic offering a generous range of quality professional, trade and personal services and retail outlets and products. Murwillumbah had the confidence, in 2014, to incorporate into its Regional Gallery the extraordinary Margaret Olley home studio with its hoard of curios, commemorating the late artist and her connection to this region. The studio had to be relocated in its entirety from

Sydney. The same year saw the opening of the extended Murwillumbah historical museum, redeveloped into an offering of national class, which is now also winning awards. In more recent years, while the town's pubs have halved to three, food and drink hospitality outlets have come to exceed three dozen. But the surrounding countryside has been paying a price for the district's ever increasing human encroachment and vehicle traffic. By 2009 locally-born Jenny Hayes had noticed that all the wild koalas, which she had been used to seeing as a child, were all but gone. In 2009 she founded 'Team Koala' to explore and advocate measures to stop the district's alarming koala decline and to raise koala awareness among drivers and dog owners. In recent years, a number of koala food tree-planting projects have been undertaken and wildlife- friendly road crossings have been sought. The traffic ever grows as wildlife habitat gives way, but environmental awareness has at least been growing as well.

Support local history.

JOIN THE MURWILLUMBAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY TODAY!

Link to our Membership page: <https://www.murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au/member.htm>

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.

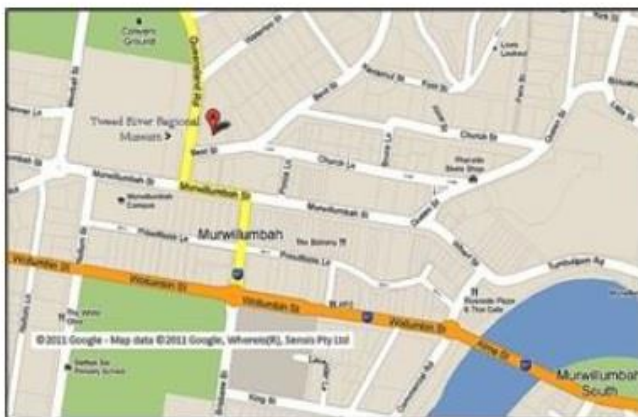
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ABOUT THE MUSEUM: The Tweed Regional Museum is a Tweed Shire Council community facility, established in 2004, with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between Tweed Shire Council and the Murwillumbah, Tweed Heads and Uki and South Arm Historical 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.

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