

TIMELINES

In fifteen minutes

Number 23

Something new!

How to research your family history

An exciting new opportunity for you from the Murwillumbah Historical Society. Starting from 30 June 2025 the Society is offering one on one training in how to research your family history. Only \$5 per session for 2 hours per week on a Monday from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Not only will you receive training, but you will also have time to begin your own research about your family with guided assistance, and written materials for future reference. Be quick! There are only 3 places available at each session. Please contact secretary@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au or phone (02)6670 2273.

At the President's residence

The Murwillumbah Historical Society committee met on Monday , 16 June 2025. While the President, Bev Fairley's report was brief and largely of an administrative nature, one item was noteworthy. The Society has been offered 'a box of LandCare records'. Bev was told that the Tweed Regional Museum, the custodian of The Collection, is not in a position to accept such paper records unless they refer directly to the district. In view of this situation, Bev proposed that the Society, subject to an assessment of the records, should undertake to scan them and create a digital file of the holding for future reference. The various reports – treasurer, membership, research, IT/digital, and bookshop – were dealt with in the accustomed orderly manner. There were six research requests since the May meeting. Among these were enquiries about the Tweed River Steamship Company, Murwillumbah South Infants School and Kingsford Court Flats. And the Society has the pleasure of welcoming a new member, Carleen Quirk.

Museum Management Committee

Bev Fairley represents the Society on this Committee. At the May meeting she and others of the Committee were given a 'crash course in collection management'. The venue was the Museum Collection store, a 'pioneering' facility when first built, but now facing the challenges of 'sector standards, disaster management and climate change, Council resourcing, community benefit and policy alignment'.

The Museum is also planning for future street parties. The next one, Street Party 2025, will be held on Saturday, 6 September, 3:00 pm to 9:00 pm, Queensland Road, Murwillumbah, NSW.

Our Next Meeting

The Society warmly welcomes new members. We meet on the third Monday of every month.

1:00 pm on Monday, 21 July 2025, at the President's residence.
(Please call to confirm attendance and for venue location.)

CONTACT US: Phone: (02) 6670 2273

At the Museum: Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm and Wednesday and Friday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

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

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

Email: editor@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au

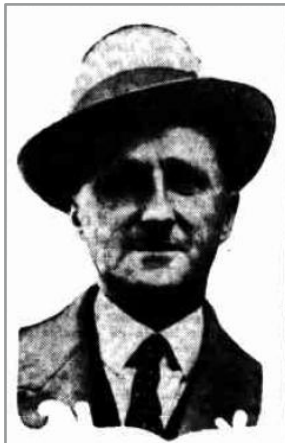
Mail: c/- Tweed Regional Museum, 2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah NSW 2484 or PO Box 373, Murwillumbah NSW 2484

History in a Box

The annals of research

A recent enquiry has brought David Baird Hair to the notice of the Society. Hair was born in Sydney in 1885. He married Rebecca Rachel Moore at Taree in 1912. He died in New Zealand in 1951, having travelled there to be with his wife who was ill and who predeceased him by a month.

Hair was a baker, coming to Murwillumbah from the Manning River during World War I after purchasing W Gale's Bakery and Refreshment Rooms. In 1928 he became extremely ill, suffering bronchiectasis, the permanent enlargement of parts of the airways of the lung. Prior to an operation to clear a lung abscess, his doctor, Robert John Pritchard, drew off three syringefuls of 'morbid matter' from the chest wall. The needle was left in during this procedure. While the last syringeful was being emptied, Hair coughed. When Pritchard looked, the butt of the needle was on a towel and the needle had disappeared. Pritchard did not tell Hair, nor his wife, about this, reasoning that Hair's nervous disposition, and the likelihood that his wife telling him what had happened, would worsen his condition. In Pritchard's opinion an x-ray to locate the needle and an operation to remove it would have resulted in Hair's death. The operation to clear the abscess was successfully conducted later that day. Pritchard saw no need to look for the needle during the operation as 'the patient would have died'.



Left to right:
'David Baird Hair, who carries a needle 2½ inches long in his lung';
'X-ray photograph showing the position of the needle as it is now lodged in Hair's lung'; and
'Dr. Pritchard, of Murwillumbah, from whom the master baker is seeking to recover £5000 compensation'.

Source: *Truth* [Sydney], 29 June 1930, p. 17

Hair continued to have health issues arising from this illness. Visiting his brothers, both of whom were doctors, at Easter in 1929, he was referred to a specialist who arranged for an x-ray. At this point, the needle was seen. It was the opinion of the doctors that it should not be retrieved, as an operation could result in Hair's death, and the needle was not moving from the tissue in which it was lodged. In 1930 Hair decided to sue Pritchard for £5,000. The case was reported by the *Tweed Daily* over a number of issues, and also caught the eye of the city press, with the *Truth* newspapers reporting it in their inimitable style. While Hair succeeded in his legal action, he was only awarded £100, an amount that automatically carries costs'. The jury 'found that there was evidence of some negligence, but not sufficient evidence to show whether any ill-effects had arisen from the presence of the needle in the lung or were likely to arise in the future'.

Hair's material legacy in Murwillumbah is the Kingsford Court Flats, built in 1935 at a cost of £7,500. The building is heritage listed. Sadly, there are no photos of it in the Tweed Regional Museum's Collection, other than edge of frame shots during the 1954 flood or when properties nearby were being demolished for the building of the Murwillumbah Services Club.

To round out this article, some random snippets from Hair's life. In 1921, during the floods in Murwillumbah in which two people died, 'Mr. D. B. Hair had a good supply of bread on hand, and customers waded into the shop to purchase supplies [and a] large number of people found refuge in Mr. Hair's premises'. Contrariwise, in 1941 he 'pleaded guilty to a charge of using a place [this may have been his residence at the Kingsford Court Flats, though there is no evidence of this] for the purpose of betting and was fined £20, in default 40 days' imprisonment'.

Do you have any information about or photos of the Hair family or Kingsford Court? If you do, the Society would be more than happy to see them