

Byron Bay

The History, Beauty and Spirit

Peter Duke





PHOTO COURTESY FRANK MILLS

'Farming days'

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Byron Bay (N.S.W.)
Byron Bay (N.S.W.)--History.
Byron Bay (N.S.W.)--Social life and customs.



PHOTO COURTESY DICK HOOLE

Byron Bay and Cape Byron



Cape Byron, the most eastern tip of the largest island on Earth; Mount Warning, the sharp peak in the distance (right), is one of the oldest and largest dormant volcanos in the world. The town of Byron Bay is located on the left side of the photo.

FOREWORD

Byron Bay is a place which, if it didn't exist, one would have to create. A landscape of stunning beauty with a rich and colourful history, where one is caught in the magical and creative cusp between Mount Warning, the Byron headland and the hinterland. This is a place of historical significance, from the first Aborigines who arrived millennia ago, to the jagged peak of Mount Warning, named by Captain Cook, to the pioneer settlers and cedar cutters.

Since then, there have been waves of migration to The Bay, from the whaling days to the arrival of the surfers, the hippies, the dreamers and the developers. Its beauty has always been its attraction and has inspired craftspeople, poets, musicians, artists and writers who found their creativity flowering in Byron Bay and its surrounds.

We all carry an image of places like Byron, whether we've been there or not. In an era of solistalgia – where distress is produced by rapid change impacting on people's home environment – we cling to the fact that places like this still exist. This is where the remnants of the past are still visible, where a community has grown and fought together against inappropriate developments and ideas that would change the heart of this small, magic, town that is known worldwide.

There are many stories in Byron. Written on the rocks and in the rainforest are the touchstones of those who have passed this way, or have stayed; and where the wonderful and the wacky have contributed to the tapestry of Byron's story.

This book captures some of these images, moments, stories and history of the place some of us have been lucky enough to know and love. Through its pages I hope you see Byron Bay as it was, its evolution and why today it still has such a profound impact on every new arrival.

I hope Byron will continue to be treasured for the special place it is.

Di Morrissey, 2010



Main Beach, Byron Bay

INTRODUCTION

On the June long weekend of 1998 I drove into Byron Bay for the first time. After living in some of the busiest cities in the world, a wonderful sense of wellbeing came over me. The wide streets, old style architecture and remaining fishermen's cottages fondly reminded me of a typical Australian coastal town. There were no tall buildings and no traffic! I had yet to see 'The Bay', but already I felt at home.

I checked into the First Sun Caravan Park and walked straight down to the beach and the view from Main Beach was (and is) spectacular: Mount Warning, Byron Bay, Julian Rocks, Cape Byron and the sparkling Pacific Ocean. I was extremely inspired to be here. After a quick splash in the ocean and laze on the beach, I ate some lunch and wandered into town.

The local fishing tackle shop was my first port of call. As a young boy I grew up on fishing and knew the local tackle shop was the information hub of any small coastal town in Australia. As expected, I was fully briefed by the owner who was generous with his local knowledge. I wandered off with an understanding of 'the lay of the land', and was already being steered in the right direction.

Within the first fortnight, I landed a temporary teaching job at a local school and rented a small three bedroom apartment at Wategos Beach for \$300 a week. When I first arrived at Wategos there was no sand on the beach, so I questioned the possibility of surf. However, the sand soon returned and in the winter of '98 I had my first perfect day of surfing with no one else sharing the waves. Those early months in Byron Bay I fished and surfed the Cape to my heart's content.

Summer approached and I met an old school friend, who was working in Byron Bay. After brainstorming ideas about what

work I could do, a book was suggested and I was sold on the idea (though extremely naive about what was involved). Because it didn't cost much to get started, I was very keen and I felt the project could finally justify my existence to stay!

The first day on the job as a casual researcher (I say casual because it took 11 years to complete this book), I strolled down to the Byron Bay Services Club to browse the old pictures that decorated the club's walls. The women at reception kindly directed me to Eric Wright, the town historian. Like many of the old timers I met, Eric loved the Bay, and in the months to follow he became an inspiration for this book. In conjunction with some other older residents, Eric helped me to assemble a portfolio of wonderful historical images.

Initially the intention of this book was to showcase the beauty of the natural surroundings, however the direction continued to change after lengthy discussions with many of the older residents. I soon started to realise Byron Bay was much more than a pretty picture. The old photographs became the catalyst for some fascinating conversations and it was easy to see that these wonderful stories would greatly enhance the book. In addition, some beautifully written interpretations, interesting anecdotes and poetry were eventually passed on to me.

'Byron Bay the History Beauty and Spirit' is not a detailed history of Byron Bay. It is a collection of the powerful words, striking images and the stories told to me by an amazing cross-section of people. This book is a tribute to a great spot and to all the good people who have made it so.

Peter Duke

MOUNT WARNING – WOLLUMBIN

by Veda Turner

Mount Warning, 44 kilometres north-west of Byron Bay, stands as an unmistakable sharp peak on the horizon with its rocky, slanting summit. It was named by Captain Cook when he passed by the Cape Byron area in May 1770, but is also known as Wollumbin to the local Bundjalung people. Mount Warning remains significant to the Bundjalung, providing a traditional mythology that extends back to the dreamtime. Called Wollumbin, meaning ‘fighting chief of the mountains’ (additional meaning ‘Cloud Catcher’), the Bundjalung believed that lightning and thunder observed on the mountain were warring warriors and that landslides were wounds obtained in battle.

As the first point on the Australian mainland to be touched by the rays of the rising sun, Wollumbin has an evocative appeal. The view from the top is majestic, taking in the azure blue of the ocean and the yellow crescent of Byron Bay in the distance. The folded green ranges and ridges all around contain the largest array of subtropical rainforest left on Earth. In the distance to the west lie the twin peaks of Mount Barney, one of Australia’s premier climbing challenges. To the east another twin peak is visible, Mount Chincogan near Mullumbimby.

Wollumbin is the remnant core of its mother volcano, which formed the surrounding landscape from Lismore to Coomera, Cabarita to Kyogle. Eruption began 23 million

years ago and ceased three million years later, with a variety of stages resulting in lavas of differing composition. Initial basalts were overlaid by acidic resistant rhyolites, then further basalts. This has influenced the topography and plant communities.

The volcano erupted out of the Clarence Moreton basin, a long trough stretching from north of Brisbane to south of Grafton. The rocks forming this basin are up to 500 million years old. Cape Byron and its adjoining ridges are an example of these ancient sedimentary rocks. The ancient volcano was a shield type, with viscous lava flowing considerable distances creating a broad low form. It grew to about double the height of today’s Wollumbin.

Its height, and the ranges surrounding it, have a major influence on weather systems. The predominant moist south-easterly airstream coming off the Coral Sea drops its rainy burden as it rises over the mountains to move inland. This has led to a dryer environment inland to the north-west, the aptly named Beaudesert region.

To the Indigenous Australians, Mount Warning is a very sacred site. In fact to all life on the far north coast, Wollumbin is the mother, providing fertile soils, ample rain and a vista to feed the soul.



BYRON BAY'S TRADITIONAL OWNERS

The Byron Shire is the home of the Bundjalung Nation; and the Arakwal people, who are part of the Bundjalung Nation, are the custodians of Byron Bay.

It has been estimated the Indigenous Australians have been living on the north coast of NSW for 20,000 years or more. When the ice caps melted towards the end of the Pleistocene Age, about 10,000 years ago, the sea level rose a reported eight kilometres. Much of the land was covered and many Indigenous coastal sites now lie under the sea. There have been many archaeological sites reported on the coast surrounding Byron Bay, including bora grounds, shell fish middens, stone chopping tools, burial sites and natural mythological sites.

When the Europeans first settled on the north coast there were about 20 different languages spoken. In Minjungbal, a dialect of Bundjalung, Byron Bay was known as *Cavanbah*, meaning *meeting place*. The Cape itself is called *Walgun*, meaning 'the shoulder'. *Walgun* remains part of the Dreamtime stories and was an important site for ceremony and spiritual inspiration. The Cape, Palm Valley (at the Pass) and Wategos were known as *Currenba* because of the water channels (*curraby* means 'gully').

'King Bobby' (see photo) of the Bumberline Tribe is the direct descendant of the Arakwal people of Byron Bay. 'King Bobby' passed away early in the 20th century. He had one son, Harry Bray, who was also a prominent Indigenous leader and his photo appears frequently in the history of Byron Bay. Harry lived in a camp behind Tallow Beach during the first two decades of the 1900s.

The Arakwal people continue to maintain a strong role in both the Indigenous and the wider communities in Byron Bay today.

Source: Byron Bay Community Centre Information Directory 2009 edition

AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINES.- BYRON BAY DISTRICT.

SAVOINI Studio



Memento of the First Plaque laid in

Bay Creamery.- Sept. 26, 1901.

The Bray Family: at the centre is 'Bobby King' of Bumberline. On the right is Alice. On the left is Clara with her two children, Linda and Peter, grandchildren of Bobby. Byron Bay 1901.

Caption validated by the late Linda Vidler, Arakwal 'Bumberline' Elder. Photo with permission of Arakwal Corporation.



Doing the Marloo (Kangaroo dance), Indigenous dancers, Main Beach Byron Bay 2003

ABORIGINAL HISTORY

One year after I began researching this project in Byron Bay, I realised the local Indigenous culture was an important and interesting part of Byron life and should be included in this book. Growing up in Australia in the 1960s and 1970s there was very little education or information available about Australia's Indigenous people. Living on the north side of Sydney, our house backed onto Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park. We used to roam the bush as kids, and yet we were never told that Ku-ring-gai was the name of the Indigenous people who lived in the area. Like many Australians, I grew up oblivious to Indigenous culture.

After starting my research in Byron Bay, a few of the older residents mentioned that Byron Bay was originally known as the 'Meeting Place' to the Indigenous people. Living at the Meeting Place, I wondered about the stories that Indigenous people would have told each other. Spanning back thousands of years, their history must be extremely rich. That small piece of information ignited my desire to learn more.

From the late 1990s the Indigenous people of Byron Bay, the Arakwal, were working hard in court to reclaim the land that was rightfully theirs. The process was a long and difficult one, taking many years. Unfortunately nobody was in a position to discuss the area's Indigenous history with me. I had nowhere to go and no contacts, so I went to the Byron Bay Library and began my search there.

A book called Australian dreaming; 40,000 years of Aboriginal History (by Jennifer Isaacs) provided an important breakthrough for me. In this book is what I believe to be one of the most significant pieces of rock art in the world: a magnificent, colourful full body painting of the Wandjina. It is quite extraordinary and accompanied by a very interesting short story. According to the Indigenous people in north-west of Australia, the Wandjina is the creator of all life on Earth.

Over the following eight years I was fortunate to hear significant stories from Indigenous history in different areas. From the north of the continent comes the majestic rock art and story of the Ancestral Beings, the ancestors of the Indigenous people. In the centre of Australia, fascinating stories date back beyond an ice age and correlate closely to stories from these other sites. From Western Australia comes the story of Wandjina and from the east coast is a story about Nutham, which is the same concept as the Wandjina only in a different language.

I believe Byron Bay still is the 'Meeting Place', as people from all walks of life continually come and go from here.

Peter Duke

Footnote: 'The History, Beauty and Spirit' acknowledges the 'Black War' that raged throughout Australia in the 1800's, many Koori and European lives were lost. The Stolen Generation. The social injustice experienced by Indigenous Australians. The process of reconciliation taking place in Australia today and the urgent attention it requires. The Indigenous culture has much to be proud of. Keep the culture alive.



Indigenous Australians

NEW DREAM OLD LORE

‘According to the stories of my father and various Elders from the north coast, the Rainbow Serpent snakes round Byron Bay in a radius of approximately 50 kilometres. The head comes to Broken Head and the tail is up near Brunswick Heads. Within that area, a long time ago, our people used to come from all over Australia to Byron Bay. They came from as far away as Tasmania, Bathurst Island and the Kimberley. They came here to have big lore-making ceremonies. At Cape Byron, where the lighthouse now is, there was a welcoming bora ground (a sacred ceremonial ground). The Bundjalung Elders would sit up on the Cape and welcome the people who came by canoe and the inland walking tracks. On arrival, everyone would have to walk up to the Cape to the welcome ground and sing the story of where they came from and perform traditional dances. Around 2000–3000 people would gather in Byron Bay and everybody was welcome. The men would make camp from the lighthouse, going north right up towards the Tweed River. The women camped south of Cape Byron down

to Lennox Head and sometimes as far as the Goanna Headland at Evans Head. You could image the lore-making ceremonies, especially the dancing with all the paints and feathers. Oh, it must have been wonderful.’

Extracted from an interview with Lorraine Mafi-Williams, Di Morrissey and Lindy on Bay FM 7 December 1997

Lorraine Mafi-Williams was a lifetime student of Auntie Milly Boyd, an indigenous woman of high degree who spoke four languages: Bundjalung, Githrabaul, Knarkbaul and English. Milly Boyd was the keeper of the lineage and the lore and served the North Coast for many years. Milly Boyd was the great-great-granddaughter of Elemani who lived in the first 50 years of the English occupation. Elemani lived near the border of NSW and Queensland and may have never performed her customary responsibilities because of the white settlement and massacre raids on her people.

THE LEGEND OF JULIAN ROCKS

by Paul Haskew

‘The Aboriginal legend about the Julian Rocks is a tale of two lovers. The male was from Cavanbah, the female from up the coast – “away”. Her tribe was taboo with Cavanbah and the Elders promised heavy magic upon the two unless they stopped seeing each other. Of course they didn’t, hence the “bone” was pointed at the lovers. The earth began to tremble and the sky filled with fire as the two lovers walked into the ocean holding hands. Giant waves rolled across the bay.

‘In the morning all was tranquil and out in the bay were standing two rocks, symbolising the relationship between man and woman, husband and wife. The ocean of life is swirling all around them. Whilst under the water they are still holding hands joined together as one, providing support to each other at the base, maintaining their individuality on the surface. The two lovers – The Julian Rocks.’

Footnote: Julian Rocks are located 2.7 km north east of Byron Bay



WHEN THE WORLD WAS WIDE

*They roved away in the ships that sailed ere
science controlled the main,
When the strong, brave heart of a man prevailed
as 'twill never prevail again ...
They raised new stars on the silent sea that filled
their hearts with awe;
They came to many a strange country and
marvelous sights they saw.*

HENRY LAWSON (1867–1922)

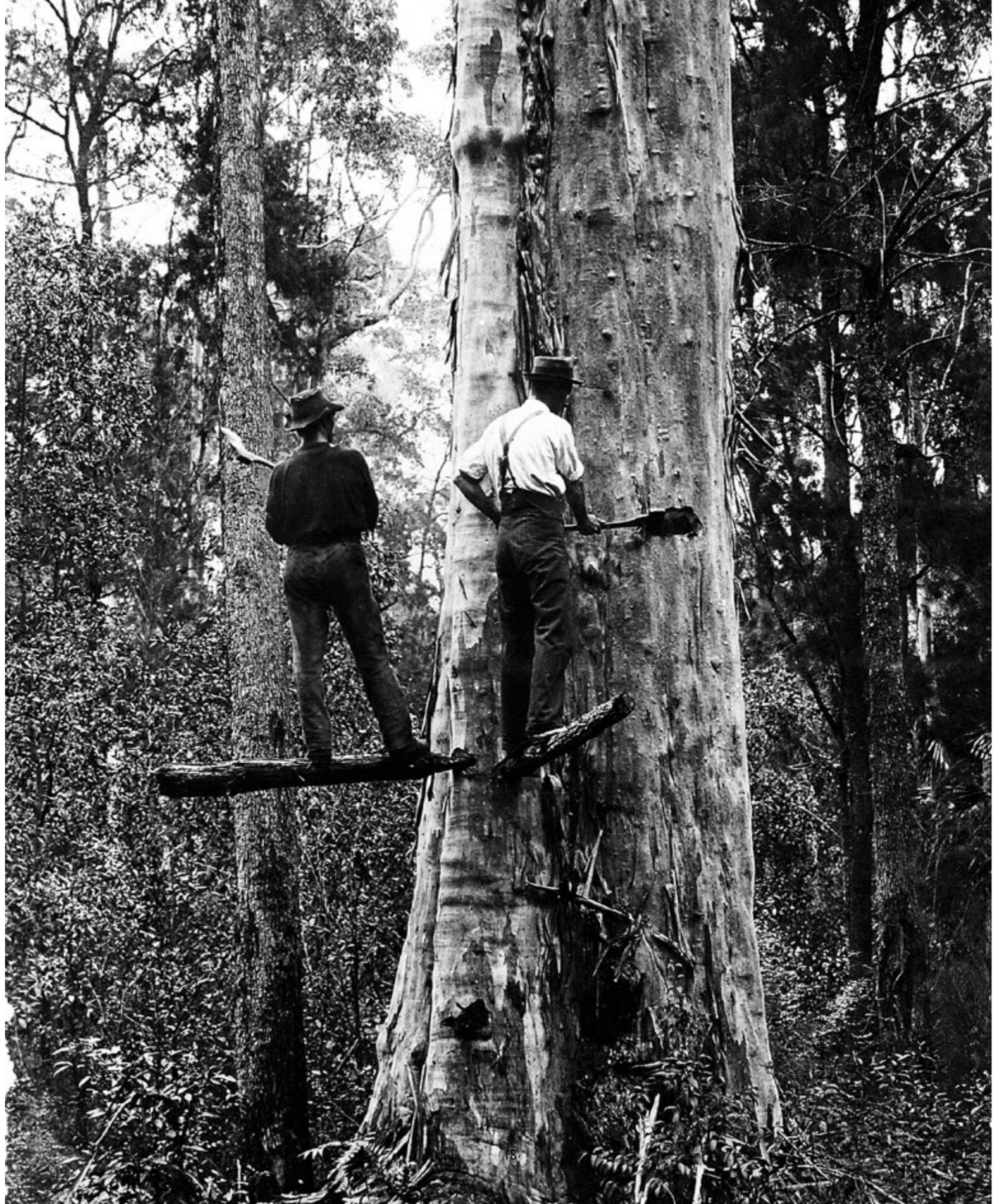
1770s

‘A high point of land which I name Cape Byron bore N.W. by W. at a distance of three miles ... and may be known by a remarkable sharp peaked mountain, which lies inland, and bears from it N.W. by W.’.

Captain James Cook was on a voyage in the Southern Sea tracing the transit of Venus across the face of the sun, a calculation that was thought to help measure the sun’s distance from Earth.



PHOTO: CAPTAIN COOK - OBSESSION AND DISCOVERY, 2007: S.CARDWELL_0702
© FILM AUSTRALIA COLLECTION, NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE OF AUSTRALIA



COME BY CHANCE

*'... No location was assigned it, not a thing to help one find it,
Just an N which stood for northward, and the rest was all unsaid
I shall leave my home, and forthward wander stoutly to the northward
Till I come by chance across it, and I'll straightway settle down.'*

BANJO PATERSON 1864–1941

THE 1800s

The Australian colony's most lucrative export was timber and the demand was high. Reports had been received by escaped fugitives from the penal colonies, describing vast quantities of cedar on the far north coast of NSW.

In 1823 Captain Henry Rous, in the HMS *Rainbow*, named the Brunswick River. A decade later, company-sponsored lumberjacks, later known as cedar-cutters, tracked north from Sydney up the east coast. By 1838 they began to work the far north coast of NSW.

In April 1849, Steve King and the Boyd brothers sailed over the Brunswick bar in the schooner *Midas* and entered the territory of the Dur-rumbil (meaning 'place of the water rat') people, who were part of the Minjungbal tribe. King and the Boyd Brothers established the first permanent European settlement on the river and immediately started harvesting the 'Big Scrub'. Brunswick Heads became the first township of the Byron Shire. Not long after, the hinterland behind Byron Bay was being cut for timber.

Source: Frank Mills and *Byron Bay and the Story of Surf Life Saving* by Harry Mercer, researched by Col Hadwell



CEDAR SYDNEY BOUND

By the 1850s, sailing ships collecting cedar would moor in Byron Bay. The trees were felled on the hillsides, the logs pushed down the chutes of the small surrounding valleys and hauled to the beach. A line would be rowed to the ship, looped around a pulley and returned to the beach. The logs were bundled together and hooked up to one end of the line. The other end was attached to a bullock team which walked down the beach drawing the logs out through the surf to the ships bound for Sydney.

In conversation with Tony Kibblewhite

1861

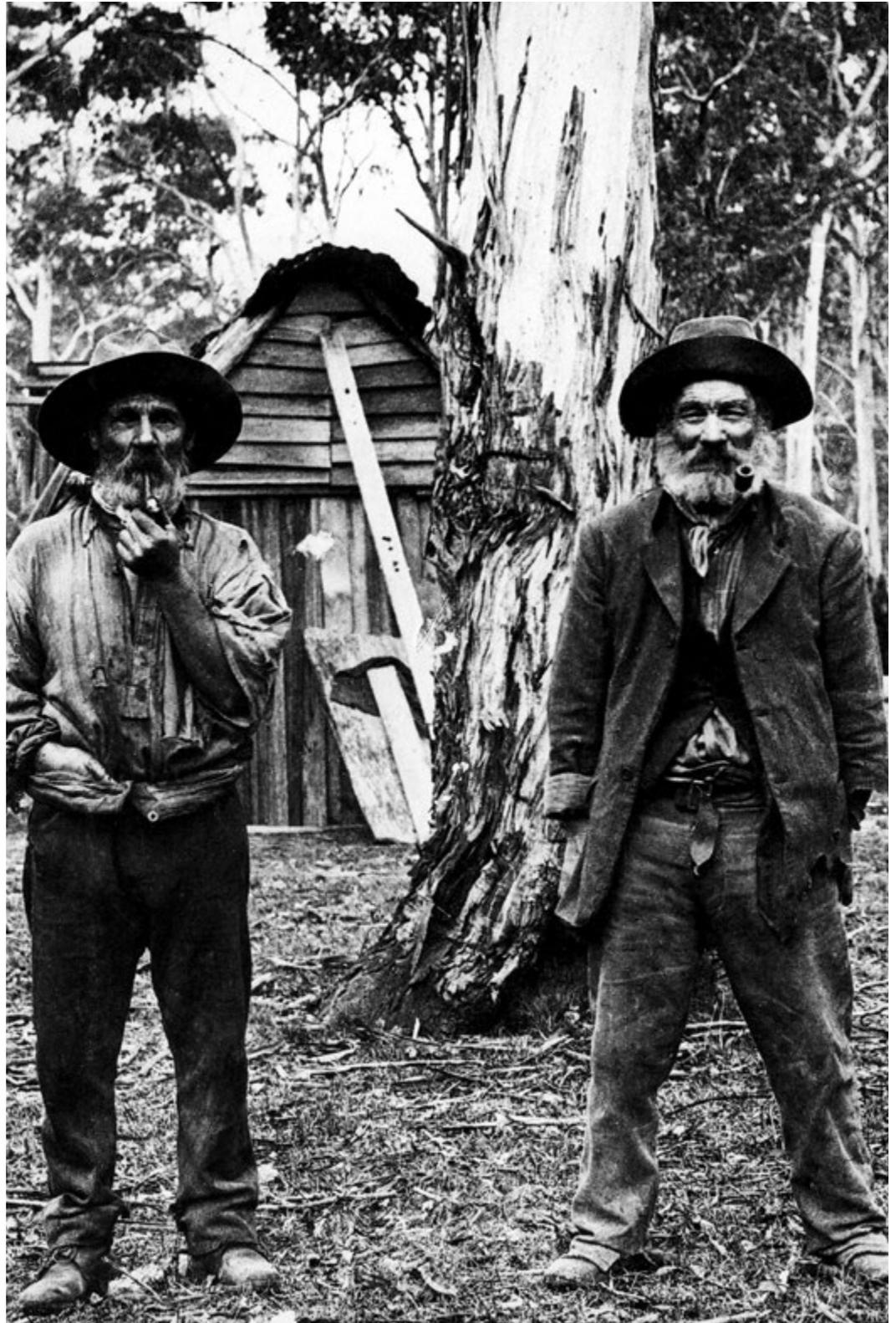
The Robinson Land Act allowed for the free selection of land on the far north coast of NSW. The Act was implemented to break down the domination of the big land holders in northern NSW.

Selection of land was from 40 to 320 acres. Terms and conditions were interest free and required 5 shillings deposit on each acre. A further 15 shillings were payable within three years to acquire the land.

It was necessary to live on the land for one year and to increase the value of the land by one pound per acre. Improvements included buildings, fencing and clearing the land. The most common source of income was cutting timber.

Most of the new settlers failed in their quest for freehold ownership. The squatters then moved in.

Source: Richmond River Historical Society



FIRST SETTLEMENT

The town of Byron Bay was first settled in the 1870s. Originally known as Cavanbah, the town was renamed Byron Bay in 1894. David Jarman built the first habitual dwelling on the north side of Cape Byron. Jarman's place acted as a halfway house for the early settlers travelling between the towns of Ballina in the south and Brunswick Heads in the north.

Source: *Byron Bay and the Story of Surf Life Saving*, by Harry Mercer, researched by Col Hadwell

Brookes Camp at Palm Cove (the Pass), c1910, the original site of Jarman's.



SYDNEY MAIL 1884

“The following extract from the Sydney Mail, May 3rd, 1884, is deserving a place in the History, as showing the correctness of the position as summed up by the Mail’s correspondent”. From Norco’s Twenty Years of Progress.

As this beautiful locality is but little known to you readers, and in fact I may say up to the last two or three years scarcely to anybody except the Cedar Getters. A description, though but an imperfect one, of the bay and the surrounding country, may be of interest, especially to those in search of land unsurpassed in richness and which on account of the large area held by each selector, can be leased upon very easy terms ...

I shall now endeavour to give a description of Byron Bay and the country joining it. The bay is formed by the bold and prominent headland of Cape Byron (the most easterly point of land upon the Australian continent), protecting it on the south and south-east. To the north of the cape are two small islets, Juan and Julia, between which and the headland lies a low reef of rock, thus forming a good harbour. These natural features, combined with a lofty range of hills forming the cape, make a splendid shelter against the strongest south-easterly and southerly gale. Not only schooners, but even the Clarence and Richmond river steamers often put into Byron Bay for shelter when their own bar-bound ports forbid their entrance. There is not the slightest doubt that this must be the great future port of the north, and the terminus of the great northern railway, the second trial survey for which was completed some six or eight months ago.

... Until three years ago none of the land within 10 or 12 miles from here was selected, and, therefore, no port was required. But at the time just mentioned the great ‘Rush’ for land set in and scores of persons came from the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, Hunter, Clarence and other districts, and at first their hardship was unparallel, there being at that time no grass for horses, so they were compelled to walk, in some cases 20 miles, through thick jungle and pouring rain for their provisions.

In fact, getting rations out to their selections was a great undertaking indeed. Now their circumstances are altered, as each selector has their area cleared and grassed. Several stores too have been opened in different parts of the scrub, and also at the bay ...

Between the bay and brush or scrub lays a tract of low undulating country of limited area, but well timbered with hardwood. Having passed through this belt of country the coast range is mounted. This varies in height from 500 to 700 hundred feet, falling gradually with gentle undulations towards the Richmond River, a distance from 20 to 30 miles. As this range is mounted a decided change is noticeable, both in the soil and the foliage, the latter being so dense that it is impossible in some places to see more than 10 yards ahead of one. The soil, I may safely say, is as rich as any in the world (capable of growing 80 to 100 tonnes of sugarcane to the acre, and of great density) and varying from 10 to 40 feet in depth. The whole of the country, for 30 miles in a southerly direction and extending west to Lismore, is one unbroken tract of this rich soil, and all selected.

This splendid area is so well watered by never-failing creeks (I do not exaggerate when I say there are many hundreds, small and large) that none of the sections are without clear running streams ...

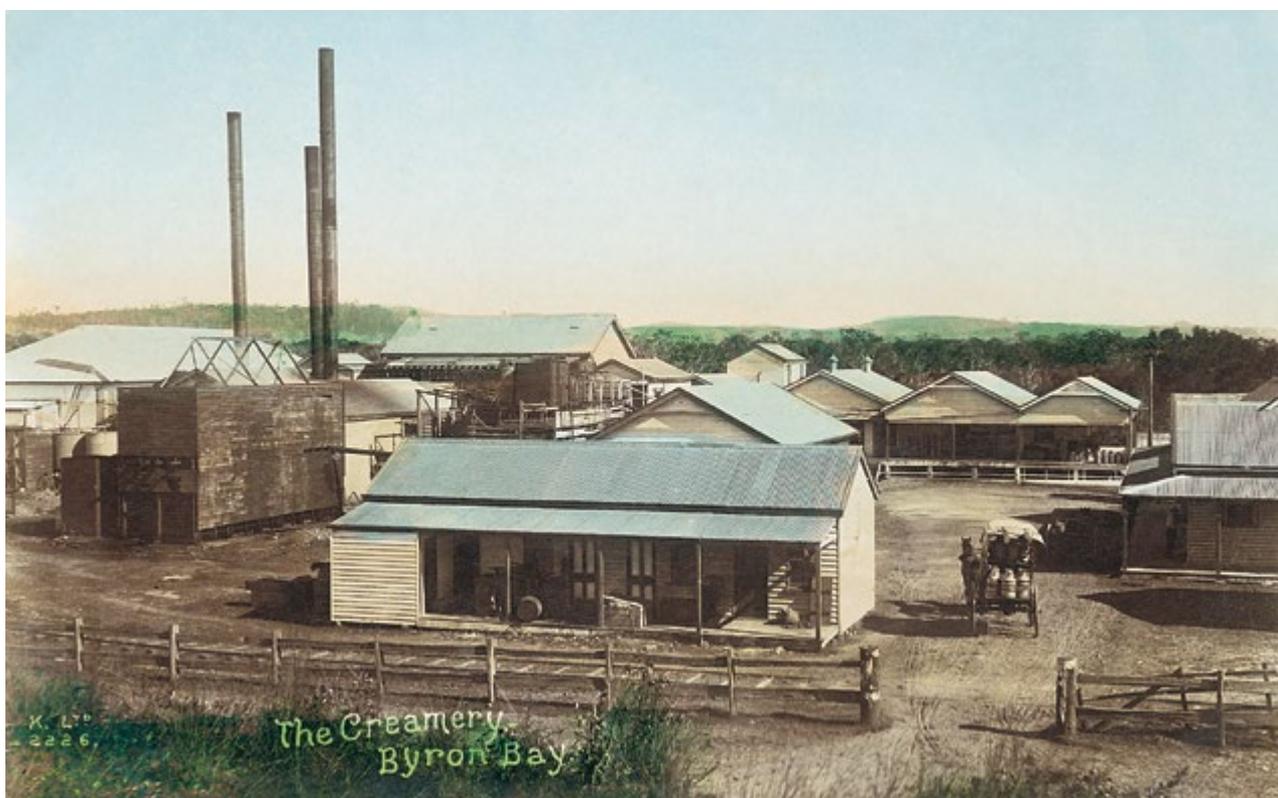
I mention these facts to show what wonderful facilities exist here for agriculture to be brought to a high state of perfection, with such a climate and soil, and it is a great pity more is not known of this wonderful country. I feel confident that the big scrub, when cleared and cultivated, will be capable of supporting a million inhabitants, and all prosperous, for it does not take many acres of this soil, combined with such a delightful climate, to keep a family in good circumstances ...

... Mr. Gibbs, with his trial survey for the railway from Byron Bay to the Tweed, is making good headway and the selectors along the route will hail with joy the day that the Iron Horse steams over mountain and valley, taking their valuable produce to the great seaport of the north. For there is truly a bright future in store, sooner or later, for Byron Bay.



THE JETTY

The 24th of July 1888 was a gala day in Byron Bay with the construction of the first jetty complete. Byron Bay became the main port for the entire far north coast of NSW; sailing ships and steam ships began arriving to port.



FARMING AND THE CREAMERY

After the land was clear of timber, farming began and agriculture flourished. Coffee and various fruits were tried and it seemed everything would grow! Dairy farmers from the south coast of NSW brought their dairy herds built up from breeding stock that had come from Great Britain. They began making their own butter, with some difficulty. Methods for settling cream from milk involved leaving the milk to stand in wide pans to allow the cream to rise before being scooped off. This was not hygienic in such a warm climate. There was no refrigeration or even ice and roads were rough tracks. With the introduction of local cream collecting depots – known as creameries – at Binna Burra and Eureka, farmers used horses and carts to transport their milk to the creamery. A huge machine separated the milk from the cream, leaving the skimmed milk. The farmers would return home, feed the skimmed milk to their pigs and churn the cream into butter. The centrifugal separator became available in the 1890s, and it was cheap enough to have on each farm. No longer was

there a need for the local creamery.

Once the railway line arrived in 1894, the cream was taken by rail to the farmer's co-operative processing plant (which became Norco) at Byron Bay. First called the North Coast Fresh Food and Cold Storage Co-operative, its objective was to provide cold storage for perishable produce, and to manufacture and sell ice. In 1899 paspalum grass was introduced as an improved pasture and the industry trebled by 1904. At its peak there were more than 4000 dairy shareholders supplying Norco and in time, Norco became the largest butter, cheese and small goods (ham, bacon, Byron sausage) factory in the southern hemisphere. Here the goods were processed and prepared for shipping to the markets in Sydney and around the world. Norco used to great effect both the rail and the jetty that served steam trains and ships to take local produce to the four corners of the globe.

In conversation with Robyn Gray and Tony Kibblewhite



'BYRON BAY IN FLOOD AND STORM'

by James Ainsworth 1847-1922

'In 1864 I was engaged in hauling cedar into Skennar's Creek. At the time of the flood, I was busy salvaging the tallow [animal fat] washed up from the floundered schooner *Volunteer*, on Tallow Beach and Byron Bay. A terrific easterly gale and blinding rain battered down the protecting terraces behind the beach, flooding the lowlands beyond. In this way the sea penetrated to where the creamery now stands and filled the swamp opposite all the way to Belongil Creek with salt water. The foam, churned up by the agitated surf and lashed by gale, rose to a depth of ten feet on the track between Tallow Beach and Byron Bay. It was generally higher than the horse's back. No vessels could have survived in the roadstead, and be it sadly stated many river ships off the coast at the time were never heard of again.'

(This article was copied by Roslyn Nurse.)

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Early records show a large number of ships were lost in the early days around Byron Bay. The schooner *Volunteer* was wrecked at Cape Byron in 1864. All hands were lost and the cargo of tallow was strewn along the beach to Broken Head, giving the beach its name today. (Tallow Beach is the first beach south of Cape Byron.) In the following thirty years, ten known shipwrecks occurred around the Cape and Byron Bay. In 1901, the lighthouse was erected to safely guide ships around Australia's most easterly point.

In conversation with Eric Wright



THE INDUSTRIAL TOWN

‘The first thing to strike you when you came over the hills by road or rail, and down into Byron Bay were the numerous chimney stacks. Besides the landmarks of the lighthouse and cranes on the jetty, it was the presence of industry you couldn’t help noticing. In the years following the first settlers, they say the area was under a constant cover of smoke. Timber burnt as the land was cleared.

Throughout the first half of the 20th century and prior to electricity (1926), the whole town was run on coal and timber. Coal bunkers were situated around the

town for storage. Prior to the railway, coal arrived by ship and was unloaded by shovel. Without a natural water supply, large wells for ground water were dug as all the industry was steam driven.

Once the railway line went in the town was connected by rail. A small steam engine known as the green frog would commute via the rail line, linking the town and its industry. From the port to the dairy was one mile at most and in between came the canning and freezing co-op (1913–20), saw mill, the town square, railway station and piggery a short distance away.’

In conversation with Brian Parkes

Byron Bay from Paterson Hill c1908 (Norco back left of photo where the Services Club stands today).



BYRON BAY c1925

Panoramic photo divided in half;

Top: Julian Rocks and the jetty to the far left. Looking east to Cape Byron and the beginning of the township of Byron Bay.

Bottom: The township of Byron Bay; Paterson Hill is back centre and the escarpment back right of the photo.





SHIPPING

By the early 1920s steam ships carrying passengers and cargo were travelling between Sydney and Byron Bay twice a week, the voyage taking approximately 24 hours. In this picture the Green Frog can be seen travelling along the jetty. The steam driven cranes on the end of the (1st) jetty are recognised by the supporting arm linking the two cranes together. The photo, dated 20th of January 1924, makes this ship the TSS *Wollongbar II*.

In conversation with Eric Wright



PHOTO COURTESY ERIC WRIGHT COLLECTION

The maiden voyage of the TSS *Wollongbar II*, arriving in Byron Bay from Glasgow, Scotland on the 11th of January 1923.

In conversation with Eric Wright



BYRON BAY c1927

Model T Fords (with tarpaulin/sun roof) park adjacent to the jetty, waiting for the arrival of passengers by steamship.

Ferguson's store is opened for trading, hiring swimming costumes, providing hot water for tea, chips, drinks and bait for fishing.

The Pier Hotel (back centre) burnt down in 1947. Cape Byron is located to the back left, out of picture.



BYRON BAY c1925

The Promenade adjoining the Pier Hotel, Main Beach. The small huts on the beach front were hired as dressing rooms, providing shaded seating with deckchairs, sandwiches and cool refreshments.



Jonson Street, approaching the beach front c1920



The Excursion train would arrive from the bush each Sunday; that was the one day the streets were full. As early as the 1920s the beach front and parks became the picnic grounds. A piano would play in the park and the people would sit and picnic in the park or by the jetty.

In conversation with Merl Wright

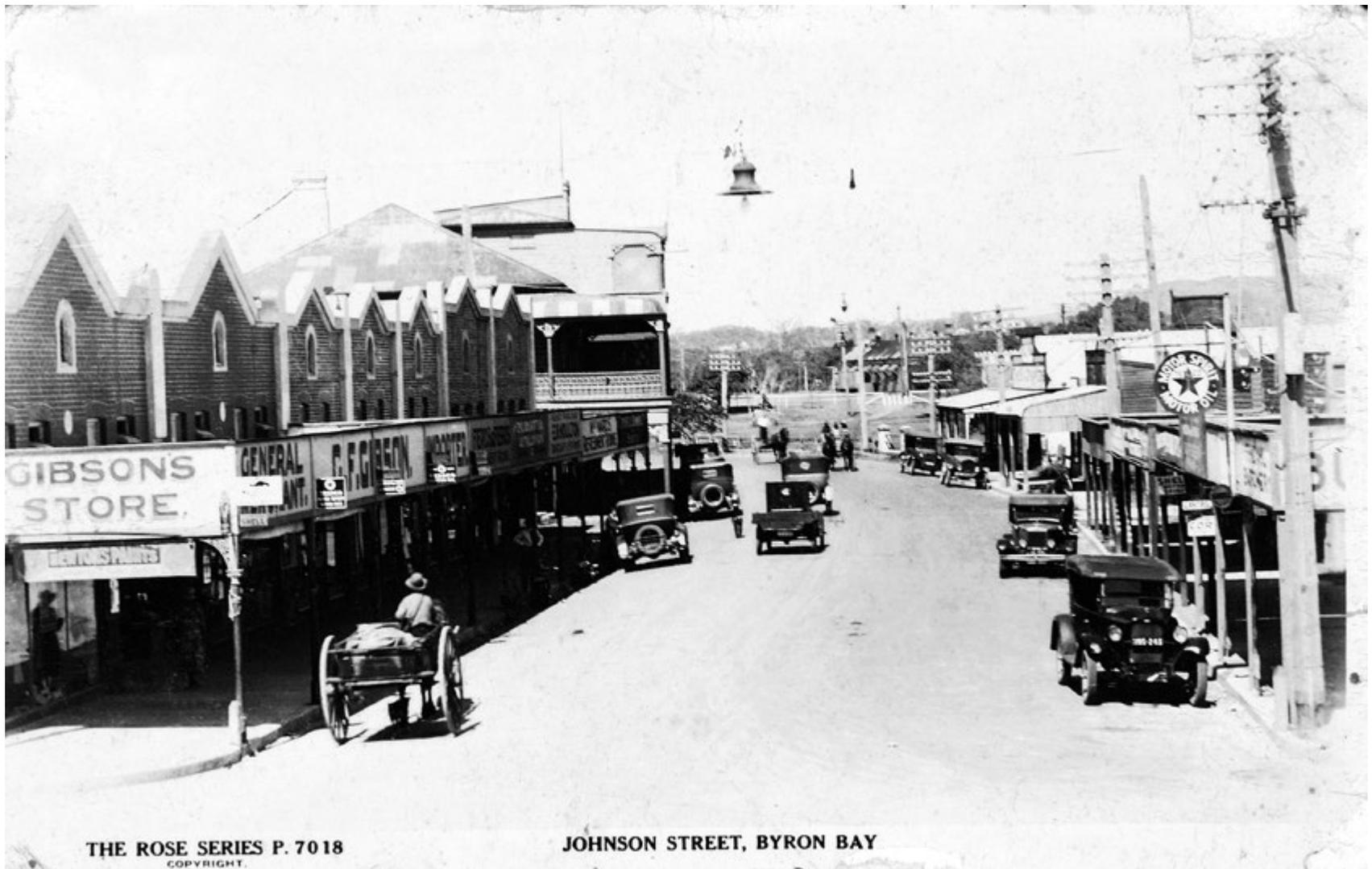
Main Beach c1925



SURFING BYRON BAY 1920S STYLE

The old jetty can be recognised by the cross cut supporting beams and the steam driven cranes on the jetty, dating this photo pre-1929. The funnels of a steam ship rise above the jetty.





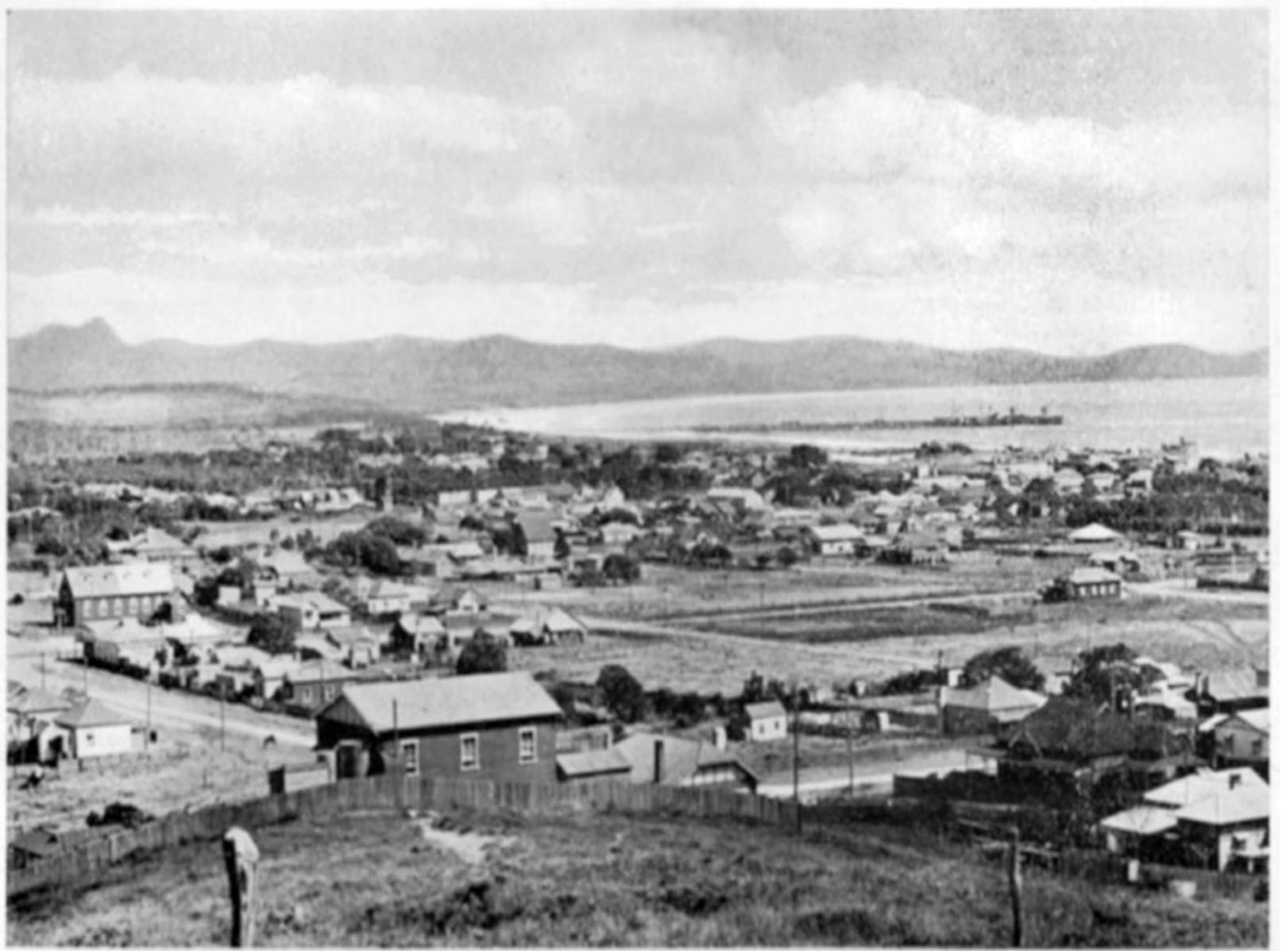
BYRON BAY c1927

Looking south down Johnson Street (from the corner of Johnson and Lawson streets), towards the railway station. The Great Northern Hotel is located back left.



BYRON BAY c1930

Looking west from Cape Byron towards Clarks Beach (note the sand hills) and Main Beach. The town of Byron Bay meets the end of the old jetty. The Wreck can be seen on the far side of the jetty. One piece of the jetty's deck is missing near the shoreline, indicating the likelihood of closure. The start of the new jetty may appear at the far end of the beach. Belongil Creek is located just out of the picture, to the back right.



BYRON BAY c1930

Viewed from Paterson Hill on the south-east side of town. The New Jetty is in the distance, opened in 1929. Electricity was introduced in 1926 (see power poles in photo). Ruskin Street, front left, runs down to the partially extended Catholic Church (fully renovated 1937).



BYRON BAY c1940

Looking west from Cape Byron towards Byron Bay. The two jetties are in the distance: the new jetty (to the right) was built in 1928 and dismantled in parts between the mid 1960s and 1970s.

BRUNSWICK VALLEY (EARLY HISTORY)

by Robyn Gray

The forest was impenetrable for the first settlers and most easily entered via the waterways of the Brunswick River. In some places the forest paused, creating open grassy areas often used by Indigenous people. For the first settlers, these clearings were ideal for resting and feeding themselves and their animals as they cut tracks through the undergrowth. Mullumbimby Grass, roughly at the southern end of the present Mullumbimby Golf Course, was where first settlers coming from Brunswick Heads made homes in the 1870s. The settlement included simple dwellings, a school, a slaughter house and later a church.

Brunswick Heads was a busy port that had been important to the cedar trade since 1849. By the late 1870s much of the cedar was gone and this is when the story of Mullumbimby really begins. The township at the 'Heads' had grown in importance throughout those pioneering years of timber cutting. However, when the railway line opened in 1894, bypassing the town, it began to decline. The police station went to Mullumbimby, and public buildings were moved. The dangerous river bar made shipping difficult and with the opening of the jetty at Byron Bay, there was a safer alternative for the ships.

The parishes of Billinudgel, Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby were surveyed in 1879. In 1881 the first farms were selected around Mullumbimby. Three years later William Bate and William Risley cut through the forest to the hill top at Jasper (later Federal) on the south west of the town and now at the edge of Byron Shire. Another settlement would soon be on its way.

Mullumbimby is located about 10 kilometres along the river from Brunswick Heads. This is where the Mullumbimby and Chinbible creeks flow into the Main Arm of the Brunswick River. Prior to the opening of the Lismore to Murwillumbah railway line in 1894, Mullumbimby was a scrappy settlement supporting

selectors and timber workers. However, after the railway was established it grew into a prosperous service centre for expanding rural industries.

In 1906 the Byron Shire was incorporated and councillors voted in favour of establishing their headquarters at Byron Bay. The people of Mullumbimby were not happy and began a campaign towards independence. Two years later the Mullumbimby Municipal Council was incorporated. The municipality covered not much more than one square mile and had 907 residents. The town soon began to prosper as surrounding industries continued to grow. The timber industry was already well established, and dairying and banana growing were reaching into the valleys of the shire, west of the town. Land selections at Main Arm continued until the late 1920s. The Mullumbimby Municipal Council opened a hydro-electricity undertaking in 1926 (built in the Byron Shire). The power station supplied electric light to Mullumbimby, Byron Bay, Bangalow and Brunswick Heads (1933). The Terrace Reserve became one of the first camping reserves in NSW to have electric light, adding to the reputation of Brunswick Heads as an ideal holiday location, known as 'the pearl of the Pacific'. In 1939 the Mullumbimby Municipal Council inaugurated its own water scheme, supplying the township of Mullumbimby. The electricity undertaking and the development of the water scheme were achieved by a municipal council made up of five councillors, a town clerk and an electrical engineer.

The two world wars came and went and the soldiers from the area took their part. After the Second World War the world at large began to change dramatically. After the privations of those war years, Australia entered a period of national prosperity and many people began to enjoy the good life.

Footnote: Brunswick Heads is located 13 kilometres north-west of Byron Bay



THE WATEGOS

Grandfather Watego came to Sydney from the Loyalty Islands (South Pacific) and belonged to the Salvation Army. He was a market gardener and known for his roses. Grandmother Watego was English, by her photos she looked very Italian. In 1914 Murray Mick Watego (son) moved to the Tweed River at 19 years old and married Mary Noels; they had ten children. Mick cooked for the cane cutters and farmed the land. Mick's sister Laurie came to Byron Bay and together with Mick bought land at Wategos Beach. Aunty Laurie worked as a cook at the Pier Hotel. Mick's boys Vincent, Lloyd, Clarrie and Colin cleared the acres to grow bananas and vegetables. Lloyd cut and sliced palm trees and built a cabin. We watched the *Wollongbar* go past our beach. My first memory of Wategos Beach was an old red house on the far end of the beach where an elderly Scottish lady Mrs Morris and my best friend Marie lived. She owned a horse and sulky (which could travel to town via the beach at low tide). Lloyd built our lovely four bedroom house which had a wood stove and kero' lights. Our beach then was called Little Beach. Our house was never short of visitors, each Sunday we sang around the piano. Pat was blessed with beautiful music, Vince was also a gifted musician and played at the local dances in a band, he was loved by everyone. Colin also had a great gift for playing the piano. We had many wonderful evenings at our house.

From the memoirs of Laura Beckers nee Watego – courtesy Suzie Beckers



Wategos Beach c1940, Blackmore's farm house in the distance



CAPE BYRON 1947

Wategos Beach right side with no road access.
Little Wategos Beach, currently with no sand, front
centre. Banana plantations and mixed vegetables
growing on the Cape. Sometimes cattle would
graze there too. Tallow Beach (back centre) runs
south to Broken Head. Seven Mile Beach in the far
distance goes all the way to Lennox Head.





ARTHUR MALIN AND THE MARLIN

Byron Bay fisherman Arthur Malin (pictured) and the 586 lb Marlin he caught on a hand line. Arthur was fishing Julian Rocks, about 2 miles off shore from Byron Bay, when he hooked this 11 foot, 9 inch fish. On 100 yards of 300 lb fishing line, 'the tug of war' began as Arthur tried to retrieve the huge fish. He had no choice except to let it 'run' as the Marlin continued to power away from the boat. The fishing line was tied to the bow of the dinghy, the small timber boat and its three horse power engine being pulled by the Marlin a further two miles out to sea. Three hours later the Marlin and Arthur were finally worn out. Having tied the fish to the side of the boat they slowly made their way back to the jetty. The Marlin was lifted by crane into a box trailer used by the fishermen to 'cart' their catch.

The box trailer was then hauled by hand to the railway weighbridge. Unable to lift the Marlin out, the box trailer was weighed on the weigh bridge, its weight later deducted from the total, leaving 586 lbs of fish.

Once in town the Marlin was strung up in a Moreton Bay Fig outside the old fishing co-op on Lawson Street. This photograph was taken in 1948.

In conversation with Arthur Malin



THE '54 CYCLONE

Somewhere around 1954, we had a big blow on, with a very large swell running across the bay, from the Cape towards Brunswick. The biggest waves I ever saw was when three waves, one after another covered Julian Rocks with green water. White water ran over the crest of the hill where the top pub (Beach Hotel) is today and down into the main street. The entire fishing fleet of 22 boats was lifted off the jetty deck and washed back into the sand hills. The two cranes washed into the ocean where they remain today and six hundred feet was wiped off the jetty". The 1954 cyclone saw the demise of the shipping industry and on the very same day, the whaling industry began, keeping the jetty alive.

Bill Haskew- from the journal of Paul Haskew.

The New Jetty, c1950



A DECADE OF DOMINATION

The Byron Bay Surf Life Saving Club was an overpowering force in local and regional surf life saving championships beginning in the 1948–1949 season. By the late fifties the club was winning both state and national titles.

Pictured: The March Past c1952.

Bill Haskew leads the Byron Bay Surf Club (team nearest to camera) at the branch championships held at Main Beach, Byron Bay.

Source: *Byron Bay and the Story of Surf Life Saving*, written by Harry Mercer, researched by Col Hadwell



LIFESAVERS

by Paul Haskew

‘Lifesavers (c1950) would spot for sharks from the towers located on Main Beach. If a large shark came within sight of the beach a bell would ring from the tower. With all the bravado of the old whaling crews, men from the surf club would quickly launch the surfboat in pursuit. A harpoon was tied to the rope from the forward belt reel and supported by one crew member. The crew, manoeuvring the boat by oar, paddled around the swimmers forcing the shark further out to sea. The harpoon was launched (by hand) if necessary denying the shark of its Main Beach meal.’



MURRAY VIEWS NO. 23 SURFING BEACH FROM PAVILION, BYRON BAY, N.S.W.

MAIN BEACH c1950

The new jetty in the background (the old jetty removed), the stern post of the Wreck visible, two shark towers located on the beach.

GROWING UP IN BYRON BAY

by Max Pendergast

I was born in 'The Bay' in 1943 and growing up here in the late 40s and early 50s was a fantastic experience. The population was so small that everyone knew everyone and looked out for them. It was like one big extended family.

Our house was in Fletcher St (where Passion Flowers now is located) and it was only a short walk up to Main Beach. Every day in summer, that's where I'd be. I had learned to swim (enough to save myself!) when I was five. My dad was a fisherman and he always took the time to show me the rips and other dangers to watch out for at the beach. From the age of eight I was allowed to go to the beach by myself. The only place I was never allowed to go was Tallows, because Mum and Dad considered it too dangerous. To this day I don't like or trust that beach. Even though I've surfed there many times, I always feel uneasy there.

My best mate Colin Farrell and I would beg, borrow or steal (mostly steal!) surf mats or surf-o-planes from the Surf Club and spend all day on them up at Main Beach. One day we found a couple of surfos in the dump. The club had thrown them out because they were perished. We went surfing on them, but they'd only hold air long enough for us to paddle out and catch a wave, before we'd have to blow them up again. We rode them until they just fell apart. One weekend we found an old, abandoned (at least we thought it was abandoned) aeroplane over in Butler Street. We managed to remove part of the tail section, which was made of a timber frame covered with fabric and quite light. We took it up to Main Beach and surfed on it until eventually it fell to pieces.

Byron Bay Surf Club was very strong in the craft events, so I suppose it was inevitable that I'd progress to stand

up surfing. In those days it was on the plywood racing boards known as 'tooth picks'. The boards were 16 feet long and very narrow. Riding them on a wave was tricky because they had a mind of their own in terms of what direction they went. We rode straight in towards the beach because it never occurred to us to angle across the wave.

When I was around fifteen, one of the senior club members, Dave 'Fatso' Phelps (who still lives out at Ewingsdale), had what was probably the first fibreglass board in the Bay and he would let me borrow it. One day I got my mum to drive me around to Wategos Beach. I don't know why I wanted to go there, because nobody ever went to Wategos to ride a board, only to go fishing. Maybe it was because I didn't want anyone to see me if I made a fool of myself. I remember surfing there for about two hours all by myself, still just going straight in. I think I was the first person to surf at Wategos, because the Keevers boys who lived there hadn't begun to surf at that time.

Mum and Dad bought my first surfboard from Joe Larkin, whose factory was in the main street in Coolangatta. I remember them driving me up there to pick it up. It cost 27 pounds, two and sixpence.

Towards the end of the 50s and early 60s, surfers from Sydney started to come to the Bay and with them came the newer style of surfing: angling across the face of the wave. From then on, surfing took off. The Bay became a magnet for surfers and filmmakers from all over the world because of its waves. I guess that's still true today.

My only sadness is that nowadays I don't have to go and look for someone to share the Pass on a perfect day. In fact I rarely, if ever, surf there anymore ...

BOOM TOWN WHALING

As the sirens signalled the return of the whaling boat, the children would be the first to race over to watch the whales being hauled in. The whaling industry became an early form of tourism in Byron Bay as cars diverted off the main road to see the spectacle. A railway line ran out along the jetty and the Green Frog towed the whales back to the whaling station on a flat bed trailer.

The flensing crew would then go to work, dicing up the blubber and dropping it down into a cooker located under the working deck. The oil extracted was exported to Europe. The by-product of meat meal was used as stock feed. The local meat works (1913–83), Byron Bay's biggest employer, formed the Byron Bay Whaling Company in 1954.

The company operated for only eight weeks a year due to the quota of 120 whales per year, increasing to 150 in 1959. The whaling station employed around one hundred workers who could earn up to five times the average wage due to a combination of excellent rates of pay and long hours. Employees worked seven days a week from 6 am till 6 pm: an 84 hour working week.

By 1961 whaling station inspector Stan Nolan said the whales had practically stopped coming. An airplane was then used for spotting the whales. Stan indicated the former Soviet Union had been culling large numbers of whales in the Antarctic using enormous mother ships for storage. The Byron Bay whaling industry closed down in 1962.

In conversation with Stan Nolan, Donny Campbell, Merv Whicker and Trevor King





The Flensing Crew c1958



BELONGIL CI950

Taken from the whale oil storage tanks opposite the whaling station. The sandy road heads northwest towards the mouth of Belongil estuary is Child Street; Mount Warning is in the distance. In the foreground, the road runs parallel to the railway line and goes from the jetty into town.





SUN GIRLS c1958

Byron Bay beach girls line up for judging at the Courier Mail 'Sun Beach Girl' competition. It was a big day out for all the girls, and contestants had come from as far away as Kyogle. Spectators gathered at Main Beach as a ramp was set up near the surf club to see the girls on parade. Note the new risqué strapless swimming costumes which had come into fashion. The newly crowned 'Sun

Beach Girl', Val Steward from Byron Bay (centre), went on to the final in Brisbane, staying at the smart Lennon's Hotel. The weekend beauty pageant included chauffeur-driven parades in open convertibles, interviews and swimsuit modelling. The lucky winner of the final was a local girl from Lennox Head.

In conversation with Val Steward



Byron Bay Cultural and Debating Society c1960

BYRON BAY CULTURAL AND DEBATING SOCIETY

‘It was known as “Catholic Hour”, 10 am, directly after church on a Sunday. We used to hop into the back of the Great Northern Hotel for a drink. With no Sunday trading allowed, there was always the risk of being caught by the police. They were pretty tough in those days, so the decision was made to take a couple of bottles or a dozen and head over to the beach front.

‘One of the guys went to Lismore to visit an old school friend who was fortunately a solicitor. We found out we were legally entitled to have a drink outdoors, provided the person who bought the beer didn’t drink it. There was a loophole in the

law, an elected “taker” would purchase the beer on a Saturday, ostensibly not consume any of it overnight, and bring it on the Sunday.

‘It was originally called the “Tatt’s Club”. Then one Sunday about twenty of us pitched in and bought a lottery ticket. We won twenty quid, decided to get a badge and have a name change. An agenda was put forward to Byron Council regarding the weekly meetings and the “Byron Bay Cultural and Debating Society” was formed.’

Adapted from a recorded conversation between Bill Reilly and Eric Wright

SAND MINING AT CLARKS BEACH

by Paul Haskew

'In the 1960s, the sand mining company Zircon Rutile travelled up the east coast of Australia wet-mining the sand dunes. Prior to sand mining in Byron Bay there were around 200 acres of majestic sand hills, the biggest of which were up to 200 feet high. The sand hills stretched from Clarks Beach to the surf club and inland to the recreation grounds. Nestled amongst the sand hills were two large freshwater lagoons. Behind the lagoons and sand hills ran a small belt of tea-tree swamp, where the football fields and Scout hall are now located.

'This was an incredible playground for us kids of Byron Bay, with our underground forts, tin

canoes and Huckleberry Finn outlook on life. Unfortunately Zircon Rutile, with permission from the Department of Lands, had a different idea: namely profitability. As the company began to mine the beach, more employment was created for the town and our playground slowly diminished.

'The karmic carousel continued, as the goodwill of selling our sand dunes returned in the form of landfill some 20 years later. A good part of Byron Bay is around sea level and, in some parts, a little below. Many properties, including the school, church and hospital, used this landfill to raise their height. The landfill was found to be contaminated and had to be removed from all sites.'





Sand Mining c1967, Clarks Beach, Byron Bay

Footnote: The sand hills in Byron Bay between Clarks Beach and town were a wind-blown sand drift that over the years (c1920s) buried the road, police station and courthouse. The Department of Lands needed to release more land in Byron Bay and sand mining prepared the land for development while creating employment and revenue.

The 1954 and 1974 cyclones did enormous damage to the beaches north of Cape Byron down to Brunswick Heads. During the 1954 cyclone, the waves were so big they rolled over Main Beach and

down Jonson Street (a few of the old locals reported riding those waves!). The white water and foam reached Woolworths. In the early 1950s the beach was far greater in size than it is today. It has been estimated that between 10 and 30 metres was eroded from the beach after each cyclone.

With the demise of the Jetty in Byron Bay in 1954, an artificial harbour was built at Brunswick Heads in the early to mid-1960s. The north and south walls of the harbour, known as 'train walls', were constructed, shooting straight out into the ocean. They were

designed to provide protection for the fishing fleet, which was relocating to Brunswick Heads from Byron Bay in the late 1960s.

Then in 1974, Cyclone Pam devastated the coast. To the north of Brunswick Heads, the cabins at a spot called Sheltering Palms were washed away, and the houses from North Head Road up to New Brighton were severely damaged or destroyed. The residents of New Brighton, looking for refuge against the ocean, built their own groyne out into the ocean, about three kilometres north of the Brunswick River. The groyne was later removed

by public works.

In Byron Bay, the surf club was almost washed into the ocean. Following Cyclone Pam, the Jonson Street rock groyne was constructed on the ocean side of the Main Beach car park, at the end of Jonson Street. Work initially began on the groyne in the mid 1960s.

Other factors that have contributed to the erosion of the beach include removal of both jetties, rough seas and big tides.

In conversation with Keith Anderson, Trevor King, George Morrison and Frank Mills



Locals, Ruskin Street Byron Bay, c1968. Paterson Hill and the water tower back right of photo.

SURFING, A NEW ERA

by Paul Haskew

‘We saw the biggest change in surfing when Phil Edwards and his mates arrived from California and Hawaii with their Malibu surf boards. They surfed their way up the east coast of NSW sometime in 1959–60, staying for a few weeks in Byron Bay as a good autumn swell provided perfect waves at Wategos and the Pass. The Americans met up with a few of the bigger lads from the surf club, surfing on their hollow plywood surf boards. As far as performance in the waves, our local

boards were a bit clumsy compared to the fibreglass and foam boards from California.

‘A new era in surfing was being born as Phil and his mates finally headed north towards Noosa Heads, leaving a legacy with their new found friends from Byron Bay; one Californian Malibu surf board and a few hints and tips on how to hang five and ride the tube. It wasn’t long afterwards that surf board manufacturing began in earnest.’



GET A HAIRCUT OR GET OUTA TOWN

Extracted from Stoked by Bob McTavish

Sydney, October '62 ... The North Coast express was crowded as we tumbled into our second-class seats. No sleeper. No recliner. Just a hard seat and an occasional crash-out on a bit of floor. As we travelled north through the night, the train got emptier as people got off at Taree, Kempsey, Coffs Harbour, and Grafton. So finally, we were able to sleep full-length on the seats, as dawn broke around Lismore. The last leg to Byron was worth the whole trip, as we came through the cutting at Saint Helena hill, wowed by the vista of the Bay! The sleepy headland projecting way out into the shimmering ocean, with the arching crescents of the sandy beaches stretching north and south. Paradise!

We alighted at the stylish old station with its hundred coats of paint, and got our boards out of the goods car at the rear of the mostly empty carriages. Then we carried our stuff out to the small park in front of the station to figure out what the next move was.

A white Falcon, obviously a cop car, slowly rolled towards the station, checking out new arrivals, apparently. A dozen or so normal people had got off here, as well as us two not-so-normals. In an instant, he was on to us. From the driver's window, a big head with a blue open-neck shirt barked at us.

Get a haircut or get outa town, Surfie mongrels!

We acted friendly, and innocent, not reacting to the aggression. I gave the cop a slight wave, and a nod. He kept the Falcon rolling, and after staring us down, continued on his way.

A friendly local surf-club guy who saw our boards, and the incident, offered us a lift in his ute to Wategos Beach, where we intended to camp for a few days.

You reckon the cops will chase us outa town if we camp at Wategos, Bob? asked Terry.

Naw! She'll be sweet, mate! I assured him, believing

Wategos was remote enough not to trouble the cops.

The local bloke's name was Johnno, and as he drove he told us a story of the local clubbie on a surfplane getting hurled out of the water by a great white shark recently. Hmm. Welcome to Byron! He trundled us around the headland to Wategos, we thanked him and he drove off. I have seen him many times since; we talked just a few weeks ago.

Terry and I dropped our stuff on the grass near where the shower and toilet block stands today. There were only two old deserted timber houses in Wategos at the time, and they soon disappeared as well. One was pulled off its stumps by a crazy Bondi guy called Pythagoras during Easter, '63. He hitched a hunk of thick rope around his tow-bar and drove! The whole house slumped forward, and slowly bent as it wrapped itself over the ill-positioned stumps. Not a good thing to do.

Terry and I were getting ready for a surf, when two girls came walking along the beach toward us. Byron people were so friendly in the early sixties, and even chicks were not afraid to be friendly with us visiting surfers.

We chatted for a few minutes; they were really nice girls.

Suddenly, the white Falcon appeared around the small corner, and skidded to a halt right on top of us. Both doors swung open, and instantly the big sergeant grabbed Terry by the hair, and literally swung him around! Terry was flying through the air in a circle! Then he hit the ground, and his hand went to the hot-spots on his head where blood had started to flow. The cop actually had two handfuls of Terry's hair in his hands!

I told you poofers to get out of my town! Now get in the car!

Luvly hair, eh Sarge? Better get 'em a haircut, hey? said the younger cop, as he grabbed me by the hair and hustled me to the car. It really hurt! I couldn't imagine

what pain Terry was in. The bloody patches in his hair looked horrible.

They left our stuff there, and the cops drove off with us wedged in the back seat with the constable. The sergeant told the dumbstruck girls not to ever have anything to do with surfer boys, and get on home, now!

Then they took us to the local barbershop next door to the Ryan Sisters' Café, and pushed us in. The barber put down his newspaper and got up, smiling. The cops had brought him business. He joined in their mocking, and I decided he was a gutless man. This cop really ran this town!

The big sergeant stuck his hand in my pockets, searching me. He found my only money, a ten-bob note, and handed it to the barber.

Give him a quarter-inch crew cut! Make it real short! and flicked him my ten bob. The barber chuckled. He then did the same to Terry, found a note, and gave the same order. Terry and I were dumbstruck. Still in shock. No words would help this situation. We just accepted our fate.

I'm goin' back around to Wategos to get their stuff. You take 'em to the lock-up when they're done, he told the constable.

Terry and I spent the afternoon and night in the Byron Bay lock-up, two cells out the back of the timber station itself, the same as today. There was a third old bloke in the other cell, but the door was unlocked so he could come and go as he pleased. Turned out he was a homeless dude, Byron's one-and-only in '63, unlike today, when there'd be a hundred. So the sergeant did have a heart in there somewhere.

Next morning, the cops' tune was different. Maybe they rang Sydney police to check up on us, our addresses and bona fides, etc. Perhaps they found out that Terry's dad was Chief Inspector of Police!

They brought us breakfast to our cell: bacon and eggs and thick toast from Ryan's Café – the only meal I'd ever had

from there! Couldn't afford café food. Then they ran us, with our boards sticking out of the boot, to the northern edge of town, so we could hitch to Queensland. Which we did.

Terry didn't tell his dad about the incident for around twenty years. Too embarrassed. His dad said recently that if he'd known, he would have gone through the Byron Bay police like a dose of salts!

For the next ten years, Sergeant Simpson tried hard to keep the riffraff out of his town. He mistook us for troublemakers, just because our hair was a little long. He judged us wrongly. We loved the Bay, and were very peaceable characters. He got to know and accept me later, when my wife and I came to live at Lennox Head, just down the coast a little. He made some lame excuse to visit, and he knew I was the guy he'd abused and shorn and thrown out of town.

He didn't apologise – just sort-of sized me up. I could tell he saw me very differently from '62.

I also know that one night he single-handedly evicted about twenty-five bikies from the Top Pub and the town itself. Unbelievable! And he had a real concern for the welfare of the young locals, even dropping them home at night if he thought some young girl was out too late. He knew their names, and where they all lived, even as far away as Mullumbimby, twenty minutes up the road.

He also set up the first dope bust in Byron, in 1968. He'd never seen dope before, and the so-called 'pot' he 'found' in a mate's place was a matchbox of literal grass, cut with scissors! It's amazing the stuff the cops could get away with then.

Before he passed away, he must have been horrified at the state of his beloved town. Dope, hippies, surfers, and radicals not only lived here, they owned half the joint! Crazy town.



Wategos Beach 1963



Cape Byron c1970s



ACTION ON THE JETTY

by Paul Haskew

'The Byron Bay Whaling Station and Abattoir pumped their offal and blood along the jetty through a 12 inch pipe, directly into the Pacific Ocean. Thousands of gallons of blood and offal turned the ocean into something like the red sea. This provided the kids of Byron Bay with such an adrenaline rush, catching and experiencing the phobia of countless dozens of sharks!

'The pylons of the jetty were made of turpentine timber and in the splash zone a mass of razor sharp barnacles. Early one morning a local boy was spear fishing off the end of the jetty. To gain his attention our "cooees", whistling and pippy throwing alerted him to a 16-foot tiger shark bearing towards him. Adrenaline pumping, the young spear fisherman shimmied up a vertical pylon, taking all in his stride. Within seconds, he was standing on the deck of the jetty, eighteen feet up, bleeding profusely from his feet, arms and legs. I never saw that kid spear fish again. Actually I never saw him swim in the ocean again.'



SURFING THE JETTY

by Paul Haskew

‘When surf board riding began we used to lie in the sun on the jetty, watching out for that perfect set of waves to roll in. Throwing sheets of newspaper into the ocean was our way of testing the water for sharks. If there were any sharks, the newspaper would foam alive from the ensuing frenzy. Anything to hit the water was taken! If the sheets of newspaper sank

untouched, then into the ocean we’d go. This is when the action began, throwing our Malibus into the water and jumping eighteen feet down into the ocean. We quickly retrieved our surf boards and paddled into the take-off zone to catch a perfect wave into the beach. Then walk back out along the jetty and warm up in the sun. This reduced our time in the water as there were no wet suits in the ’60s and more importantly reduced our shark fodder time.’

The new jetty, 2005 feet long

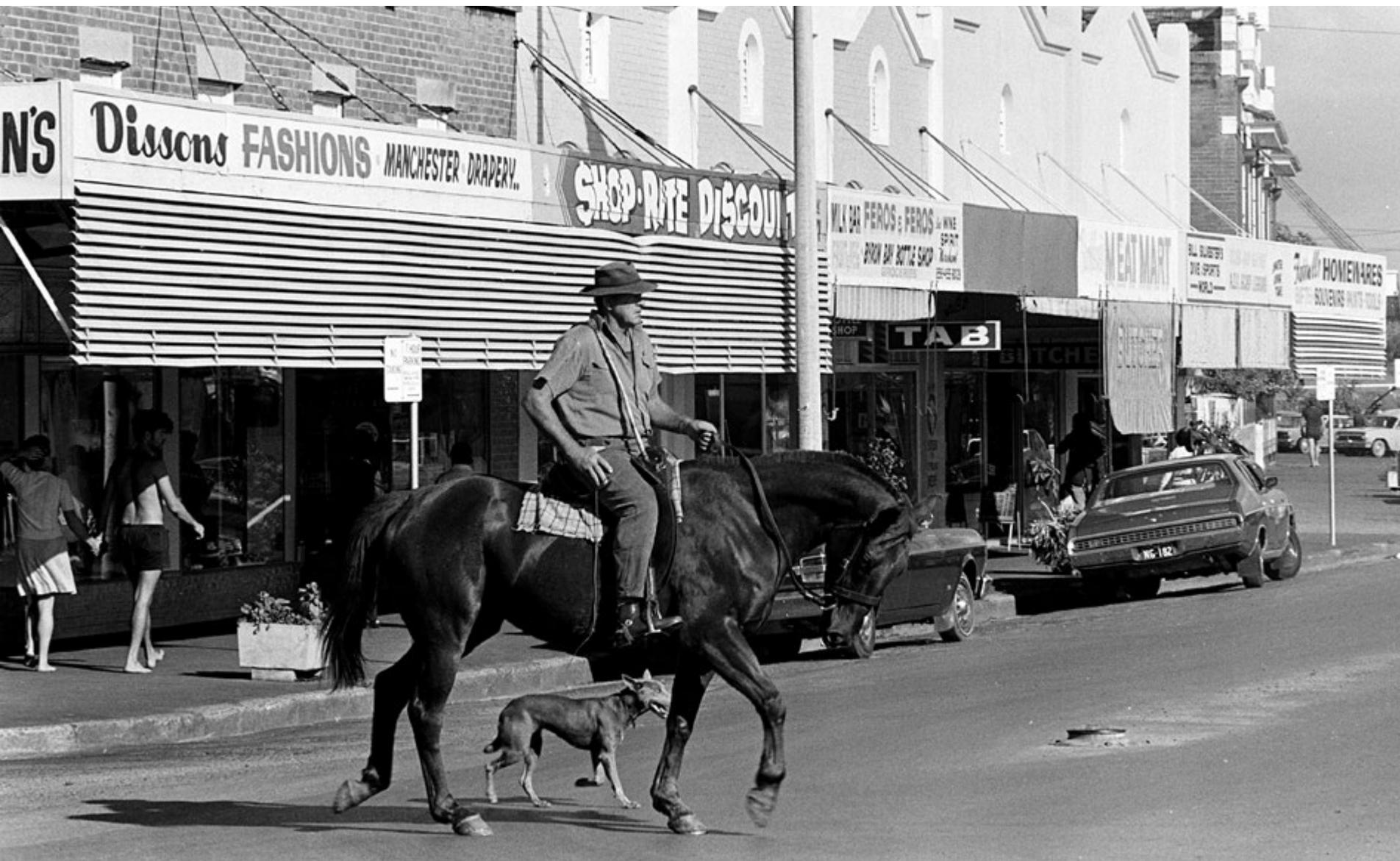


PHOTO COURTESY LEE PEARCE

Jonson Street Byron Bay 1975

DECLINING RURAL INDUSTRIES

Rural industries, including dairying and timber, were rationalised in the 1960s. New regulations and requirements revealed how marginal some dairy enterprises had been. The dairy farmers in the district had nothing but their land left when the process was finished. Many dairy farmers left the industry. Others moved into beef cattle production, while others changed professions completely, becoming real estate agents and developers as the pressure for residential housing began to grow.

Timber quotas saw the last sawmill closed and sold in Mullumbimby in 1964. This was a terrible blow to the town. The banana industry, which had once been strong despite disease and other problems, went into decline. Everything was changing in Mullumbimby, and in Byron Bay the food processing plant and the meat works had seen lean times. The region was looking to reinvent itself. Social changes and population movement provided some hope and by the late 1960s and early 1970s Australians were beginning to want to make changes to their lifestyles. Some were moving to the Byron Shire to make new lives.

Source: Robyn Gray

OCEAN SHORES

Development began in the north of Byron Shire in the late 1960s at Ocean Shores. By 1974 development company Princess Properties sold off 1200 blocks of land at an average price of \$7500. Princess Properties was owned by Daniel Ludwig, who also owned the Myocum Pastoral Company, which had extensive holdings throughout the Brunswick Valley. Ludwig, one of the world's richest men, owned the world's fifth largest shipping fleet, was the biggest private coal producer and the second biggest real estate developer in the United States.

Early on in the Whitlam administration, Ludwig attempted to move his tax base to Australia and when he was unable to make satisfactory arrangements he pulled out of Australia altogether. The whole Myocum Pastoral Company's assets were auctioned off, including the Ocean Shores Development. Interests associated with Alan Bond purchased the development and then planned the biggest development in Australian history.

A fully-fledged town was planned, capable of supporting an additional 6000 people, with a golf course, university, shopping centres and a hospital. There was even a rumour Bond intended to defend the Americas Cup there! The grand development plan was knocked back by council and then taken over by the State Government. The covenants that restricted Ocean Shores to upmarket development were downgraded, reducing block prices from around \$15,000 to around \$7500. Ocean Shores took off.

The State Government established the Billinudgel Nature Reserve, incorporating just over 400 hectares of native bushland.

NEW FOLK IN THE VALLEY

by Frank Mills

When the hippies found the North Coast
With its scenery and natural charm,
The place where it all started
Was the top end of Main Arm.
Before they had found Nimbin
And the beautiful beaches of Byron Bay,
They settled in banana packing sheds
Deciding this was where they'd stay.
Col was the leader of the hippies
He purchased 400 acres of land,
Whatever he would do with it
The locals couldn't understand.
But times were quickly changing
When these new folk came into view,
Men had hair down to their shoulders
And some women were topless too.

The news had spread extensively
About the land which time forgot,
The new life based on natural living
Growing vegies and a little pot.
They had friends in the ABC
Who thought a little their way,
It made news in a documentary
And the new folk had their say.
There were other well-known people
Who liked to live this way,
But they had lots of money
So they settled in Byron Bay.
Although the hippy lifestyle
Is no longer on the scene,
The people who promoted it
Are now known as the greens.

Frank Mills farmed the Top End of Main Arm for 32 years, before selling 400 acres to the new folk called the hippies, in 1971. This was before the Aquarius Festival at Nimbin in 1973, when the area became so popular with the 'Alternative' Society.



AQUARIUS FESTIVAL

In 1973 a ten-day cultural, arts and music event called the Aquarius Festival was held in Nimbin, 41 km west of Byron Bay. The Australian Students Union organised the event, in aspiration of returning back to nature and celebrating the values of happiness, freedom and wellbeing. The hippy communities at Mullumbimby and Main Arm were approached to host the festival but many of the new settlers wanted to avoid large crowds. Nimbin was eventually chosen as the dairy industry was being rationalised and the declining population made it the ideal site. The Aquarius Festival inspired a movement of people that helped transform the region. New communities started flowing into the far north coast of NSW, an area today known as the rainbow region.

In the 1970s, hippies were responsible for creating communes throughout the region. They were also forerunners in organising the local markets to which they supplied produce, arts and crafts. Interestingly, in the 1920s, the Chinese lived in communes when gold was mined in the hinterland of the Clarence and Richmond Rivers, 150 km to the south. When the mines closed, the Chinese grouped together in communes in the valleys of Byron Shire. Eventually the men returned to China as very few Chinese women were allowed to enter Australia.

In conversation with Frank Mills





Dancing in the street, Nimbin 1973

CATCHING ANOTHER KIND OF WAVE

by the late Nicholas Shand

Waves have been pounding the Byron shire since time immemorial. During the fifties the Great Australian Surfie discovered the quality of those waves and was for a long time able to keep them as his own preserve.

In the early 1970s a new kind of wave hit the Byron shire and this one swept up the valleys and over the hills. It was a wave of patchwork colour, an unwashed wave, a laughing wave, a wave of love and confusion, a very hairy wave and very often a stark naked wave; a wave full of new thoughts and old ideals – a wave of alternatives.

The sixties had finally caught up with the Byron shire. The hippies were arriving.

Their advent was a microcosm of what was happening throughout the western, and part of the eastern, world. Dropping out, getting high, revising values, living and giving, founding communes, blowing yourself apart and then putting yourself back together again, only different, were the powerful aphrodisiacs of that heady time.

For those in the shire who got off the beaches and ventured west, a wonderland was in store. Beautiful valleys, rolling wooded hillsides with spectacular views, cooling creeks and lots of space. Old farmhouses, emptied through the post-war rural depopulation, were cheap to rent. Old sheds left from the halcyon banana days of the fifties were even cheaper.

Dropping out is, essentially, an experimental search for freedom. Up here in the early seventies that search led to all sorts of fun and a whole variety of realisations.

Moon dances, where every freak in Main Arm and their offspring (barely 200) gathered as an extended family to listen to the original Chincogan band (no booze in

those peaceful far out days); the weekend barter and wholefood market, first held in Coopers Lane – a bunch of parsley and a magic mushroom for a packet of beedies; the first home births, as often as not in a field as there was hardly a house – and eat the placenta (it says so in the hippy rule book); and the new born names, aagh!

Blossom, Jasmine, Rainforest, Mango, Lotus, three siblings called Fern, Tree and Valley; hitch hiking naked into town with nary a glance from those that gave you a lift; and music was everywhere – in the valleys, the sheds, the fields and on the beach.

They were easy, colourful days. The old locals were often agog, forever amused, sometimes fearful, actually interested and they realised that a little prosperity was returning to the valleys. Land prices rose and turnover increased ...

Wave upon wave has invaded the shire since those days. Hippies kept coming and the counter culture expanded. In the eighties came the richer drop outs from the cities, swapping their cashed up eastern suburbs houses for a bit of paradise and a healthy bank balance.

The shire's character has changed forever; rural peace has given way to rural smallholding; the empty cobwebbed lanes have given way to the tourist route and the sleepy hollow of Byron has been made to wake up and grow up

...

But there is a legacy in them thar hills, born of a wave of madness and mushrooms, hope and freedom and a generation of release.

Nicholas Shand, journalist & founder, *The Brunswick Byron Echo* (now *The Byron Shire Echo*), 1991



Munchies Byron Bay 1978

HARE KRISHNA FESTIVAL



APEX PARK MIDLANDS
SUN 23RD MAY 2 P.M.

- * DEMONSTRATION OF BHAKTI YOGA
- * MANTRA MEDITATION
- * SINGING, DANCING, CHANTING
- * FREE VEGETARIAN FEAST

COUNTRY HOEDOWN
THIS SUNDAY



SAVE THE RAINFOREST

In 1979 a student gathering and anti-logging protest made national headlines at Terania Creek. The demonstration lasted 28 days and there were about 200 people in residence. They moved into the forest and set up camp, people coming and going throughout the demonstration. The protestors formed a human barrier as the new settlers defied the odds and held off the work in progress. A commissioned inquiry was called and the result was a new World Heritage listed region known as Protectors Falls.

There was much jubilation at the preservation of priceless rainforest – environmental history had been made. Photographer and environmentalist David Kemp states, ‘In the Australian context, it is regarded as the first major social action to bring awareness with the success of saving a rainforest. It became the model for subsequent ones like the Franklin and the Daintree. Following Terania, a year or so later was the Nightcap blockade, the 30th anniversary approaches.’

In conversation with Peter Hamilton and David Kemp





George Feros 1979

THE MAN WITH THE BELL AND BOX

by Rusty Miller

In the early seventies a silver-haired, stocky built Greek immigrant, George Feros, could be seen each morning cleaning the walkways and streets of Byron Bay. This daily self-imposed mission restored half of the CBD from the previous day's usage.

Then in the evenings at the Top Pub, as the crowds frolicked and danced to the live rock bands, George would circulate through the throngs of rocking, smoking and drinking people. Gently waving his hand bell he would ask for donations towards his dream, the building of an aged persons home. As the years progressed, people warmed to his persistent sincerity of mission, giving more coins and notes.

George, the sound of his bell and the small wooden, white, red and blue donation box became a Byron icon. When George passed away, his \$120,000 collection paid for the George Feros Memorial Hostel, a nursing home that cares for elderly people.

Excerpt from *Rusty's Byron Guide*



PHOTO COURTESY RUSTY MILLER

George Feros on the way to his labour of love,
corner of Jonson & Lawson streets, 1972



THE ARTS & MUSIC

Byron Bay was entertained by a wonderful array of international musicians during the early 1980s. The music industry flourished as artists Bo Diddley (pictured), Robert Cray, Steely Dan, Doobie Brothers, Joan Armatrading, Grace Knight, Rick Whiteman and many other fantastic artists were attracted to town. Recording studios were established as the music industry found real credibility.

The catalyst to the music industry, the late Dan Doeppel, transformed the old piggery into a venue known as the Arts Factory. The Arts Factory became like an incubator for the craft industry in Byron Bay. The live-in community was made up of mostly Americans and it appeared almost every night was cause for celebration. With the owner's vision (he knew it was a great venue) the cultural direction soon changed and a licensed rock and roll venue became the focus.

Byron Bay soon became an attraction for young people around the world. European backpackers would stumble across town; there was hardly anyone here, beautiful beaches, great surf, lots of sun and fabulous bands playing at night. The town, however, wasn't big enough to support the industry; there simply weren't enough people here. So the Arts Factory turned into a Backpackers hostel as the RSL and pubs gave their support to the local music industry.

The Arts Factory was the original venue for the first East Coast Blues and Roots Music Festival in 1990. Today the old piggery has been transformed into the Byron Bay Premium Brewery and Buddha Bar/Restaurant.

The East Coast Blues & Roots Festival has evolved into the award winning Byron Bay Blues Festival, Australia's largest and most successful international blues and roots festival..

In conversation with Marion & Jim Stephens and Bill Conner



THE FACE OF BYRON

This internationally renowned mural on the Byron Bay Community Centre attracted much attention from the moment it was painted in 1984. It was designed and created by three of the new wave of artists (Jan Rae, Geraldine Searles and Nicki Neon) who arrived and settled in Byron Bay during the early 1980s. The mural depicted actual characters living in the area.

Originally formed as the Mechanics Institute in 1892, the building was erected in 1895. In 1913 a new building was constructed and the name changed to the Literary Institute. This is where the community would gather for

concerts, eisteddfods, billiards, wrestling and boxing matches. The most popular was the cinema with balcony and individual 'seating ownership'.

In 2003 the community centre building was redeveloped to the Byron Bay Community and Cultural Centre. The centre is equipped with a state of the art cinema and conference rooms, and is staffed by more than 50 volunteers. The main activities are cultural events and community development. An information directory is produced and there is a Salvation Army Drop In and a Homeless Breakfast.

In conversation with Kathy Bardos and Eric Wright



Pig art competition,
'The Piggery'-Arts Factory 1984





HARMONIC CONVERGENCE

Groups of people around the world gathered for the dawn, to meditate for world peace at significant sites. The fishermen at Cape Byron were surprised to discover, as the sun rose, their huge audience (1987).



The Pass, looking west to Mt Warning,
Mt Chincogan is to the right.



‘HELLO MUM WILL YOU SEND ME MORE MONEY’

The backpacker has a huge presence in Byron Bay adding to the excitement and buzz that is Byron. With your positivity and good energy, we welcome you and hope you enjoy your stay in Byron Bay (please take care).



NO MACKIN WAY

The 1990s saw the emergence of many social and environmental action groups in Byron Bay. The Byron Bay Chamber of Commerce sent out a clear message in writing to multinationals Pizza Hut, KFC and McDonald's suggesting they were not appropriate for town.

CLUB MED AND BECTON DEVELOPMENT PLANS

In the early nineties Club Med bought a 63 hectare site in the northern part of Byron Bay and began plans for a major development. The location, with its picturesque groves of trees and sandy walking tracks, adjoined a virtually deserted section of Belongil Beach. Club Med planned to build a massive \$80 million, 3000 bed tourist resort.

The prospect brought the Byron Shire community together in outrage. Between 1991 and 1996 community members and businesses joined forces and fought to have the development approval overturned. Byron Shire Business for the Future (BSBF), an alliance of business owners and professionals, with the support of the community, took the local council to court over the approved tourist facility.

Byron Shire's residents were against unlimited development and felt the site was ecologically sensitive. Many were also convinced the Club Med business was not in the best interests of the town and its culture, believing that the resort would be built by outsiders and that key staff, as a matter of policy, were rotated between Club Med resorts every six months, thus providing few opportunities for locals. As well as the likelihood of profits being directed offshore, other negatives included more traffic, more stress on the already overloaded infrastructure and a fair chance of more effluent flowing into Belongil Estuary.

It was the first time the town had joined together with a unified voice. A media campaign and protest rallies

were organised and BSBF's appeal saw the Land and Environment Court overturn the development approval. An environmental issue won the day: an endangered species, the comb-crested jacana, or 'Jesus bird' (which walks on the lilies), was given precedence over the development. No social issues were argued in court.

Club Med never returned to submit another development application and it later sold the site. A Melbourne property development company, Becton, purchased the land and devised a new project with more than 354 units on part of the site, with environmental repair works and a nature reserve. Again the prospect of intensive development faced massive local resistance. In 2003, 1500 people protested on Main Beach against the development. Despite the protest and a concerted local campaign against the Becton project, the State Government approved the development.

Following the credit crisis in 2008, Becton placed the development project on the back burner and in 2010 it sold the entire site to private buyers. Future plans for the site are unknown; however as the area remains environmentally fragile, it is hoped careful deliberation will be implemented in the undertaking of any future development.

Source: Tom Wilson and Rainbow Dreaming, 'Protest in Paradise' story by Wroth Wall

CLUB MED
GO AWAY
DONT COME BACK





JABILUKA

In 1998, the Mirrar people of the Northern Territory called on activists to come from around Australia and the world to blockade the construction of the Jabiluka mine at Kakadu. Over 500 people were arrested during the course of the eight-month blockade.

In 2010, the Australian Nursing Federation urges the Australian Government to lobby for the elimination of all nuclear weapons. Uranium mining continues in Australia as the stockpile of nuclear weapons decreases worldwide from estimates of 62,000 to 23,000.

Source: Wikipedia and *Byron Shire Echo*



Looking for a nuclear free, renewable
energy and peaceful future



Mandy Nolan demonstrating for human rights against the mandatory detention of refugees, 2002.



THE TAO OF POOH

In 1997 the Tallow Estuary, on the southern side of Byron Bay, was in trouble. The South Byron Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) was discharging treated sewage into the sensitive Estuary, which flowed into the ocean nearby.

It was a time of high population growth and booming real estate. Pressure on the Estuary would only increase over time, in spite of programs to reuse treated effluent on the Byron Golf Course and other areas. It was a common problem in seaside areas all along the coast.

After community consultation and legal action, Byron Shire Council decided to close the South Byron STP and divert effluent to the West Byron STP for reuse on 40 hectares of purpose-built wetlands, in an ecologically based management model to minimise environmental impacts on habitat, waterways and community. Ongoing management would be required to ensure protection for the nearby sensitive Belongil wetlands and Estuary.

The successful wetland model for effluent management is now the largest in Australia and is being introduced in other sites around the country. In 2010 Byron Shire's Brunswick River Estuary Management Plan and Sewerage Augmentation Scheme won the United Nations Association of Australia's Excellence in Overall Environmental Management Local Government Award. The Council worked for more than 10 years with community groups and the Brunswick River Wastewater Steering Committee on the project, which takes in many of the lessons learned in the West Byron STP.

Free from effluent, the Tallow Estuary is now regenerating and the environment is improving for fish, prawns and birds.

Source: David Pont, designer of West Belongil Wetlands





NUDE AIN'T RUDE

In 1997, a 'clothes optional' swimming rally was held at Belongil Beach. Entertainment included naked comedy, surfing, reggae music and body percussion. The campaign was unsuccessful on the chosen site, however 'clothes optional' swimming was approved beyond the residential houses north along the Belongil spit.

Source: *Byron Shire Echo*



Byron Markets

Art, Craft, Music, Live Performance, Organic Produce, Culinary Delights, Psychic Readings (Tarot, Numerology, Astrology), Clairvoyants, Massage & Healing.

MONTHLY REGIONAL MARKETS

BYRON BAY REGIONAL MARKETS — *1st Sunday of the month at Butler Street Reserve.*

BYRON ARTISIAN MARKETS — *Saturday evenings October to Easter at Railway Park.*

BRUNSWICK HEADS MARKETS — *1st Saturday of the month by the Brunswick River.*

LENNOX HEAD MARKETS — *2nd & 5th Sundays of the month at Lake Ainsworth.*

THE CHANNON MARKETS — *2nd Sunday of the month at Coronation Park.*

BANGALOW MARKETS — *4th Sunday of the month at the showgrounds.*

Local performer Suzy Leigh, as Tina Trash, in *The Good Time Show*.



Byron Shire – One of Australia’s richest areas for plant and wildlife diversity.

The Byron Bay orchid

PATERSON HILL – SAVED BY A MOUSE, AN ORCHID AND 1000 PROTESTORS

Snaking across the landscape at the southern end of the Cape Byron Ridge is Paterson Hill (named after the poet Banjo Paterson), the smaller brother of Cape Byron and made of the same ancient sediments. It supports a unique plant community known as ‘dwarf gramminoid heath’, containing many rare species. Protecting this special place has involved two major environmental campaigns over a 12-year period.

The first began in 1992, when the State Government proposed to subdivide Crown Land west of Paterson Street adjoining Browning Street. This hilltop had been a favourite of local historian Eric Wright, as it gave views over the town and hinterland unimpeded

by powerlines. It was also a popular spot for surfers to check conditions at Byron’s surf breaks.

Following community lobbying led by Veda Turner, the council unanimously opposed the Government’s proposal; a rare event at that time. The State offered a compromise in the form of a small hilltop reserve. However the proposed two-storey units promised to bring an unprecedented wave of unit development to the Paterson Street ridgeline, contravening Council’s Local Environment Plan (LEP) and posing a risk to the biodiversity of the area.

Continue...

After several years of campaigning activities, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) carried out an investigation of environmental values. It discovered that the site was home to the rare and endangered eastern chestnut mouse. This revelation led to the withdrawal of the proposed development and the creation of a nature reserve on the land. The hilltop lookout was formally named after Eric Wright and its management was given to the Paterson Street Hilltop Reserve Trust.

But Paterson Hill, with its sweeping views over the lighthouse, the ocean and the nearby Cimum Margil wetland, wasn't out of danger. The freehold land to the east of Paterson Street was also facing development. It was known as the 'Detala' land after the Detala Development Group, which had gained approval through the Land and Environment Court for residential development of the heath land.

The Paterson Hill Action Group, directed by Peter Hamilton, swung into action. The group's campaign saw more than 6000 submissions sent to the State Government protesting the development.

The campaign's turning point came when an endangered diuris orchid, commonly known as the Byron Bay Orchid, was found on Paterson Hill. First discovered on Cape Byron in the 1920s, the diuris orchid was thought to be extinct for decades, having been eaten by the lighthouse goats. In 1997 the

endangered species was rediscovered and it became the emblem of the Paterson Hill campaign.

On 28 October 1999, 1000 protesting residents gathered in Pacific Vista Drive and blocked the developer's earthmoving equipment from reaching the land in the largest civil protest in Byron's history. Byron Bay Councillor, Richard Staples, set up an office on top of the excavator's arm, taking advantage of a regulation allowing councillors to legally set up office anywhere in the shire. Protected from being removed by the police, Richard rang the Council, which finally issued a stop-work order on a technicality. Throughout the day up to 200 people blocking the road to the site were taken to the police cells and then released and told not to return to the site.

Subsequent court action found that Detala had not complied with its conditions of consent. Discussions with the landowner led to the State and Federal governments purchasing the land in 2004 and including it in the Arakwal National Park.

Through determined action by the people, Byron Council, Government and the landowner, a rare and valuable natural asset was preserved. The fabulous vistas from Cape Byron tell a thousand stories. This is one of them.

Source: Veda Turner and David Saunders

VISION FOR ARAKWAL NATIONAL PARK

... from the Arakwal 'Bumberline' Elders

'We want to see Country how it used to be.

*We want to continue to look after Country and want it to look
after us.*

*We want our people to be back on Country, caring for and using
Country like we always have.*

*We want to share parts of our culture with the wider community
so they learn about and respect Country
like we do.*

*We want everybody to work together to keep Country clean and
healthy.'*

– Aunties Lorna Kelly (dec), Dulcie Nicholls
and Linda Vidler, 2003

THE ARAKWAL INDIGENOUS LAND USE AGREEMENT (ILUA)

On 28 August 2001, the Byron Bay Arakwal people achieved formal recognition of their rights as traditional owners to lands around Byron Bay, including the Park. This was achieved through an Indigenous Land Use Agreement (ILUA) under the Commonwealth Native Title Act 1993 between parties including the NSW Government, 'the Arakwal people and the Arakwal Aboriginal Corporation' ('Arakwal ILUA').

The Arakwal ILUA was the result of at least seven years of negotiations initiated by the Elders, Aunties Lorna Kelly (dec), Linda Vidler, Dulcie Nicholls and Yvonne Graham (dec) in 1993. It acknowledged their rights as traditional owners and allowed the creation and joint management of the Park; separate land for the development of a cultural centre, and housing of the Elders and their families; and employment, learning and development opportunities for their people with the NPWS.

It is the first ILUA in Australia to include the creation of a National Park. The Byron Bay Arakwal people endorsed the declaration of the Park over part of their Country to protect it from development, to maintain cultural use, and provide economic and employment opportunities for their people; in addition to catering for appropriate public enjoyment. The Arakwal ILUA provides these opportunities through joint management with the NPWS.

Extract: NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service *Arakwal National Park – Sacred Ancestral Place of the Byron Bay Arakwal People: Plan of Management*.





Lawson Street, Byron Bay

JET AIRPORT

The proposed development of a jet airport at Tyagarah, five kilometres north of Byron Bay, was rejected thanks to the creative actions of (locals) Fast Bucks, Gary from the music centre and Stuart Owen-Fox.

The guys recorded a high quality tape with the sound effects of jet planes taking off and landing. An amplifier was borrowed from a local rock band and loaded on to a flat bed truck. The truck was parked in town right outside the council chambers.

Two minutes before council were to vote on the jet airport proposal, the switch was 'flicked on' and

out came the sound. Five hundred decibels of jet planes taking off, first one, then another took off. Shop keepers fled their shops wondering what the racket was, as the sounding jets took off and landed. Councillors came running out shouting 'shut that thing off'. 'Sorry, we can't hear you' was the response.

The police came driving down the street and the truck drove away. A ten minute demonstration, nobody was hurt and no damage was done. Several minutes later council voted NO to a jet airport in Byron Shire.

In conversation with the late Stuart Owen-Fox



Mullet Fishing - The Pass c2002



PHOTO 'WHITEBAIT' COURTESY SUSIE BROCKHOFF

THE MULLET RUN

A Byron Bay fisherman recalls the mullet run: 'The hill man was the spotter, usually positioned at the Pass, Fisherman's Lookout it was called. In the old days someone was posted there all day. The size of the mullet school was measured in acres; there may have been 3 acres sun baking around the Cape sometimes. When the mullet run was on, from May through to June, they would usually hug the Cape to avoid the sharks.'

'The hill man would use an arm signal, indicating to the boats when to launch. The timing was all-important: if the boats went out too early the fish would shy away. In that case it would take a full tide, another 12 hours, before the next run. Our best day and largest catch was back in May 1977. We landed 26 tons out in front of the old surf club on Main Beach. The fish were hauled in throughout a day that began at dawn. The Land Rovers were still clearing the fish off the beach after dark. Some of the fish were then taken to the Hickey smoke hut in Byron Bay, the rest processed in Brisbane. The female's eggs, the roe, were exported to Taiwan. Whole male mullet went to Saudi Arabia, the scales to Japan for textiles and the skeletons to Western Australia as crayfish bait.'

Fishing was one of Byron Bay's longest serving industries. In 2006 the NSW Fisheries paid out the contracts of all professional fishermen in Byron Bay. (Fisherman's lookout is located at the Pass and is the rocky outcrop at the back of the photo.)

In conversation with fishermen Barry Baxter and Nick Casey

PROTECTING BYRON'S MARINE TREASURES

Divers and snorkellers at Byron Bay's distinctive offshore outcrop, Julian Rocks, can find themselves face-to-face with creatures ranging from small colourful fish and sea slugs, through to grey nurse sharks, graceful manta rays, playful dolphins, and even humpback whales.

Julian Rocks is part of the diversity of coastal habitat found around Cape Byron, which includes estuaries, sandy beaches, rocky shores and reefs. Divers who take the two-kilometre boat trip from The Pass to Julian Rocks will swim among an extraordinary 500 species of fish, 114 species of molluscs, 100 species of marine algae and 30 species of corals. Threatened and protected species around Julian Rocks include grey nurse sharks, the elusive black cod, the sleepy loggerhead turtle, the elegant wrasse and the giant Queensland groper, which can grow up to two metres in length. Between May and October each year, humpback whales migrate through the waters of Byron Bay on the way north to breed, and on their return journey to Antarctic waters. The rocks themselves provide a nesting site for birds, including seagulls and cormorants.

The unique and precious marine areas around Byron Bay were protected by the declaration of the Cape Byron Marine Park in 2002, after years of lobbying by committed locals. The multiple-use park allows for recreational and commercial activities including diving, snorkelling, whale and dolphin watching, recreational and commercial fishing, commercial tourism, underwater filming, surfing, hang-gliding, kite-surfing, swimming and kayaking.

The park stretches from Lennox Head in the south to the Brunswick River in the north, reaching up to three nautical miles seaward and covering some 22,000 hectares. Much of the Brunswick River estuary is protected by sanctuary zones that allow protection of vital breeding areas for fish such as mulloway, bream, flathead, whiting, mullet, luderick, mangrove jack, and invertebrates such as prawns, mud crabs and oysters.

The park has four zones providing different levels of protection, ranging from general use areas to sensitive 'no take' sanctuaries where all forms of fishing and collecting are prohibited.

Source: Marine Parks Authority NSW





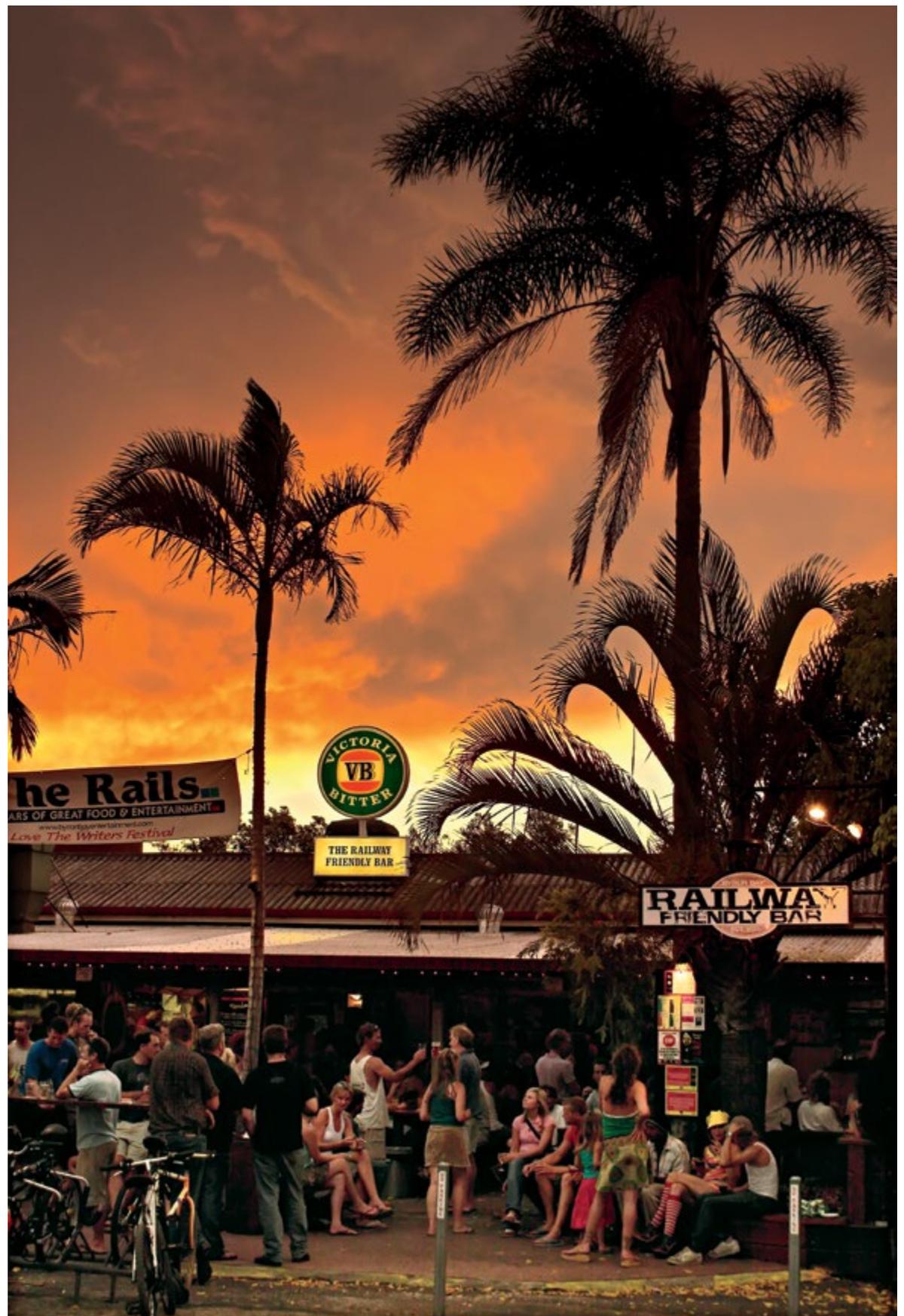
ACTIVITIES AND TOURS

Helicopter tours, Wildlife tours, Mountain bike tours, Hot air ballooning, Diving and snorkelling, Whale watching, Hang gliding, Micro Lite Aircraft flights, Surfing, Surf schools, Body boarding, Swimming, Kayaking, Dolphin wildlife tours, Horse riding, Golf, Skydiving, Fishing, Sea turtle snorkel tours, Kite surfing, Bushwalking.

Cape Byron Marine Park

PUBS AND CLUBS

Byron Bay Premium Brewery and Buddha Bar/Restaurant, The Great Northern Hotel, The Beach Hotel, The Railway Friendly Bar, Balcony Bar and Restaurant, La La Land, Cocomangas, Cheeky Monkey's, Liquid Bar and Nightclub, Byron Bay Golf Club, Byron Bay Bowling Club, Byron Bay Services Club.



'The Rails', live music every night of the week



Byron Bay Blues Festival

'The very word "Festival" conjures an excitement in me, an anticipation of celebration. I see a Festival as a community that comes together for a short time, to celebrate a common interest and create an immersive experience. With the very best of Festivals, one emerges with a slightly altered perspective, ideally with heart and mind expanded. That's what Festival means to me.'

Jeni Caffin, Byron Bay Writers Festival

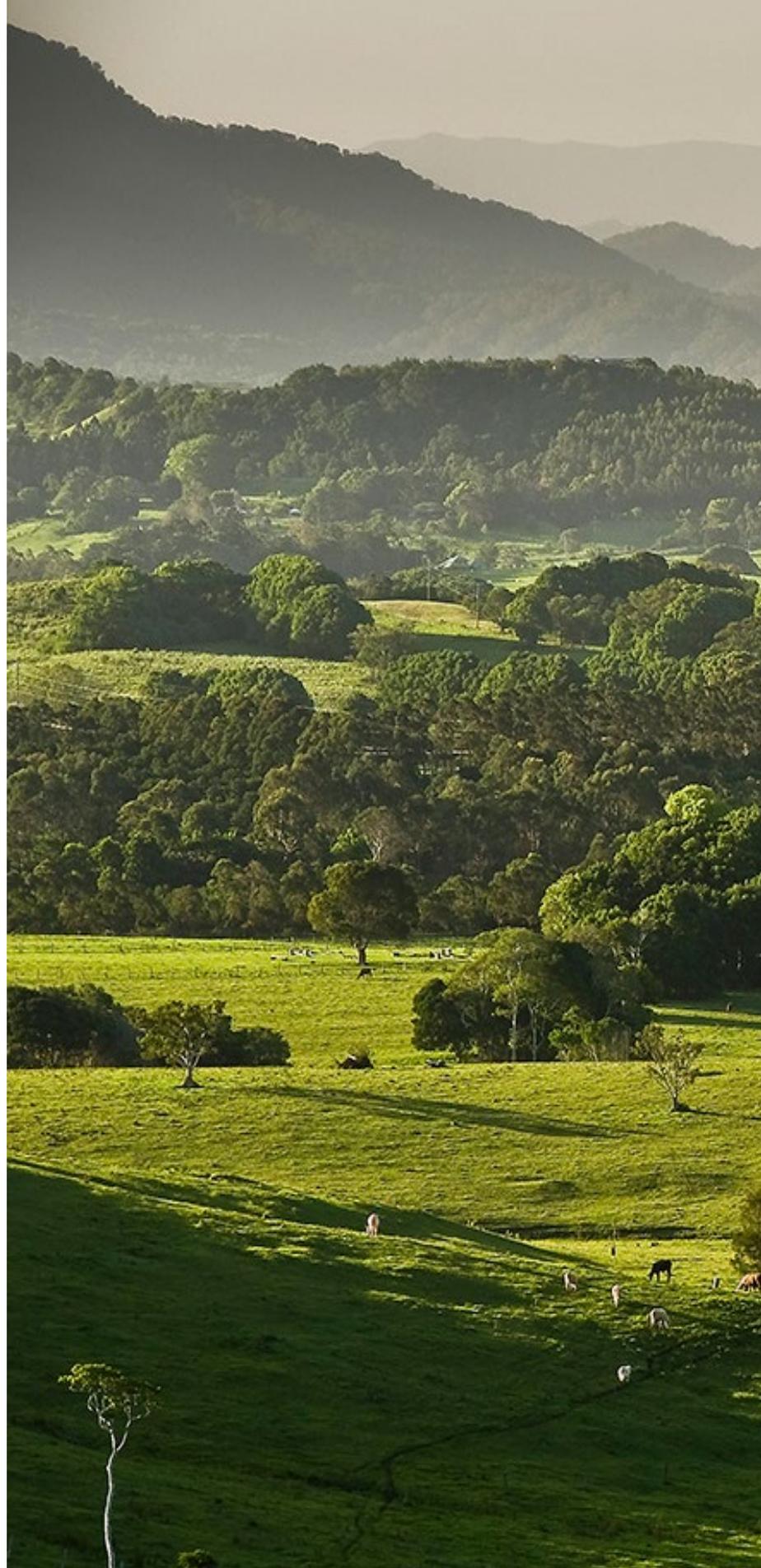


FESTIVALS

Byron Bay Writers Festival, The Big Joke: Bangalow Comedy Festival, Byron Bay Blues Festival, Lismore Lantern Parade, Byron Bay Latin Fiesta, Brunswick Heads Kites & Bikes Festival, Fatherhood Festival, A Taste of Byron, Mullumbimby Music Festival, Bangalow Music Festival, Family Unity Festival, Ukitopia Festival, Byron Bay International Film Festival, Byron Bay Comedy Festival, Byron Bay Arts & Music Festival, Sydney Travelling Film Festival.

Brunswick Heads Kites & Bikes Festival

Byron Hinterland





BANGALOW

The town of Bangalow, with its trendy main street lined with small boutique-style shops and cafes, was originally known as Byron Creek. Now the home of the Billy Cart Derby and the Fatherhood Festival, the town – first settled in 1881 – was renamed Bangalow after a type of palm that grew by the creek.

John Campbell was one of the first settlers who purchased 640 acres of land under the Robinson Land Act. By this time, the towns of Ballina and Lismore were well established and the area surrounding Bangalow was well known by the cedar cutters.

Bangalow had established a school, police station, courthouse, town hall and showground by 1902. Its dairy farmers were part of the industry that developed throughout the district. In the nearby centres of Eureka, Clunes, Federal, Goonengerry, Rosebank and Newrybar, farmers got together to form a co-operative which became the well known company, Norco. Along with farmers in these settlements, Bangalow dairy men supplied the processing plant at Byron Bay.

Although it had prosperous beginnings, Bangalow had to reinvent itself following the 1960s' decline in the dairy industry. In the hinterland surrounding Bangalow are macadamia nut farms, coffee, cheese, wine, fruit, and vegetable growers. The town today has maintained much of its early charm and provides the Shire with residential housing surrounded by rural properties and a 'small town' appeal. Bangalow is ambitiously attempting to become the first plastic-bag-free town in Australia.

Footnote: Bangalow is located in Byron Shire, 8kms south west of Byron Bay.



EVENTS

New Year's Eve Community Celebrations, Byron Bay Triathlon, Byron Bay Winter Whales Ocean Swim Classic, Bangalow Billy Cart Derby, Byron Lighthouse Run, Schoolies, World Naked Bike Ride, The Byron Bay Writers Festival Poetry Contest, Ben King Memorial Easter Classic Surf Contest, The Byron Bay Malibu Classic, Byron Carols by the Sea.

Bangalow Billy Cart Derby



ART EVENTS AND CULTURAL DAYS

FEHVA Festival for Art Lovers and Artists, artsCape Biennial and Byron Arts Classic, ADFAS Byron Bay (Australian Decorative & Fine Arts Society Byron Bay Inc), Beggars Banquet, Harmony Day, International Women's Day, Australia Day.

artsCape Biennial
Andy Scott *Argestes Aqua*



PHOTO COURTESY DAVID YOUNG

BYRON SHIRE

An epicentre of alternative healing therapies and yoga.

Massage therapy, Kinesiology, Naturopathy, Homeopathy, Traditional Chinese Medicine and Martial Arts, Yoga, Osteopathy, Chiropractic Medicine, Aromatherapy, Detox and Health Retreats, Day Spas, Acupuncture, Crystal Healing, Reiki, Holistic Medicine, Bach Flower Remedies, Magnetic Healing, Pilates and Yogalates, Meditation, Iridology, Craniosacral Reflexology, Colonic Irrigation Therapy, Ayurvedic Medicine, Counselling, Sound Healing, Colour Therapy, Spiritual Regression, Shamanism.

EATING LOCAL BRINGS GLOBAL CHANGE

by *Helena Norberg-Hodge*

Although the Byron Shire and its surrounds have been a rich source of agricultural produce for many years, prior to the development of its now thriving farmers markets, locals had limited opportunities to buy locally grown food.

Around the turn of the century, Helena Norberg-Hodge, author, international advocate of local food economies and founder of the International Society of Ecology and Culture, ran a workshop that helped Byron Shire locals turn their idea of a farmer's market into a reality. By December 2002 the first of the weekly Byron Shire Farmers Markets had opened in the Butler Street Reserve, starting an event that would become a cornerstone of local life.

'For the past 35 years, I have had the opportunity to live and work in the ancient culture of Ladakh. Observing the impact of the modern world on the people there has given me a different vantage point. I have become convinced that we need to stand back and look at the bigger picture, to have a chance of solving the enormous problems we face. The driving force behind our problems is economic globalisation or the deregulation of global trade and finance, which has increased the power and size of giant banks and corporations.

'The most powerful solutions involve a fundamental change in direction – towards localising rather than globalising economic activity. Localisation is essentially a process of decentralisation: shifting economic activity back into the hands of local and regional businesses instead of concentrating it in fewer and fewer mega-corporations.

'Since food is something everyone needs every day, a shift from global food to local food brings great and immediate benefits. Today, hidden subsidies for global trade mean that countries are importing and exporting identical products. Across the world, millions of tons of beef and veal, wheat, butter and milk are criss-crossing the world on a daily basis. Apples are flown from the UK to South Africa to be washed; fish travels from Norway to China to be deboned. It's obvious that reducing "food miles" will dramatically reduce CO₂ emissions.

'Rebuilding local food economies brings other environmental benefits as well. The large-scale packaging and processing of the global markets demand monoculture or just a few standardised products. Local markets, on the other hand, give farmers an economic incentive to diversify, thus encouraging organic methods and leaving niches and habitat for wildlife. Surprisingly, and perhaps most importantly, studies all over the world show that small-scale, diversified farms have a higher total output per unit of land than large-scale monocultures.

'Local food systems have economic benefits too, since most of the money goes to the farmer instead of corporate middlemen, and since they employ far more people per acre than large monocultures.

'It's truly inspiring to see that there is an emerging local food movement worldwide. From the grassroots, farmers and consumers are linking hands and discovering that it is possible to increase wealth, jobs, and biological diversity, while strengthening community at the same time. We have a long way to go in educating our governments and pressuring for policy change. But in the meanwhile, people are demonstrating that it's possible to build a better world.'

WEEKLY FARMERS MARKETS

BYRON FARMERS MARKET — *every Thursday morning.*

MULLUMBIMBY FARMERS MARKET — *every Friday morning.*

BANGALOW FARMERS MARKET — *every Saturday morning.*

NEW BRIGHTON FARMERS MARKET — *every Tuesday morning.*





WHALE MIGRATION

The population of humpback whales migrating along the east coast of Australia, and past Cape Byron, has been slowly but steadily increasing in recent decades.

Once estimated to be in the order of 22,000 to 25,000, the population fell to as low as 104 individuals after commercial whaling ceased in the 1960s.

Tracking the recovery of the humpback population and ensuring the ongoing protection of cetaceans is one of the key objectives of Southern Cross University's Marine Ecology Research Centre.

Researchers, led by Professor Peter Harrison, estimate the east Australian humpback population is recovering at a rate of around 10 per cent a year. In 2010, more than 11,000 humpback whales are expected to pass Cape Byron on their annual migration north to the breeding waters in the Great Barrier Reef.

Monitoring their movements from key vantage points such as the Cape Byron Lighthouse, and at sea, the researchers have developed an extensive photographic database of individual whales providing vital information on their migratory movements and social behaviour.

They have also led the development of a revolutionary computerised Fluke

Matcher program, enabling scientists to efficiently match the movements of Australian whales with whales in the South Pacific and Antarctica.

In 2004, Southern Cross University researchers obtained the first skin samples of Migaloo, the renowned all-white whale. DNA samples from the skin, which was retrieved from the water after Migaloo breached, confirmed that Migaloo is a male.

Researchers are also involved in a long-term project investigating the ecology of the dolphin population, which is estimated to be up to 1200 between Brunswick Heads and Ballina.

In a three-year study of dolphins off Byron Bay, Dr Liz Hawkins identified 186 individual whistle types and linked those to particular behaviours, providing a much deeper understanding of dolphin communication. She is now leading the Dolphin Ecology and Acoustics Project, which is monitoring the health of the dolphin population and the impacts of human activities on the dolphins along the coast from the Gold Coast to Coffs Harbour.

Southern Cross University



Main Beach Looking West

SHAPING THE BAY

When close to the far north coast of NSW, the ocean currents run in a northern direction. But north of Byron Bay, somewhere around Hastings Point, the current moves out to sea and turns around in a southerly direction. You can see this for yourself when you watch sailing ships racing in the area. They hug the coast when heading north and then sail further out to sea to travel south. Ask any surfer or one of the Winter Whales (ocean swimmers) how hard the current can flow at the Pass.

This circulating ocean current has been a major factor in the creation of the Byron Bay shoreline. The current runs hard along the coast from the south. It is a huge mass of travelling water, taking sand with it. When the current hits Cape Byron the impact diverts the water around to the left. The water travels with enormous power. The Indigenous word for Cape Byron is Walgun, meaning 'the shoulder'. It makes sense.

Over thousands of years this natural diversion process carved the beach into an arc, known as a 'zeta curve'. The energy of the ocean has literally carved out Byron Bay.

The same principle applies to beach side car parks and groynes (rock walls), which become obstacles to the current. They become shoulders, just like the Cape, but only on a smaller scale. On impact, the passing current changes course, altering the coast directly beyond.

This natural effect of the ocean's currents on Cape Byron and Byron Bay will continue. The Bay is constantly being shaped and we simply can't hold the ocean back. Now we're facing rising sea levels – perhaps not for the first time in the area's history. Studies of the sand dunes in Byron as well as Indigenous shell middens at Skinners Shoot two kilometres inland both show that the ocean has reached far higher levels in the past. Likewise, the shoreline was at one stage about eight kilometres further out to sea. These facts are also mentioned in the oral history of Indigenous Australians.

Coastal changes look like something we need to accept, prepare for and adapt to.

Source: Frank Mills



Byron Bay: Main Beach in the foreground, Clarks Beach right side, the Pass far left; Cape Byron at the back.



Musicians by the sea at dusk, 2007

CREATING A NEW KIND OF PROSPERITY

by Mary Gardner

Here in Byron, we are very aware of the whales on their migrations along this coast. Part of our revenue, directly or indirectly, is from watching living wild whales. But back in 1960, this was a town of whalers. By 1962, that industry had collapsed here. So did the meat works, another major local industry.

In spite of such setbacks, Byron transformed itself into a new sort of town.

Today, we are still experimenting with how to supply our common necessities, support a fair community and achieve a genuine environmental sustainability.

We are facing problems by no means unique to us alone. Pollution from pesticides and the burning of fossil fuels. The rising costs of housing outstripping local wages. High commercial rents. Impacts of tourism. Local extinctions.

We are trying many alternatives for energy, farming, housing, transport. We have farmers markets and community gardens. Shared food. Therapies. Local goods. Local currencies. Seed saving. Wildlife corridors. More tree planting. Wetland restoration. With lots of music and art.

We want to grow our children, our cultures and ourselves. To support all this, we are reframing our local economy to work within real limits about how it uses our land, water and us too. We are learning how to put genuine political clout to these limits well before the ecological ones force their painful impersonal corrections on every one of us.



WALK FOR CLIMATE ACTION

More than 250 people lined Cape Byron, pointing towards Mount Warning in a symbolic gesture of the global climate challenge facing humanity.

Source: *Byron Shire News*

‘Many economies remain blind to the huge value of the diversity of animals, plants and other life-forms and their role in healthy and functioning ecosystems from forests and freshwaters to soils, oceans and even

the atmosphere. Humanity has fabricated the illusion that somehow we can get by without biodiversity or that it is somehow peripheral to our contemporary world: the truth is we need it more than ever on a planet of six billion heading to over nine billion people by 2050.’

Achim Steiner UN Under-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Program

Source: *Byron Shire Echo*

THE SUN SHINES ON NIMBIN

The Nimbin Community Solar Power Project, established in 2010 with the assistance of the Rainbow Power Company and local community, is aiming for Nimbin to become an energy neutral community. On a sunny day, with the residential uptake of grid feed solar systems in Nimbin, it

is estimated the Nimbin Solar Power Project will generate around 85 per cent of the current average power needs. Currently 37 per cent of the community is using stand alone solar to generate electricity.

Source: *The Nimbin Good Times*





NO WAR

Aerial Photo: February 2003, 750 heartfelt women gather together in Byron hinterland prior to the tragic events in Iraq.



Becton Protest Rally, Main Beach 2003

WHAT WE ARE AS CIVIL SOCIETY MATTERS

When we volunteer, join in group efforts and even when we protest, we are building something strong, however invisible. The stronger the culture of civil society, the stronger the progress that people can make in their transition to a new economy.

So what is our ecological civil society here now in Byron? Our volunteer conservation work throughout the Shire. The role of the Arakwal people as co-managers of the National Park. The farmers markets and community gardens. The Byron Community College, the Community Radio, the Community Centres. The art. The musicians by the sea at dusk.

The way we share food and resources with our homeless and disadvantaged. How we involve local children and youth. The way we raise funds for whales and rainforests. Even the way we don't do some things: not build, not fish, not litter.

There is still much more of this urgent invisible work to do as we take up ecological citizenship. We may not entirely see how each of us make up the human superorganism, let alone how we can influence it for the better. But here in Byron, we are taking that first step. And then another. Just watch us.

by Mary Gardner

INTERNATIONAL PEACE

A fundamental problem is pinning down exactly what ‘peace’ is. It’s easy to think it’s simply the absence of war, right? That’s what researcher John Galtung calls negative peace. But just because there’s no direct violence doesn’t mean a society is ‘at peace’. Structural violence occurs when the government or society’s norms oppress, exploit, or deny services to some citizens. Often, the two forms reinforce each other – the oppressed use violence to rebel against structural conflict and the government responds by further repressing them. What we’re really thinking of when we talk about ‘world peace’ is nations free of violence and with attributes like social equality, political and religious freedom, and equal educational and economic opportunities. That’s what Galtung calls ‘positive peace’.

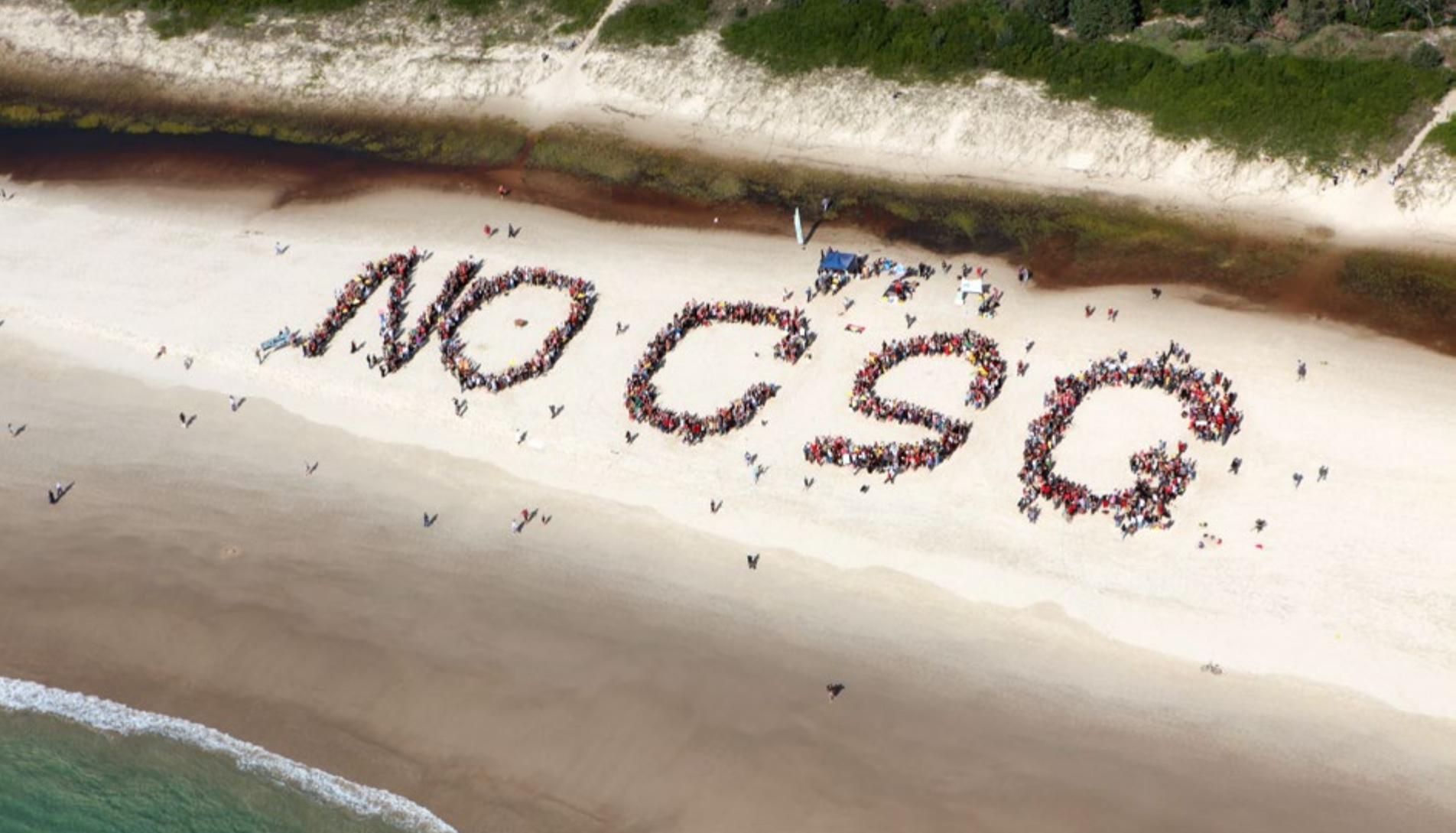
Two possible causes of conflict are poverty and inequality. In turn, conflict often costs people their livelihoods and homes and may create new inequalities. In this way, a cycle is born – inequality and poverty can lead to conflict, which leads to more poverty and inequality. A lot of international and non-governmental organisations, like World Vision and Oxfam, are working to relieve poverty and injustice before conflict arises, providing the poor and oppressed with improved access to food, clean water, education, health care, and economic opportunities to become self-sufficient.

Extract: *International Peace: How Peace Psychologists are Changing the World* courtesy of Winnifred Louis and Michelle Steffens for the Psychologists for Peace interest group of the Australian Psychological Society

Byron Bay Peace Rally, 2005







CSG FREE 2016

CSG stands for Coal Seam Gas, which is a global issue. In Australia over 50% of the continent is covered in gas licenses or applications. When drilling for gas pure chemicals are poured into the Earth (via wells). These chemicals are carcinogenic, disrupt the human endocrine system and are neurotoxins. As there is no guarantee that these wells don't leak, up to 95% of the community in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales, and all local councils, are against CSG mining.

In December 2015 the Northern Rivers of NSW was declared CSG free when Metgasco shareholders

agreed with the NSW government to have all licenses paid out. The cost to the taxpayer to buyback these licenses was reported at \$20 million. Communities of the Northern Rivers and Australia wide are now calling on the state and federal governments to pass a Bill in Parliament to protect land, water supply, agriculture and well-being of the people of Australia.

Many communities Australia wide face similar challenges regarding CSG mining.

Source, 'The Bentley Effect', 'Gasfield Free Northern Rivers' and 'Change.org'

'Love is forever'
1 CORINTHIANS 13:13



'The apple in her eyes'
Byron Bay Peace Rally,
2005

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Mick and a Cape Byron lighthouse goat, 1963

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p17 *Captain Cook – Obsession and Discovery*. 2007.
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The End