

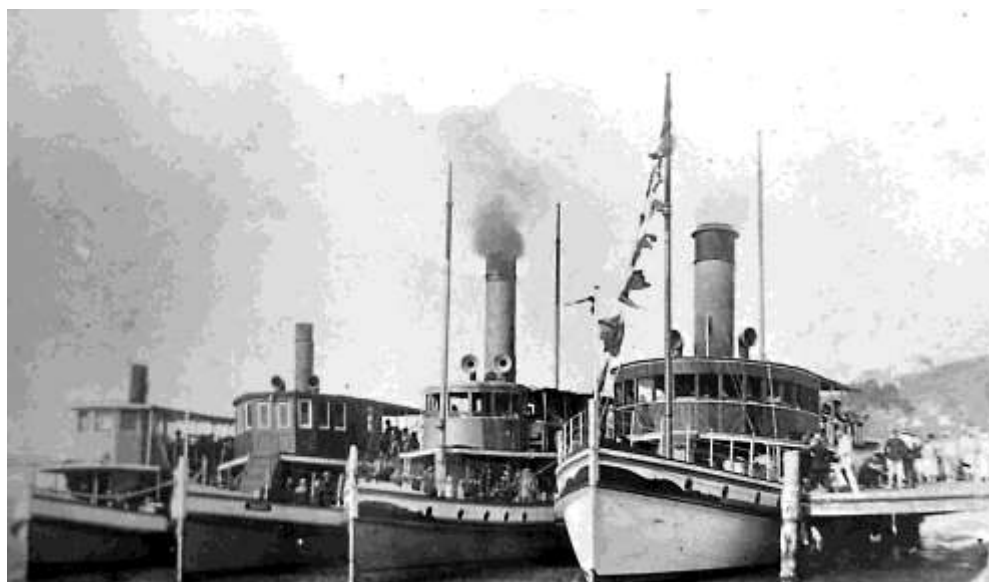
CLARENCE RIVER ADVOCATE



December 2016

Volume 17 No. 4

**FOUR BOATS AT YAMBA 1925- the *Mooli*, the *Moongi*, the *Clarence*,
the *Favorite***



STONE COTTAGE and MUSEUM

Corner Wharf and Grafton Streets Maclean

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RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

All correspondence to be addressed to: The Secretary

Maclean District Historical Society

PO Box 257 Maclean 2463

Phone: (02) 66453416 Fax: (02) 66453416

Website: <http://www.macleanhistory.org.au>

Email: museum@macleanhistory.org.au

EDITORIAL

The Clarence River presented a busy picture in past years— very different to that which we see today. We are compiling a history of rowing on the Lower River for publication in late 2017 (Volume 1)- here is a brief extract about the river steamers which were the work horses of the day and followed all regattas.

RIVER BOATS

A river boat was the method of transportation on the river, the bus or truck of the early days, when boats were used to take anything: people to a picnic, ladies on a shopping trip, visits to the dentist or doctor, visits to friends, holiday outings, and even calves and milk to market. They carried mourners to funerals, the devout to church, hawkers to a village to ply their wares, a bed for a new family, a bath to be installed in a new house. They were often the only way goods and people could move around the river and between towns.

They were also chartered for the judges' boats at all river events and they took spectators to and from regattas. The steamers also followed the races on the day to afford those with money a much better view of the races, so they could cheer their champions. They would often provide refreshments during races; town bands were employed on board to entertain and the well- heeled and well-dressed crowded the decks to watch the sport. They were often the only way competitors could get their boats and themselves to regattas.

“There’s nothing—absolutely nothing—half so much worth doing as messing about in boats.” WIND IN THE WILLOWS

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAY EXCURSIONS 1893



**HENDERSON & MANSFIELD'S
FLEET OF FINE STEAMERS**

On Saturday, Dec. 23rd

The SS IOLANTHE will leave Grafton, as usual at 1pm. for YAMBA, and will leave YAMBA at 5.30 pm for Grafton via Main River

CHRISTMAS DAY

The SS WOOLWICH will leave CHATSWORTH at 6 am for Grafton, via South Arm

The SS FLORENCE MCKENZIE will leave GRAFTON at 4 pm for Chatsworth, via SOUTH ARM.

The SS LURLINE will leave GRAFTON at 5pm for Palmers Island via the Main River

BOXING DAY

EXCURSIONS TO YAMBA

SS IOLANTHE will leave Grafton at 6 am for Yamba, via Main River, leaving Yamba at 4 pm for Grafton

SS WOOLWICH will leave Grafton at 7 am taking passengers from Cowper, South Arm and below for Yamba, leaving Yamba at 3 pm via SOUTH ARM. Return Ticket for Single Fare

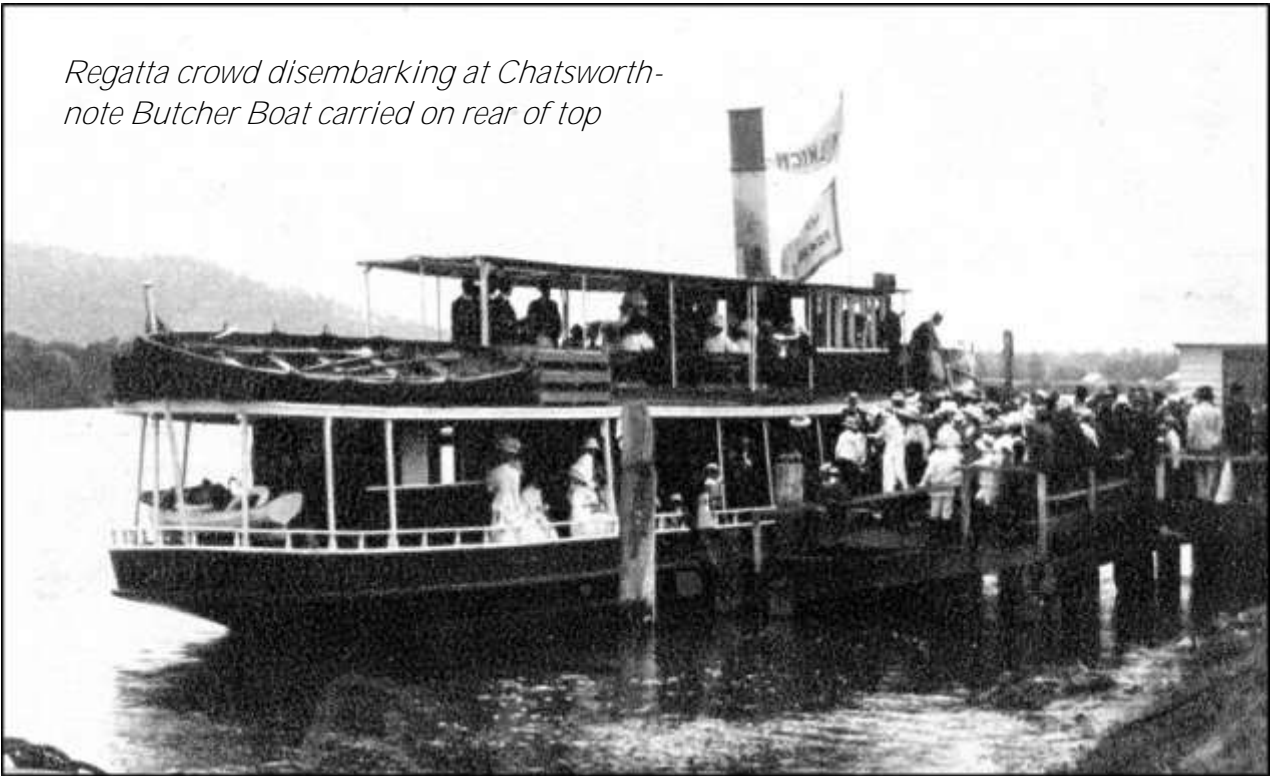
SS LURLINE will leave Palmers Island at 6am for Grafton via Main River, returning to Palmers Island at 6am on the 27th

SS FLORENCE MCKENZIE will leave MR Donnelley's wharf, North Arm at 6am and 9 am for Maclean, transshipping passengers for Yamba on to Iolanthe and Woolwich. Fares (RETURN) Maclean 1s, Yamba 2s

"A boat without captain cannot remain long on the surface!"

— **MEHMET MURAT ILDAN**

*Regatta crowd disembarking at Chatsworth-
note Butcher Boat carried on rear of top*



The tradition started very early, for example a regatta in Ulmarra in 1863 was followed by the *Uloom* .

This was a 115 tons iron side paddle steamer of dimensions 102' x **18'4" x 6'6"** It had a **single engine producing 25 horsepower** and was single masted. It was built at the Pyrmont workshops of Australasian Steam Navigation Co., Sydney for the Clarence trade. The boat was towed from Sydney, where it was built, by the *Grafton*. It was iron clad, built to carry 200 passengers, with roomy cedar lined cabins.

It was built not only to serve the droghing needs of the river, but also for parties and excursions. The boat did duty on the river until **the early 1900's.**

Boats, like whiskey, are all good. - R. D. CULLER



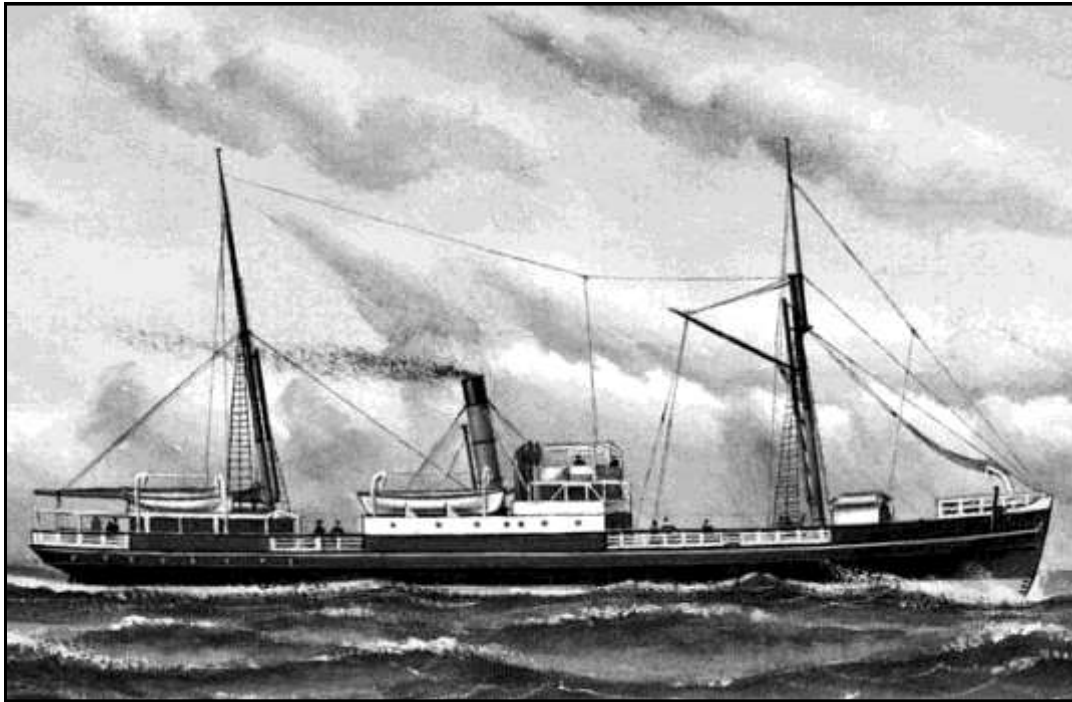
*Several North Coast river steamers including the “Uloom
“and the “Cornstalk”*

The practice of steamers following regattas and transporting on-lookers carried on for many decades – they were an invaluable and spectacular addition to a regatta -it was not until the personal motor launch or motor car gave people the freedom to choose their own time and event to patronise that the steamers disappeared from the regatta scene.

Here are some of the regulars at regattas up and down the river over many years, not, however, in chronological order.

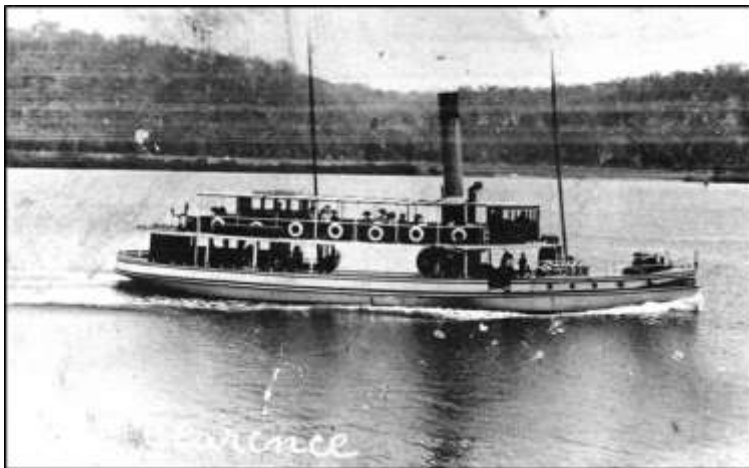
**I must go down to the sea again, to the lonely sea and the sky.
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by. JOHN MASEFIELD**

SS Grafton



This was one of the earliest steamers on the river- also from this **steamer the cannon which signalled a race's end or start was responsible for the deaths of two people at a regatta in Ulmarra 1866.**

SS Clarence

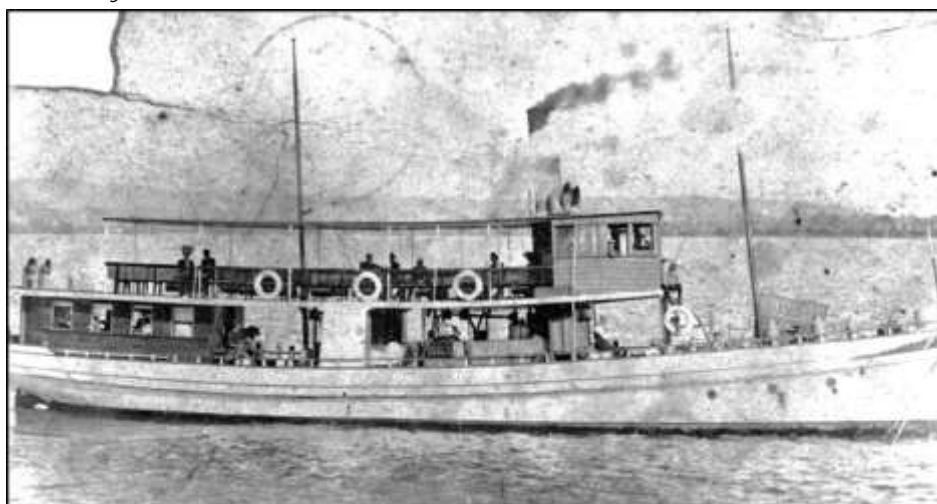


**"Men in a ship are always looking up, and men ashore are usually looking down."
- JOHN MASEFIELD**

Although not the first vessel to carry the name the one pictured (*SS Clarence*) was launched from the yards of Charles Pullen at Cowper in November 1908. Built expressly for the river trade, it was **100 foot long with a 20' beam and was reputed to be very fast, just what was needed for following rowing.** It was built of the best hardwood-spotted gum harvested from the Coldstream River region by Mr F. Firth- as well as kauri used topside. It had a promenade deck, **ladies' saloon and a large upper cabin. Its top speed was 13 knots per hour. It was christened by Mrs Short, Mrs Pullen's mother. All** steamers nearby greeted the new vessel with loud whistles.

The vessel was fitted with electricity in 1910.

Lady Beatrice



This too was a Pullen boat, launched at Cowper and also built by the same man who built the *Clarence*-William Dunn, an **accomplished boat builder from Sydney employed in Pullen's yards. It was** launched in 1903 to huge interest, the shell covered with bunting as the chocks were taken away and she was moved into the river. It **was built using all local timber and named for Charles Pullen's 3rd** daughter.

SS Favourite



Again the pictured boat above was not the first of this name to ply the river trade. There were several boats to carry the name over years. This one was started in 1914, the keel being brought in from the Coldstream by bullock team to the delight of a large crowd. When it was launched in January 1915, the Brushgrove Band played, refreshments were provided and the christening was performed by Miss Beatrice Pullen. The boat had ornate cabins and a guessing competition was held to guess the chosen name with 17 guessing correctly, so a draw from the hat was made to the delight of H. R. Carroll of Casino.

It was 107 ft. long with a 25 ft. beam and a hold of depth 8 ft. In 1921, a new keel was fitted, the old one being damaged in the channel at Yamba

When the draught of your vessel exceeds the depth of the water, you are most assuredly, aground - IAN WALSH

SS Florence McKenzie



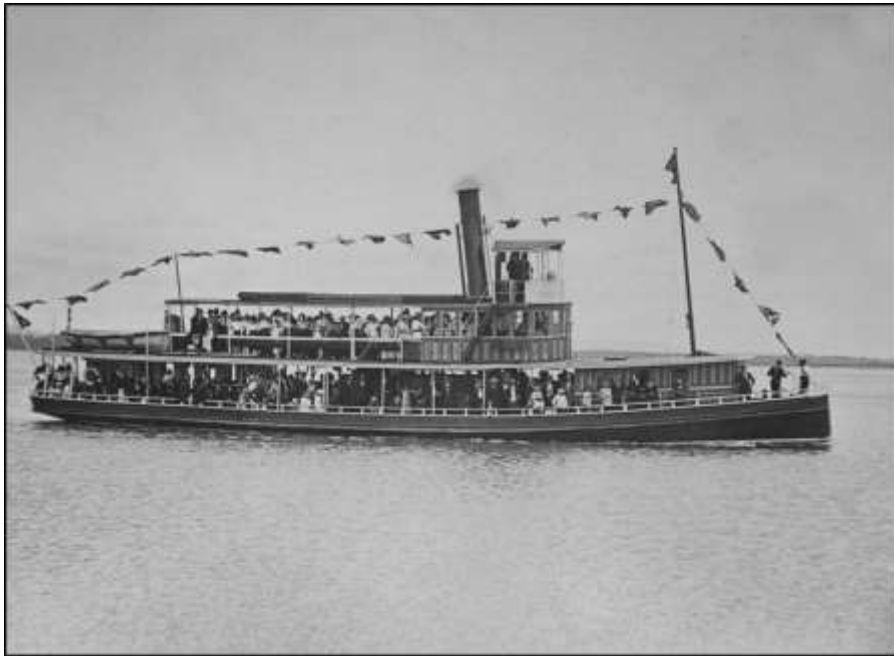
This boat served the river trade starting in the late 1870's. It was built in Grafton by William McKenzie. It had several mishaps over time- first when a propeller shaft broke between Maclean and Martin's Point causing much panic among the women passengers. Then it collided with a cane punt near Chatsworth, outside the old Chatsworth mill with the impact causing passengers to fall down, several sustaining injuries.

SS Iolanthe

(Right)



"There is but a plank between a sailor and eternity." THOMAS GIBBONS



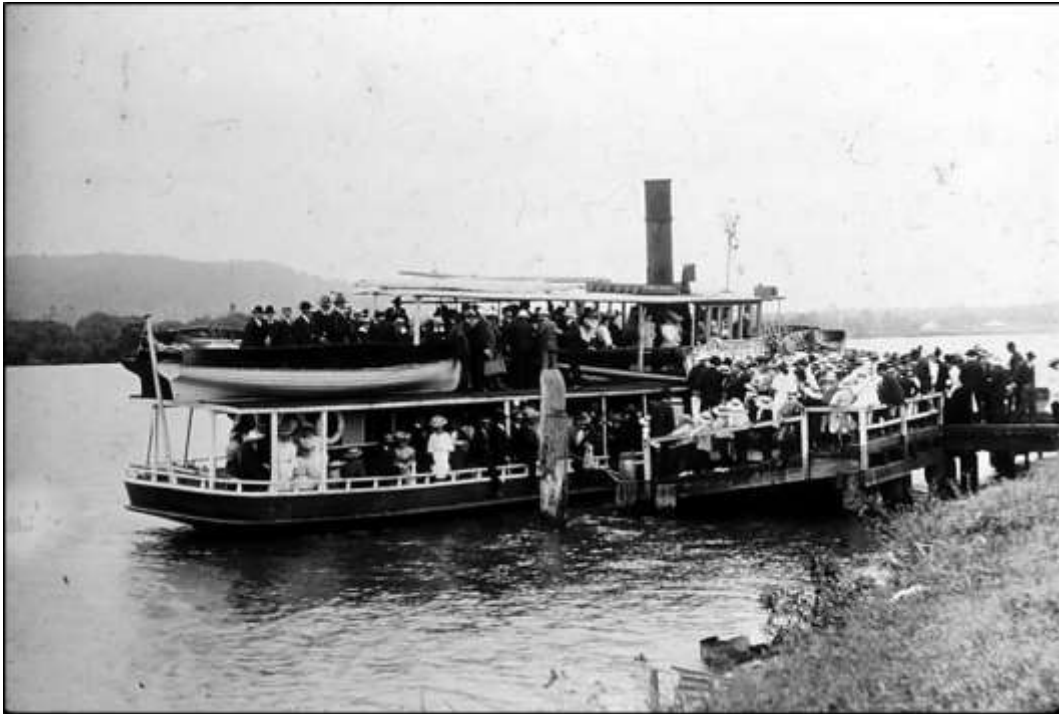
Another view of the *Iolanthe*

This was also another of Pullen's river steamers. This one was built in Sydney, with the engines and boilers imported from London. She was licensed to carry 400 passengers and cost Charles Pullen the grand sum of £3000 in 1886. It was built of Oregon and the best hardwood planking and the trip to Grafton from Yamba took just over 3 hours. In 1896 it underwent a refit of a new boiler in Sydney Harbour, where in a collision it was badly damaged and **partially sunk at Blue's Point. It was raised and salvaged, thankfully** as it was insured for £1000.

In 1908 a complete overhaul of the vessel was undertaken at **Schwonberg's boat building premises, Maclean. New cabins, new decks and a new companionway were added and a new boiler was installed at Boden's Foundry and Engineering Works, Maclean.**

"Anchor as though you plan to stay for weeks, even if you intend to leave in an hour." - TOMMY MORAN

SS Woolwich



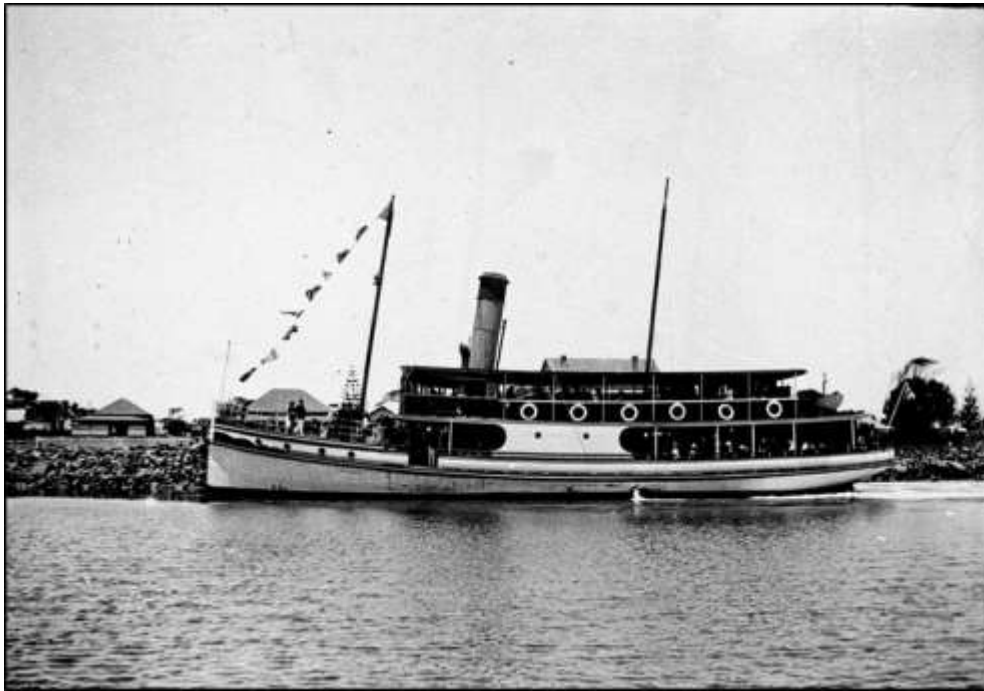
The *Woolwich* (above loading at a Chatsworth Regatta) was built in 1887 by Atlas Engineering Company to run from Sydney to Woolwich on Sydney Harbour, hence the name. It was then bought for the passenger trade on the Brisbane River before being sold to add to the boats plying their trade up and down the Clarence.

The boat was 90 ft. long and carried 340 passengers. It was fitted with two commodious cabins, one forward and one aft as well as a spacious promenade deck. It started work on the Clarence River in 1893.

In 1921 the *Woolwich* sank in the South Arm, hitting an obstruction **near Biddle's wharf, tearing a hole in its side and sinking in shallow water.**

"A ship is always referred to as "she" because it costs so much to keep her in paint and powder." . CHESTER NIMITZ

MV Mulgi



The *Mulgi* **was a motor vessel, built for Pullen's again in 1926, by Mr Dunn of Sydney.** She was the fastest boat in the fleet and could carry up to 300 passengers and travel from Grafton to Yamba in 2 ½ hours even when making stops at public wharves.

In 1931, she was given a complete overhaul of engines and a paint **job at Schwonberg's slip and Captain Bobby Miller was given the** command.

However in 1941, she was sold to a Sydney firm and the run was taken over by truck. Her last trip on the Clarence was in November 1941. This was the end of the familiar river boats as the high cost of fuel for the boats was now prohibitive, and the advent of cars, buses and trucks meant that they were no longer needed.

To float one's boat= to make someone happy (DICTIONARY DEFINITION)

OTHER RIVER BOATS – sometimes mentioned as following races were as follows.

Otus- Maiden voyage made to the South Arm in 1914. She was a drogher catering for farming families picking up and delivering at private wharves: deliveries such as milk, cream, calves, pigs and mail.

Pearl (below)- Trading between Grafton and Copmanhurst , she capsized in the river in 1912, resulting in the drowning of a passenger. Again in 1921, she suffered a mishap in Grafton when the wash of a Pullen boat cause the *Pearl* to sink beside the *Favorite* while moored at the wharf. The Pullen boat was later exonerated of wilful damage.



To rock the boat= to cause a problem where none is welcome (DICTIONARY DEFINITION)

Ibis



This boat was built by Mr Schwonberg at Maclean using local spotted gum. It was sold by auction in 1910.

Perserverance

This was a drogher - a flat bottomed cargo boat with an ample deck space that travelled the reaches of the river, supplying farms and villages and taking their goods to the larger markets for sale. They were also capable to towing a string of barges.

The Perserverance was more famous for carrying the coffin of Henry Searle from Iluka, where it had arrived from Sydney by coastal steamer, to its final resting place, Maclean.

This boat had the same name of several preceding it, the first a schooner of 74 tons launched in 1864. This one however was built in 1872 and ended its life in 1944 after many years of faithful service.



RULE 1– The Captain of a boat is always right. RULE 2– If the Captain is wrong, refer to RULE 1!

Pacific

Run by Powell's, this boat travelled between South Grafton, Maclean and Chatsworth. It was taken over by Charles Pullen in the **1900's and run in conjunction with the *Lady Beatrice*** on a 3 day a week run. In 1907 she was sold to Mr Alexander and taken to Sydney.

Many other boats were regulars-***Fairy, Matilda, Lillie, Lurline, Atlanta (Atalanta), Jinny, Helen, Warregah, Broлга, Moongi, Mooli*** and ***Ethel*** among them.

Pictured below is the *Moongi*, with the boat used to tow sugar barges to the mill- the *Hebe*.



The end of river traffic was the end of an era— at the end of the 1940's buses and private cars had taken over . Some people will still regret the end of the romanticism of this mode of travel, but as ever, time moves on!

To miss the boat= be too late for something you wanted (DICTIONARY DEFINITION)

100 YEARS AGO

The period from October 1916-December 1916 was still full of war news, but in Australia the first conscription vote had been defeated— although only by a small majority. The Labor Government under Billy Hughes split over military conscription and on 13th November 1916, Hughes was expelled from the party over his support for conscription. In November, there was a coal strike in Eastern States, causing blackouts. In the war, Australian and New Zealand troops took part in the Battle of Magdhaba in the Sinai desert where they captured the Turkish garrison. While in the Clarence:

OCTOBER

- A petition is being signed locally to urge the Government that lands in the vicinity of Angourie Point be set aside for a sea-side settlement.
- Mr D. Matheson presided over a well-attended meeting of the Maclean Highland Pipe Band...It was decided to entertain Privates D. McKenzie and W. Matheson, soldiers on final leave and make suitable presentations at a function to be held on Wednesday night.
- In response to a telegram from the Prime minister requesting that strong local committees be formed to further the cause of conscription, a public meeting was held in the Shire Hall last night when some 50 citizens, representatives of the whole Lower Clarence were in attendance.

Shells sink, Dreams Float; Life's good on a Boat

- Word had been received by Mrs E. M. McPhee, Palmers Island, to the effect that her grandson, Private Duncan McDonald of the 19th Battalion had died of wounds in France. Deceased who was 25 years of age, was born at Palmers Island...and had spent the greater part of his life on the Northern Rivers. His brother Private Archie also gave his life in the great cause, having died from wounds received at the Lone Pine charge. Both deceased were nephews of the late Captain John McDonald of the *Iolanthe*.

NOVEMBER

- The dredge *Aon* has been commissioned to work at the opening of the Iluka wall, so as to allow steamers to go to Iluka Hotel wharf at any tide, also for the convenience of the dredges to deposit their silt in rough weather.
- Fishing is at a low ebb. Never in the history of the fishing industry at Iluka has the scarcity of fish been paralleled. Only five cases of fish were shipped by the *Pulganbar* on Saturday.
- The secretary (Miss J. Stewart) of the Tyndale and Shark Creek War Equipment League, gives the following report of **the members' work for October last**: -8 pairs of sox, 4 pairs of mittens, 2 mufflers, 2 Balaclava caps, 1 pair of knee caps, 8 pyjama suits, 10 pillow cases, 5 eye bandages, 10 washers, 2 rolls of old linen...parcels of comfort were sent to Sig. Gale, Trp. Cox, Privates F. Smith, G. Benson, R. Biddle, R. McGregor, E. Royle and G. Watts.

A very nervous first time crew member says to the skipper, "Do boats like this sink very often?" "Not too often," replied the skipper. "Usually it's only the once."

DECEMBER

- There seems to be every indication of a new school being built here (*Palmers Island*) .
- A peculiar accident happened to a fine young draught horse belonging to Mr J. P. Jackman. She had been successfully put through her preliminary facings and had then hooked onto a small log. Whether she had swallowed the IWW (*Industrial Workers of the World— a Union movement not popular in the country areas*) doctrine of sabotage or was bent on giving a high-kicking exhibition, **we can't say. Almost immediately she let out and kicked** the swingletree (*Part of the harness*) with such force that she broke her leg just below the hock and had to be destroyed.
- Some very fine cheques are being made per medium of the bovine ruminants down here (*Palmers Island*). **One farmer's** cheque was £37 for 18 cows. Other cheques of over £2 per cow have also been made. Any amount of districts that are **boomed for all they are worth, can't hold a candle to ours for** dairying alone, or for all-round farming.
- Let us hope that our next Christmas will be ushered in by **normal times and that “peace on earth and goodwill to men”** will be more than mere words.

BOAT NAME PUNS: “Seas the Day”, “Usain Boat”, “Unsinkable 2”, “Marlin Munroe”, “Moor Often than Knot” , “Hydro Therapy”

THE WOOLWICH SINKS

“ The well-known passenger steamer *Woolwich* sank in the South Arm yesterday. A mishap occurred to the *Mooli* in the forenoon and the *Woolwich* was commissioned to take its place. The latter proceeded down the South Arm, but, on approaching Biddle’s wharf hit an obstruction in the water, which ripped a hole in her side, some feet in circumference. The boat was brought near the wharf, where she speedily settled down in comparatively shallow water. A fair amount of cargo was on board, most of which was removed from the sunken vessel later in the afternoon.”

The Daily Examiner 8th March 1921.



The “Woolwich” aground near Tyndale

I used to have a fear of boats, but that ship has sailed.

DISTRICT NEWS

SOUTH ARM

“ An effort is being made to refloat *SS Woolwich*, which has been lying in a half submerged condition at Biddle’s wharf for the past couple of weeks. Mr A. Oxenford, of Grafton, who has undertaken the contract, arrived on Saturday with two large punts and a steam launch. After temporary repairs had been effected to the hole rent in the keel a powerful winch was placed in position on the river bank, and with the aid of stout wire ropes the *Woolwich* was gradually drawn upright in readiness for the task of floating, which had not been accomplished at the time of writing.”

The Daily Examiner 30th March 1921

RAISING OF THE *WOOLWICH*

“The river steamer *Woolwich* which sank at Biddle’s wharf, Tyndale, some months ago, has, with the aid of the *Osprey*, been successfully refloated, and is now in lower South Arm undergoing cleaning and repairs.”

The Daily Examiner 16th August 1921

Why did the Captain decide against buying a new hat? He was afraid of cap sizing.

Research enquiries

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • William and Catherine Peoples, hotelkeepers, Iluka circa mid 1850's, Clare Hotel, Maclean late 1880's- circa 1903. • James Wilfred Percival Davis, son of George E. Davis • Henry Bellamy 1859-1925., married 1860 to Elizabeth J. Shea • William Colefax, Harwood Island (no information) • Breckenridge Family of Casino area- referred to Casino Family History Group • Adam Albert family of Tyndale and Brooms Head (for Centenary of planting of pine trees at Brooms Head) • Frederick E. Brown and son Herbert D. Brown; Frederick police constable of Palmers Island late 1890's to early 1900 • USB copy of Abraham Carr family book (Palmers Island) (book out of print) • Photograph of John William Law 1863-1951 (no photo held) • Information re 11 Church St. Maclean (former home of Dr Wherrett, pulled down and moved to Church St) • Duncan McPhee m. Martha Alice Smith family of Southgate and Maclean prior to move to Brisbane • Angus Murdoch McKenzie: Catriona Middleton of Lower River • George Forwell m Mary Riley 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bancroft/Marsh family photo • Information re burnt out building near fire station, Maclean • Maclean Cemetery research for a paper- in particular "why there are so many graves with no headstone?" • Mahabeer or Maybir, Fijian born Palmers Island 1890's (very little information)- people very appreciative of any information given) • Derrick Dick, Dutch shipwright (little information)- also very happy with whatever given • Henry Ernest Searle • Carr and Murphy families of Palmers Island; Dougherty and Sherry families of Woodford island/Cowper • Cormick and Farmer families of Tullymorgan • Michael Hayward family, Woodford Is. and Bruce Schwonberg family, Maclean • Ryan and Burke families, Harwood Island. • Joseph Alban Hunt, farmer of Upper Shark Creek 1930's • Grave sites of McLean and Johnson (no result) • William Goodger, Ulmarra, a former Mayor (referred to CR Historical Society) • Woodford Island Small family (waiting further instructions)
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Old sailors never die, they just get a little dinghy.



Maclean District Historical Society Inc.

Publications for Sale

<i>Maclean, The First Fifty Years 1862-1912</i> by E.H.McSwan.....	\$20.00
<i>Maclean and the Scottish Connection</i> by E.H.McSwan.....	\$20.00
<i>Discovery and Settlement of the Lower Clarence</i> by E.H.McSwan..	\$6.00
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<i>History of Education on the Lower Clarence</i>	
<i>Maclean</i> by E.H.McSwan.....	\$15.00
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CD.....	\$10.00
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(POSTAGE EXTRA)

MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



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*Our Society meets on the first Tuesday of every month
in our meeting room at the Museum at 9.30 am.*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS and a PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR
FROM ALL OF US**



NOTE: *We will be in recess from the 17th December 2016
until the 18th January 2017-check out our webpage:*

www.macleanmuseum.org.au