

# CLARENCE RIVER ADVOCATE

March 2016

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***STONE COTTAGE and MUSEUM***  
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# MDHS- CLARENCE RIVER ADVOCATE

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### EDITORIAL

The cover photo is of a tea towel I own which I have kept as a memento of decimal currency which was brought in two months after the start of 1966.

1966 also heralded mini-skirts, the battle of Long Tan in Vietnam, President Johnson's visit to Australia, the start of Prince Charles' schooling at Timbertop, the opening of the Harwood Bridge over the Clarence River, the resignation of Joern Utzon from the Sydney Opera House job, the arrival of lone round-the-world yachtsman Francis Chichester (later Sir Francis) after his voyage and the agreement with the USA to build Pine Gap; all great events in our lives 50 years ago. However our view will be looking further back than that!

We have chosen two areas for inclusion in our "Villages" series- however none of these form what could really be classed as villages, especially in the early days. Instead they were Parish areas, which in current days have changed their identity or become almost a suburb of Maclean (Taloumbi- or Gulmarrad). They were however prominent in forming the district that surrounds Maclean.

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### TALOUMBI

The Government Gazette of June 19, 1850 had an entry about the Taloumbi Run. This had been taken up by Thomas Ryan, an area of approximately 18,000 acres with a grazing capacity at the time of 500 cattle. It was described as covering the area on the south side of the Clarence River, covering parts of the Parishes of Taloumbi, Gulmarrad, Tyndale and Carroulum and bounded on the North side by the boundary of the Settled area of the Clarence River, with a line *"distant two miles from the bank of the river, on the West by the boundary of said settled district, being a line distant two miles that river to its intersection with Shark Creek; on the South by the south boundary of the Parish of GULLMURRUD(sic), being a line*

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*bearing East to the settled district being 3 miles reserve from the coast; on the East by the same 3 miles reserve from the coast.*” This was the area of the country running from Yamba in the north to the Bookram Lakes in the south and west to near Maclean and to Shark Creek. Thomas Ryan, formerly of Waterview station held it for only a few years, when it came in to the hands of the Small family, pioneers of the Lower Clarence who owned a station on Woodford Island.

It was bought from the Smalls by the Waugh family who at that time owned areas out near Walgett and Moree in the 1880’s. Sheep came to the property in 1902, when drought in the western holding near Moree forced agistment to be found at Taloumbi. Large flocks were agisted for periods and in later times a small flock was kept on the station until the 1960’s, when an area of the station was sold. These sheep were a mixed lot, but were gradually bred up until it was found that the Cheviot sheep were the best suited to the area and although dingoes were a major problem, a flock of these were kept for quite some time at the home station.

The name was also given to the Parish area, which encompassed the entire Palmers Island, Micalo and the area encompassing Maclean right up to the South Arm of the river. This area was designated as the Parish of Taloumbi by W. C. B. Wilson, when surveying the Clarence in 1841. In *“Maclean, the First Fifty Years”*, E. H. McSwan tells us that Taloumbi was mentioned in his remarks noted on the map: *“the species ...called Taloumbi is of excellent quality, some of which weigh upwards of sixty pounds.”*

(This is understood to have been the popular jewfish species)

The area from Townsend to the Taloumbi Station was often recognised as Taloumbi, but further complication arose when it came to school naming.



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A school was set up on Taloumbi Station in 1891 subsidised by the government to replace a private governess employed by the Waugh family. Miss F. McLean was the first tutor, staying until 1893.

*Taloumbi (or Gulmarrad) School circa 1910*

This was sometimes called Taloumbi (See newspaper article Page 3) and at other times Gulmarrad, while in 1869 an application was received to open a school on the north bank of Palmers Channel and call ***it*** Taloumbi.

An article in *The Clarence River Advocate* of 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1905 tells: “I see a *mistake in the report in the late show school section.*”

*Several of the successful competitors were down as being from Taloumbi School. It should be Gulmarrad or Beach Road School. Taloumbi School is at Palmers Channel.”*

Gulmarrad School was opened as a public school in 1904 on land formerly owned by the Waugh family, after much lobbying by the residents of the area, used to having the school on Taloumbi Station and a small building was erected on a site made available and with funds from the Department of Education at the time. It was without lining or ceiling to begin with, but these were added soon after. A teacher's residence was planned but as most preferred to live in Maclean this became unnecessary. By March 1906, there was an enrolment of 33 children.

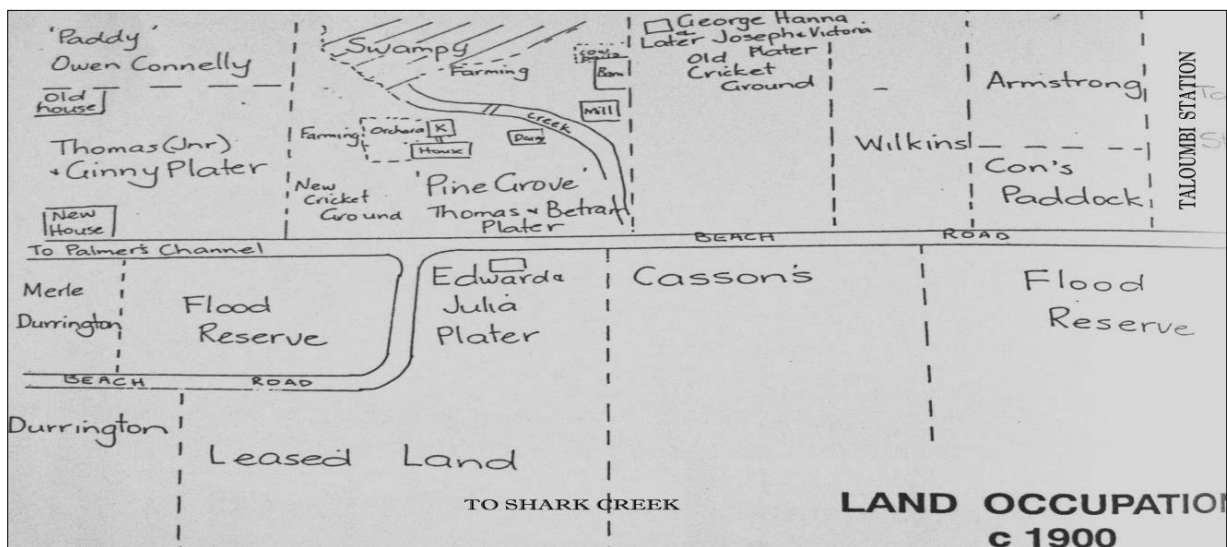
The school called Taloumbi on Palmers Channel was made a public school in 1872 and continued when an area of ground was purchased and a new school erected. The name was changed to Palmers Channel in 1907, probably as the confusion with names was a problem. This school was closed in the early 1970's.

The confusion was further compounded by the name of one of the first hotels on Palmers Island, built for Mr J. Ross in the late 1850's-1860. After his death in 1874, his wife took over until it was sold to Henry

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Sheather. In turn after Sheather's death, his wife was the licensee until it was advertised for sale in 1884 as a 14 roomed hotel "in excellent order, with billiard room, stables, outhouses, garden and orchard and kitchen." The hotel buildings were later (1901) moved to Maclean and in 1920 after a flood, the area: "where the Taloumbi Hotel was in the old days, is now deep water, the erosion being at least a chain and a half." (*The Daily Examiner* 11<sup>th</sup> February 1920)

However the area from Townsend, on the outskirts of Maclean and the present Taloumbi Station is what is generally known today as the Taloumbi region, encompassing the growing "suburbs" of Townsend and Gulmarrad, both showing a population boom in the last 10-15 years.



*Land holders in the Taloumbi area circa 1900*

### TALOUMBI FAMILIES

Some of the early families associated with the Taloumbi area are: **Plater**, **Nicholson**, **Casson**, **Shannon**, **Tabor**, **Towell**, **Sheehan**, **Hanna**, **Armstrong**, **Wilkins** and **Durrington**- as well as the aforementioned **Waugh** family of Taloumbi Station.

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The confusion over names is shown in the next two articles:

*The Clarence and Richmond Examiner 5<sup>th</sup> February 1898*

### **“MACLEAN: Friday**

***School Teacher’s Accident.***-On Monday morning while Miss McKinnon, teacher at Taloumbi school was proceeding from her home in a sulky to take up her school duties, she experienced an unfortunate smash-up. Everything went well until Miss McKinnon was getting through what is known as “Shark Creek Gate”, on the road from Maclean to Broome’s (sic) Head. Miss McKinnon had just closed the gate, and was in the act of again entering the sulky, when her horse dashed off like lightning into the bush through the trees, where he was very quickly relieved of his encumbrances. Finding it a hopeless task to attempt to catch the escaped animal the teacher walked the balance of the journey to Taloumbi station which was reached in time to open school after a fatiguing journey. Upon intelligence of the occurrence being disclosed, a messenger was despatched after the horse; but the sulky shafts were found to be broken and the vehicle smashed up almost hopelessly beyond remedy.”

### **Miss McKinnon was again in the news a year later:**

*The Clarence River Advocate 28<sup>th</sup> November 1899*

#### GULMARRAD SCHOOL

Mr. A. Lobban, District Inspector, examined this school on the 14<sup>th</sup> inst. And made the following entry in the observation book: ‘The pupils work cheerfully and exhibit more than ordinary mental culture. It is pleasant to examine such interesting children.’ These remarks reflect credit on the teacher, Miss McKinnon, who holds a certificate entitling her to a much larger school...There are 15 pupils on the roll with an average attendance of 12. There are three classes, each class gaining higher marks since Miss McKinnon took charge of the school.”

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A lot of horses get distracted; it's just human nature. **Nick Zito- Horse Trainer**



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### TYNDALE

To residents of the Maclean district today Tyndale means that area just to the north of Maclean on the south side of the mainland opposite Woodford Island south bank. It too, like the parish of Taloumbi, encompasses a wider area as the parish of Tyndale. The boundaries of the parish encompassed the area from the edge of the Maclean town to the Coldstream River, and was backed by the Parish of Taloumbi.

But in the early days, the “village” area known as Tyndale was that area of the river on the banks of Woodford Island, as well as the area across the river from it, encompassing both sides of the river. Indeed on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1875 an article in *the Clarence and Richmond Examiner* asks: “Where is Tyndale?” The answer being given as: “Many know where the parish of Tyndale is, but the township...where it is they do not know. Well, Tyndale where the post office is situated, is as near as possible midway between Rocky Mouth and Brushgrove, on the south side of Woodford Island. As you pass it in the steamer you will see very little signs of a township; one solitary weatherboard cottage, with the words Post Office over its verandah (sic). A stranger would wonder what induced the Government to establish a post office there. But Tyndale is central, and has a large population around it.”

Again when lobbying began for a punt to service the area, it was clear that both sides of the river shared the name. “A PUNT FOR TYNDALE- Are people justifies in asking for a punt at Tyndale? I say yes: for it is 14 miles from Brushgrove punt to Maclean punt, and the intervening district has a large population...We have a school and Church on one side (mainland side), a post office and protestant hall...on the other” (Woodford Island) *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* 26<sup>th</sup> August 1893.

Lobbying for the punt took many years, starting in the 1880's and it was not until 1896 that it was decided by the government that a punt was necessary. “It has been decided by the Department to place the Tyndale punt at the site between Eaton's farm and Watson's in the vicinity of the Public school.” This of course, made the school much more accessible to children from both sides of the South Arm.

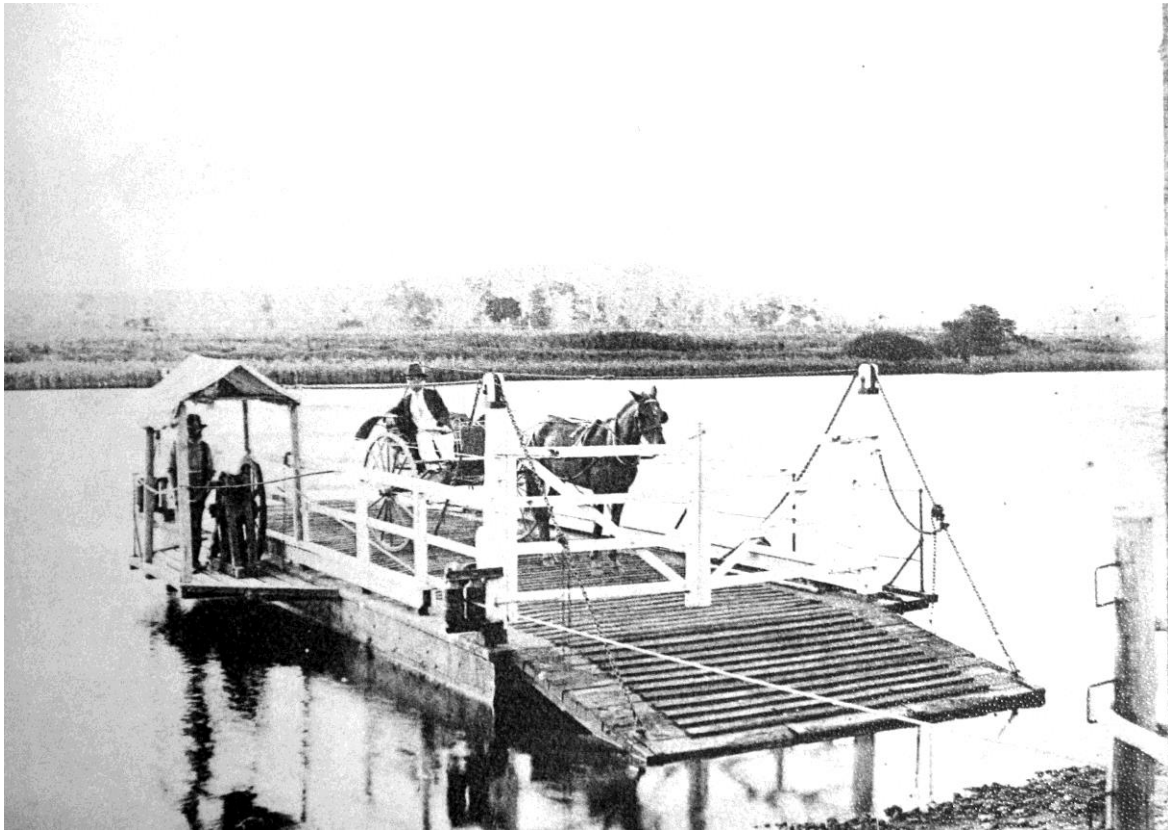


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*(Clarence and Richmond Examiner 30<sup>th</sup> June 1896)*

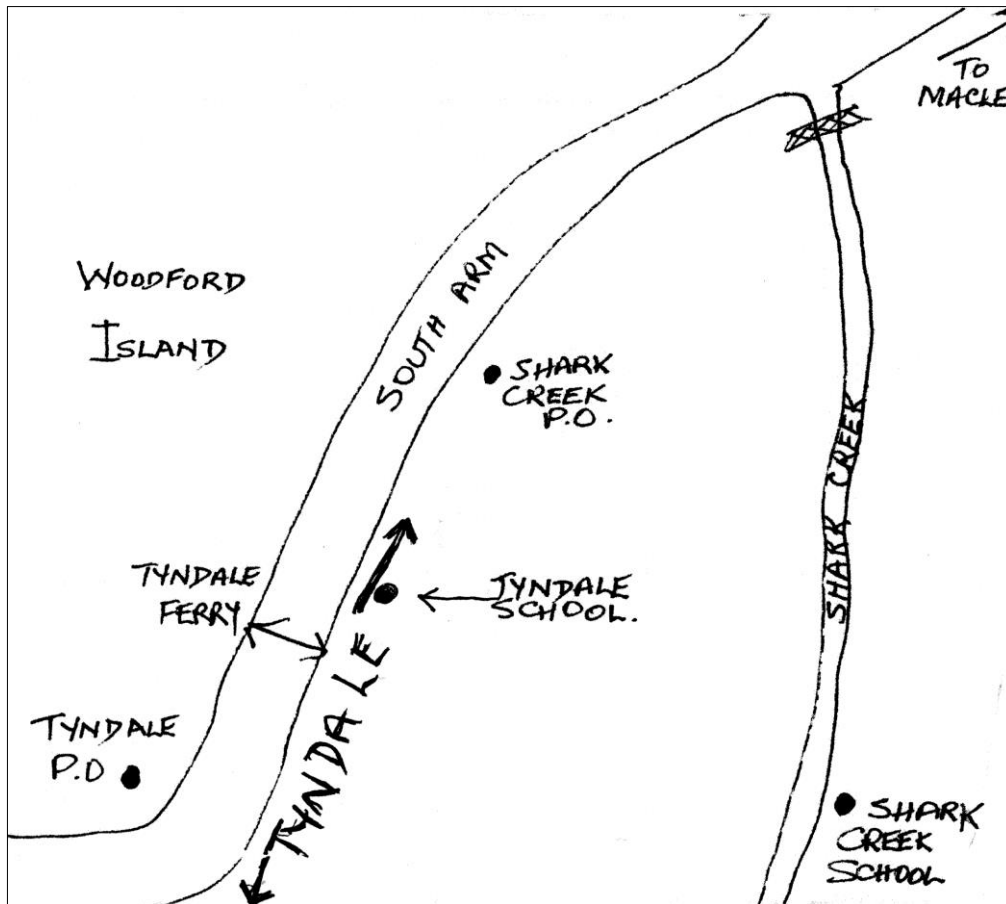
Thus in January 1896, the punt that was working at Oyster Lake Yamba was transferred to Tyndale and tenders for the construction of a new punt to replace that at Oyster Lake were called.



*An early Tyndale Ferry*

Further problems were pointed out to the authorities when the Shark Creek Post Office, (which was not far from the school on the mainland side of the South Arm) had mail wrongly placed in bags for either Tyndale Post Office, or the Upper Shark Creek Post Office much further away. The petitioners asked that the Shark Creek Post Office be renamed as the “South Tyndale Post Office.” Petitioners were local farmers from the south side of the South Arm (what is now officially called Tyndale on the mainland) and included names such as **Benson, Gallagher, Lee, Albert, Watts, Hinchey and Byron.**

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The school which was on the mainland side of the river, was established in 1868 as a Provisional school and when the building was made habitable, the school began in February 1869 with 27 pupils. However in 1871, it was destroyed by fire.

*“We are called this week to chronicle the total destruction by fire of the Tyndale Provisional School-house, on the South Arm of the Clarence River. The building was 26ft by 15 feet and was built of slabs. On Sunday afternoon, we understand, Mr and Mrs Watson held school in the building but no lights were used; and from the time the fire broke out, together with certain very suspicious circumstances, there appears to be very little doubt that the work was that of an incendiary, as the building was fired from the outside...the stock of school books which had only recently been replenished, beside some new furniture, all being destroyed... we understand that on the roll were some thirty-five children, and despite the heavy loss, the Local Board have succeeded in making such arrangements as will not necessitate even the temporary*

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*closing of the school." The Clarence and Richmond Examiner and New England Advertiser Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> August 1871.*

A new Public School was opened on land purchased from the Lee family and opened in 1884. A weather shed was added in 1887 and a residence in 1888.



(Above) Some of the pupils attending Tyndale School circa 1903, children of the families such as **Lee, Gallagher, Whalan and Biddle** were in attendance at the time. Other names from the early days were those of **Watson, Campbell, Rayner, Stewart, James, Gale, Watts and McGrath.**



The school celebrated its centenary in 1968, the photo (left) shows Mr John Henry Watson, the oldest ex-pupil at

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the time ringing the school bell to signal the start of the celebrations.

It is also interesting to see the old Moreton Bay fig tree behind Mr Watson. This provided shade for the pupils from the time it was planted in 1890 (by the teacher at the time, Mr Duncan McLachlan and Edward Lee.) The tree was planted in a hole which had been scoured out from the ground by the record flood of that year which had damaged the school house and residence. This flood still holds the record of the biggest flood, devastating most of the Lower River at the time, so the tree was a fitting reminder of floods and their destructive aftermath. Duncan McLachlan was a very dedicated teacher who spent 25 years at Tyndale School.

The school was one of many to close in the 1975 as populations had changed and school children were by then being bussed to a central location.

The Tyndale Hall, also on the Woodford Island side of the South Arm, was a popular spot for the locals. It had been built in 1883 or thereabouts and was the go-to place for weddings, family celebrations, school affairs and concerts, welcome home affairs for soldiers returning from both wars, as well as send-offs for individual soldiers when they enlisted.

### **“A TYNDALE VOLUNTEER**

*Private James Watts, son of Mr and Mrs James Watts, of Tyndale, who some weeks ago volunteered for active service abroad, arrived hom on Tuesday night on final leave and was publicly farewelled in the Tyndale Hall on Wednesday evening...to show that the people of that district endorse his actions...a present of a fountain pen, set of military brushes and a money belt (was made).” The Clarence and Richmond Examiner 7<sup>th</sup> October 1916*

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It was used for meetings and for public lectures as well; it seems it was the centre of the small community for over 70 years. It was known as



the “Temperance Hall” or “Protestant Hall”. However, the hall was not allowed to be used for “games of chance” or when alcohol was supplied, and as it was old and damaged by a storm, the local

farmers banded together circa 1958 to build a new public hall to be used by all.

It too was removed in 1990’s.

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*When I think about the world I would like to leave to my daughter and the grandchildren I hope to have, it is a world that moves away from unequal, unstable, unsustainable interdependence to integrated communities - locally, nationally and globally - that share the characteristics of all successful communities.*

~ **Bill Clinton**

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## MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

PO Box 257 MACLEAN NSW 2463 Australia

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- \* Help on rosters for door duty, even one afternoon every two months will help.
- \* Help with the input into the computer (training given)
- \* Read newspapers on the microfilm reader-extremely interesting
- \* Do general filing: photos, newspaper clippings etc.

We meet regularly on Tuesday mornings for our regular working day when these activities are carried out: hope to see you there.

**THANK YOU**

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We often get interesting information from Roy Cameron of Coolah; whenever he is trawling through Trove and comes upon a snippet of local history, especially if he can add information about it from his time in the area. This is a piece from 1940, and tells of solicitor Fleming's suggestions re the opening up of the coastal lands to the east of Maclean. In a time of only small movement of people and before the tourist booms we have experienced, it was every prescient, but what would the area be like today? Would it have reached the heights it was feted to have reached? Thank you, Roy for your input.

“ **NATIONAL PARK:** *Woolgoolga to Yamba- Proposed Scheme Outlined.*

***Maclean, Wednesday.***

*A scheme of considerable magnitude dealing with the proposed opening of a national park from Woolgoolga to Yamba, embracing the coastline, was brought before the Maclean Chamber of Commerce at the monthly meeting on Tuesday night last...*

*The originator of the scheme, said Mr Fleming, was very keen on the matter and was most anxious that something of a permanent nature should be done to improve facilities for tourist and campers...The scheme dealt with the construction of a road along the coast linking Woolgoolga and Yamba, and shire road to Grafton, Ulmarra and Maclean touching all headlands and beauty spots, It was suggested that the road should be lined with Poinciana, Flame and suitable native trees...The summary of the scheme set out that most of the land was leasehold at present and under the control of trustees and until the work was completed the present conditions should not be altered...It was suggested that the work be carried out by prison labour, as had been successfully done in New Zealand when the National Park in the North Island was developed...It was anticipated that the time taken to develop the area would be from 10-15 years...Mr Sheppard said that there were wonderful possibilities in the scheme, and the area proposed to be developed could be made into a wonderful tourists and campers park. There was much to commend it and he was of the opinion that a work of such a national character should receive the fullest possible support.” *The Daily Examiner Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 1940.**

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### 100 YEARS AGO

#### January 1916

- A deputation consisting of 25 representative citizens of the river, was introduced to the Minister of Works at Yamba, yesterday. The imperative need for improving the entrance and keeping open the channel for passenger service to the seaside was urged on his Notice. The Minister stated that in regard to the reef, this could not be commenced until the special machinery could be secured from England. Just when that would be it was impossible to say in view of the war. But when it could be procured he was in favour of blowing up the reef.
- Mr and Mrs C. W. Rayner and daughter, of South Arm (*were advised that*) their late son died from wounds received in fighting at the Dardanelles. Letters were received from the chaplain, who wrote that on Nov. 10 Rayner was aboard a transport, badly wounded in the leg. Though badly wounded hopes were entertained for his recovery. Two days later he succumbed to his injuries at sea.
- The continual drought and the probable duration of the war still remain the two most absorbing topics on the Lower River, as elsewhere.
- A reinforced concrete bridge is to replace the present wooden structure at Shark Creek at an estimated cost of £600
- A start has been made with the erection of the new Church of England vicarage (*in Maclean*) to be constructed of fibre-cement.

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- Work on the Goodwood wall is still being carried out. About one half of the wall has been removed although it will take a long while yet before the job is completed, that is if the Government can find the finances to carry on to a finish.
- The flying fox nuisance is still unabated, despite camp raiding, nocturnal sniping and a heavy expenditure in ammunition. Hitherto the pest paid chief attention to peaches; latterly they have acquired a taste for grapes, mangoes, custard apples, bananas and scarcely any product of the orchard comes amiss. The foxes have never previously been as numerous as this season, and it is evident that they have breeding haunts in some remote portions of the forest.

### February

- An open air recruiting appeal was conducted by the War Service League on Saturday night, when five recruits handed in their names.
- A 32hp American underslung car owned by Mr H. Gale was totally destroyed by fire near Maclean on Tuesday night. The car had only been purchased some three months ago and had been employed as a passenger service to Glen Innes. The loss is covered by a policy of £450 with the Australian Mutual Fire Insurance Co
- Harwood Shire inspector, Mr S. O'Keefe reported that three licences for motor-cars and drivers were applied for by Messrs. Wallwork, Formell and Marsh. These he recommended be granted.
- The *Bernie* one of the oldest crafts in the service of the CSR Co. was recently sunk in a gale close to the Cowper wharf.

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- *(At the annual meeting of Lower Clarence Hospital Board) held at Maclean on Saturday afternoon, the Medical Officer, Dr H. Sinclair Fordyce reported that he had endeavoured to compel as many of those who should be treated in hospital to come in. "There are, however considerable numbers who do not know what an excellent hospital we have and who seem to look upon it as a place to be abused and avoided; with greater knowledge this prejudice should disappear."*

### March

- **YAMBA:** The town is looking splendid after the heavy recent rains, grass and water being in abundance. Several thunderstorms passed over the town in recent weeks accompanied by exceptionally vivid lightening and pelas of thunder. Some of the local fishermen are having good sport with the jewfish, several large ones having been landed.
- **TYNDALE FARMERS AND SETTLERS:** The Secretary of this association was directed to draw attention of the Harwood Shire Council to the bad state of the South Arm road, and ask that the same be improved.
- Yesterday (20<sup>th</sup> March 1916) was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the wreck of the steamer Helen McGregor at the Clarence Heads. The following came from The Town and Country Journal at the time: "The steamer...an old trader between Sydney, Newcastle and Grafton struck on a reef on the Clarence Bar at 4 o'clock. She floated off after being on the reef for an hour but almost immediately sank in the middle of the channel. Assistance was at once afforded passengers and crew by the pilot's boats and the steamer's boats and... (*most*) were saved. One of the steamer's

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boats, however, containing eight persons, upset and all occupants were drowned.”

- Mr P. Hynes who has recently vacated the position of secretary of the Palmers Island Jockey Club, was presented with an inscribed gold medal by members of that body.
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*In betting on races, there are two elements that are never lacking - hope, and an incomplete recollection of the past.*

**Edward V. Lucas (1951)**



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### STORMS- A CENTURY APART

The recent storm that destroyed houses in Palmers Island Village was brought to mind when I read this snippet from 100 years ago- almost to the day.

*The Daily Examiner Saturday February 5<sup>th</sup> 1916.*

*“Before midday on Tuesday heavy and angry clouds began to gather from the direction of Clarence Peak. By 3 pm the storm began with heavy crackling thunder and exceptionally vivid lightening at the head of Palmers Channel, followed by heavy rain and hail. The wind increased to the highest velocity, raging along the channel. It blew down a windmill at Cr. McIntyre’s farm then to Mr C. Gilbert’s home, which it unroofed leaving the family and the contents of the house unprotected from the wind, rain and hail. A dwelling occupied by Mr Lacey, close to Mr Gilbert’s home was levelled to the ground. Mr Gilbert’s loss is estimated at about £100, not including the family’s clothing. The course of the storm then appeared to widen, lightening striking two large trees on Mr J. Davis’s farm and the wind taking half the roof of Mr A. H. Garven’s cow bails. Next was the local Butter factory which was almost completely unroofed and two chimney stacks blown down. Further on, Mr O. Smith’s kitchen was unroofed and crockery broken with hail; then part of Mr Ross’s motor car shed unroofed. Next, part of the police- station roof was taken then the public hall which was only opened 18 months ago, was carried bodily about 8 ft from its position and remained there for about 15 minutes until the wind appeared to gather more force and completed the total destruction of the hall, resulting in over £200 worth of buildings being levelled and furniture and fittings being destroyed...All windows in the south side of the Church of England were broken with hail and many windows in private houses suffered likewise. Young corn crops were demolished.”*

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*After every storm the sun will smile; for every problem there is a solution, and the soul's indefeasible duty is to be of good cheer.*

**William R. Alger**



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### RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

Donald Angus McAulay m. Stella Maud Hattersley; Donald a farmer of South Arm via Maclean	Devlin and Cavanagh Family-connection to Small family (no information) thanked to trying to assist
Photocopies of early Chatsworth Island	Photo of house 42 Wharf St. Maclean
Information re: scrapping of "Ramornie" originally anchored in front of Iluka pub circa 1950's- thank you for information supplied	Thomas Ward of Ramornie- no information, not our area
Location of William Jones' farm at the Serpentine Channel- also farm northern entrance to Maclean Called "Little Paradise"	Archibald McDermid and Rachael Martin, Palmers Island, Coraki, Casino and Tatham
Copies of original photos of Johanna McGuire nee Ryan (not in our files- referred to family member)	Henry Arthur Baker m. Annie Paine/Payne and family; Henry son of James and Georgina Baker nee Irwin; Henry of Chatsworth Island and labourer mid 1870.
Photo of Davison family tractor, which was used on their farm South Arm, Tyndale many years ago- no photo.	James Conlin or Conlon and Catherine Hynes; marriage certificate states born at Palmers Island (no information)
George William Fischer m Agnes Evelyn Carlisle. William Carlisle m. Flora McDermid	Photo/photos of Jack Hackett/Jack Casey rowing race at Ulmarra 1924 (no photo)
Location of the site of former Cavanagh home, Woodford Leigh, Woodford Island,( opposite ferry approach- now a cane field)	Phone call from a person wanting site of Bertie Hughes grave in old Maclean cemetery
Email enquiry re David See family, first Mayor of Maclean; wanted a publication- we have information but no publication.	Photos of old fig tree formerly in Maclean Showground



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### *Maclean District Historical Society Inc.*

#### **Publications for Sale**

*Maclean, The First Fifty Years 1862-1912* by

E.H.McSwan.....**\$20.00**

*Maclean and the Scottish Connection* by E.H.McSwan.....**\$20.00**

*Discovery and Settlement of the Lower Clarence* by E.H.McSwan..**\$6.00**

*Lower Clarence Cemetery List*.....**\$15.00**

*History of Education on the Lower Clarence*

1. *Maclean* by E.H.McSwan.....**\$15.00**

(This book is the history of Early Maclean - Primary, District Rural and Intermediate High School to 1961)

2. *Past Schools* by M.Switzer.....**\$15.00**

(Schools in the district that are now closed)

3. *High School* by E.H.McSwan.....**\$20.00**

(From 1961 onwards)

*Clarence River Sugar Industry- A Tour among the Mills*

compiled by Ruth McAulay.....**\$15.00**

*The Fishing Industry, Lower Clarence-The Early Years* by Yvonne

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**(POSTAGE EXTRA)**

# MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



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

*at the Museum*

