

# Newsletter of the

# TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM & HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.



October 2019

1/27 Barbeler Street Currajong Q 4812

PO Box 785 Hyde Park Q 4812

### Special Points of Interest:

- *The Naming of Mount Elliot*
- *Lydia remembers Burleigh Park*
- *Nick's Memoirs continued*

Monthly committee meetings are held at the Museum on the third Monday of the month at ten o'clock. All committee members are notified a week prior to the meeting.

### A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Hello to all our members and volunteers. It is that time of the year when it's time to dust off the decorations and get into full swing for the summer months and 'yes' Christmas. The Annual General Meeting was held in August and the committee has been returned once again, except our long standing Secretary Wendy Simpkins has retired and we welcomed Sue Fox as Secretary. Sue has been a member for a few years now and has been looking after the accessioning of donations and now has taken on the extra work as Secretary.

One of our Life Members, John McDonald has been in hospital and we wish him well for a speedy recovery. Also Ray Plozza has undergone eye surgery and we look forward to his return to the Museum soon. Fred Hague who retired recently is also recovering from heart surgery and we wish him a speedy recovery. This year has not been a good one with the floods at the beginning of the year so let's hope and pray there are no more disasters to deal with.

The auditing of storeroom 1 is complete and Fay Jones can stand back and see the "fruits of her labour". Thank you also to Petra Cartright for assisting Fay. The gems she has found is quite impressive but unfortunately they will never be displayed as the Museum building does not have sufficient room to add more displays. Nick has also completed his arranging of large photographs, maps and plans. The historical information available through the Museum is quite extensive.

Earlier in the year a meeting was held between all the Museums in Townsville. It was decided that a combined Museum's brochure was needed so tourists know what is available. The Army Museum, RAAF Heritage Centre, MTQ, Townsville Museum, Maritime Museum, Magnetic Island History Museum and Family History will feature on the new brochure which will also have a location map so tourists can easily find us. The group believes this will be an asset to us all.

Earlier this year we featured an article in the Newsletter about receiving a 1911 diary on the loss of the "Yongala". The diary was kept by Elizabeth O'Brien, the widow of a passenger, Clifford O'Brien. It was a mystery as to who sent it to the Museum. Well we can now tell you it was one of the Executors of the Estate of Cliffina Rathbourne. Cliffina was the only child of Clifford and Elizabeth O'Brien. The diary features in a special display in Hall 2.

Our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary book "Preserving our Heritage" will be available soon. Geoff Hansen has put so much work into this book for which I sincerely thank him. As this will be the last Newsletter for 2019, I wish you all the very best for the Festive Season and I look forward to working with you all in 2020.

**Trish Cronin** - President



Members of Townsville Museum visited the Hervey Range Tea Rooms, the site of the old Eureka Hotel at the top of the Range.

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### TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### BUSINESS HOURS

Monday to Friday

9:00 am to 2:30 pm

First and Third Sundays of the month

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

ENTRY Adults \$2 Chn 50c

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES

(12 months from 1st July to 30th June)

Single \$ 11.00

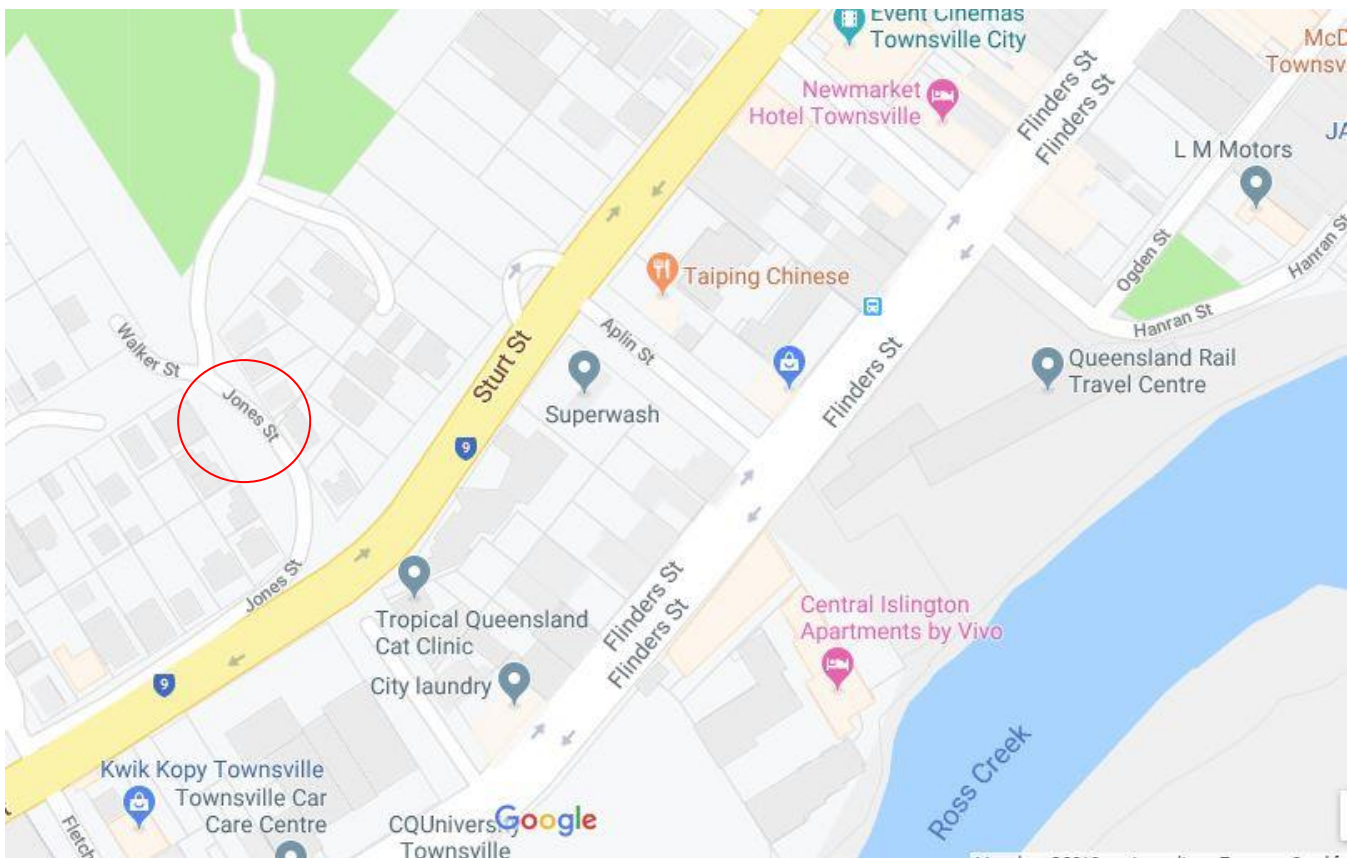
Couples \$ 16.50

Corporate \$ 32.50

## JONES STREET, TOWNSVILLE CITY

Named after Alfred Raymond Jones, who with Henry Mayer purchased several allotments in the street, as tenants in common, at the public auction held at Townsville Land Auction on the 2nd November 1874. Both men gave their address as Brisbane.

Mathew, J. (1995). *Highways and Byways*. Townsville, Queensland: Townsville City Council.



## TOWNSVILLE SHUNTING—PART 4

### Nick Shailer's Memoirs

I was 17 when I started on the platform as a lad porter at the Townsville Station railway. This is where many people started their life in the railway. The Chief Station Master was in charge overall and under him was the Station Master who was in charge of all platform activities, porters and guards, and assisting him was a lad porter. There were about six station masters for Townsville Station.

The platform staff was made up of a Platform Foreman, a position which was normally filled by 2 men per day on different shifts, and about 12 porters, two freight checkers, a barrier gate porter or ticket checker, a cloak room porter, 2 messenger porters per day, 3 number takers per day, a lad porter on yard report, a printing room porter, several coach cleaners and at least three call car drivers per day.

Shunting staff had normally 3 shifts a day made up of a foreman shunter and 3 shunters who signed on in the Station Master's office before departing into the yard. This is for North Yard only, as the South Yard operated independently. There were also 2 examiners on each shift.

In the parcels office, there were at least 12 clerks and the same number of porters. The parcels section was divided into Receiving and Dispatch sections. My father spent most of his working life in the Receiving section.

There were also 8 signal men who operated the Fork Line and "A" cabins and 3 older shunters who operated B cabins. One of the porters on duty was also assigned to help the Fork Line signalman. A further two porters worked in the dispatch office on the second floor of the old building, sorting and delivering mail.

That's a lot of staff per day and over the years, I was employed at various times to do most of these jobs.

Not under the Station Master's control were the staff in the Refreshment Rooms and Public Bar or those in the Ticket and Telegraph offices.

There were also a couple of hundred staff in the offices throughout both buildings.

On arrival of the Sunlander, some of the platform crew would unload and issue passengers their checked luggage. The rest would unload the parcel traffic and up to a 100 mail bags which would all be checked and sorted. Those for the west were placed on to one barrow, which was stored at the cloak room until the Inlander was ready for loading. The rest went to the transship gate and again checked and signed over to the post office truck.

Around Christmas time, one or two extra baggage cars would be detached and placed into the dock lines as there could be up to 500 mail bags to be worked through.

At the end of the platform there was also a supply of portable dog crates in several sizes, for use on the trains or for using when there were more than two dogs to travel. I've also seen these crates used for goats.

## TOWNSVILLE SHUNTING—PART 4

### Nick Shailer's Memoirs

On the rear of most vans were two small compartments. The top one was the coffin box and the lower for the transport of dogs. The porters would load or unload coffins as required and water, feed and walk the dogs. The boxes could hold one coffin and two dogs.

When the railway handled a lot of loaded parcel traffic wagons that had arrived from the south along with a required number of empty ones, usually QLX class box wagons, the wagons would be placed into a 2 dock road for unloading and reloading. Refrigeration or chilled load wagons would also be placed for loading. The old CMR refrigeration wagons were very noisy and were to be replaced by R class wagons or SRC class containers, which were much quieter. The chilled wagons CMIS class had to have bags of ice tipped into the ice compartment from the top. This took a crew of 4 porters and a special stand which was all right on a hot summer's day but not in winter.

Sometimes crates of homing pigeons would arrive on a train and at a designated release time. The SM would have received a telegram with the release time on it and he would supervise the pigeon-release then confirm the time to the sending station who would advise the sender.

The Parcels office was originally at the town end of the platform but in the 1960s after the Railway Refreshment Rooms moved into the ground floor of the new building, the former refreshment rooms were divided into two sections. On the parcels received side, barrows of loading were delivered by the platform porters, then sorted, checked and placed into racks for delivering to companies or the public. My father spent his working life in this section.

On the incoming side, parcels were checked, weighed and stamped with its own stamps, then placed on to barrows which were collected by the platform staff and loaded into wagons for the required destination.

With the advent of diesel locos, three fuel tanks were installed where gardens had been next to the WW2 air raid shelter, at the side of 3 dock, and road access from Flinders Street was also constructed for fuel tankers to come in and refill the tanks. A pump shed was also built here, and fuel was then pumped to the then new loco shed, two fuel points were also constructed on the main platform, one at either end, to fuel locos on the Sunlanders.

In later years the tanks were removed and a big new one built out near Forkline cabin with a rail siding. Now the tank could be refilled from rail tankers which came up on shunts from the jetty.

Nick Shailer  
November 2018

## THE NAMING OF MOUNT ELLIOT— JOHN ELLIOTT

### The Naming of Mount Elliot

A *Queensland Place Names* <sup>1</sup> search gives this citation for the name;

*'Named after Gilbert Eliot (1796-1871), the first speaker and member of the Legislative Assembly of Queensland's first Parliament, which was formed in 1860. He was the member for the Wide Bay electorate. Spelling corrupted over time to Elliot.'*

In the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <sup>2</sup> his name is given as Gilbert Elliott (1796-1871). He was the third son of the sixth Earl of Minto, born at Stobs, Roxburghshire.

"With his wife and three children he arrived in the *Mary* at Sydney in November 1839 etc." He did not enter politics until 1859, in NSW, and Queensland in 1860 as member for Wide Bay in the first Queensland Legislative Assembly.

However, in the '*Narrative of a Survey Volume 1*' <sup>3</sup> by Captain Phillip Parker King, master of the *Mermaid*, Mount Elliot is named in 1819; although it is spelt Eliot.

*June 14 1819*

*The next morning, we steered round Cape Cleveland and passed close to some straggling rocks on a reef that extends for four miles to the eastward of it.*

*Cape Cleveland is the extremity of a mountainous projection, and like Mount Upstart rises abruptly from low land, by which it is separated from the lofty range of Mount Eliot. The wooded and uneven character of the land on its west side indicated so great a likelihood of our finding fresh water that I was induced to despatch Mr. Bedwell to the shore to ascertain whether a delay might be made profitable by completing our hold with wood and water. His return bringing a favourable report, the cutter was anchored in three fathoms, at about one mile from the extremity of the Cape, bearing North 60 1/2 degrees East.*

*HMS Mermaid* had been commissioned by the British Admiralty, and Colonial Office to survey those parts of the Australian coast that were not sufficiently covered by Captain Matthew Flinders in the *Investigator* in 1802. One result of these surveys (*HMS Mermaid* circumnavigated Australia three times!) was the production of a series of coastal maps intended to aid the rapidly growing marine traffic from Port Jackson (Sydney) to China, India and England.

The small section reproduced below is from the '*Chart of part of the NE Coast of Australia by Phillip P King Commander RN 1819, 1820, 1821 Sheet 1*' which clearly shows Mt Eliot.

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/place-names/search#/search=elliott&types=MT&place=Mount\\_Elliott11545](https://www.dnrm.qld.gov.au/qld/environment/land/place-names/search#/search=elliott&types=MT&place=Mount_Elliott11545)

<sup>2</sup> <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/elliott-gilbert-3476>

<sup>3</sup> <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks/e00027.html>

## THE NAMING OF MOUNT ELLIOT—JOHN ELLIOTT



In the same *Narrative of Captain King's*, the ship the *Lady Elliot* is mentioned as having travelled down the inner reef in 1816 as the following extracts show;

May 28 1819

*But we did not pass round Breaksea<sup>4</sup> Spit until the next day. We then steered across Hervey's Bay towards Bustard Bay and passed a small island that was discovered by the ship Lady Elliot in 1816 and that had not yet a place upon the chart of this part of the coast.*

<sup>4</sup> Northern end of Fraser Island

## THE NAMING OF MOUNT ELLIOT—JOHN ELLIOTT

*June 18 1819*

*At sunset we anchored about four miles to the eastward of the position assigned to a reef, on which the ship Lady Elliot struck, in 1815; but saw nothing of it.*

*July 18 1820*

*At nine o'clock the next evening, having passed Indian Head in the morning, we rounded Breaksea Spit, and at midnight brought to the wind in order to make Lady Elliot's Island.*

The entries of May 28<sup>th</sup> 1819, and July 18<sup>th</sup> 1820 refer to Lady Elliot island, located at the southern end of the Great Barrier Reef, east of Gladstone, whilst the entry of June 18<sup>th</sup> 1819, refers to what is now known as *Lady Elliot Reef* which lies directly east of Ingham only 2.4 kms from the coast.

Wikipedia has this description of the *Lady Elliot*; <sup>5</sup>

*It was a ship of 353 tons and had been constructed in Bengal. The ship was registered in Calcutta and was under the command of Thomas Stewart. The ship arrived in Sydney from Calcutta on 23 June 1816 with a cargo of mixed merchandise. The ship left sometime between 12 and 22 September for Batavia. The ship was carrying a cargo of hats, indigo, sealskins, turpentine tar and white lead. The ship never reached Batavia and the wreck was not found until some years after. The crew of 54 who were mostly Lascars probably drowned or perished on reaching shore.*

*NB: Research details compiled for the Queensland Museum Wreck Register (see also Australian National Historic Shipwrecks Database) indicates the vessel was refloated, as a Dutch newspaper reference (Javaasche Courant) announced the vessel's arrival in Java in November 1816, i.e. after the supposed date of loss. The captain's name for this voyage was Joshua Abbott*

From Charles Bateson's 'Queensland Shipwrecks'; <sup>6</sup>

*Lady Elliot. Ship, 353 tons. Built Bengal; registered at Calcutta. Captain Thomas Stewart. Left Sydney for Batavia late in September 1816 but did not arrive. Several years later settlers at Cardwell found her remains near the mouth of a small creek. Apparently, the crew of fifty-four, mostly lascars, lost their lives. One of the first vessels to use the "inner route" between the Great Barrier Reef and the mainland when travelling between Sydney and Batavia. The captain named Lady Elliot Island on the southern Great Barrier Reef.*

<sup>5</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady\\_Elliot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lady_Elliot)

<sup>6</sup> <http://oceans1.customer.netspace.net.au/qld-main.html>

## THE NAMING OF MOUNT ELLIOT—JOHN ELLIOTT

It is believed that the *Lady Elliot* was named for the wife of Hugh Elliot, Privy Counselor, and Governor of Madras, from 1814 to 1820. <sup>7</sup> He married Margaret Jones in 1792 and they had nine children before her death in 1819.

Interestingly Hugh was the second son of Sir Gilbert Elliot 1722-1777– not to be confused with our original Gilbert Elliott 1796-1871!

In conclusion, it would seem unlikely that Mt Elliot could be named after Gilbert Elliot, Australian politician 1796-1871. The use of the name in the logbook of the *Mermaid* in 1819 would make that impossible, and yet the *Mermaid* clearly had records of the voyage of the *Lady Elliot*, enabling them to identify Lady Elliot Island ‘that had not yet a place upon the chart’. This would make good sense, as the ‘inner route’ was still very little known, the dangers of navigating the reef being so large. So, it looks likely that the intrepid Mr Stewart, master of the *Lady Elliot*, named the mountain whilst passing close to shore in 1816.

And finally, as my own surname is Elliott, I have taken a keen interest in the various spellings and misspellings of Mt Elliot over the years. There seems to be a consensus now that the correct version is indeed Elliot, but the constant errors are not just a modern predicament as the following extract from *The Steel Bonnets* <sup>8</sup> will show;

*Note – A curiosity about the name Elliot is that there are more than seventy ways of spelling it, from Ayelwood to Ilwand, and Dalliot to Ellot (which was the form most commonly used on the Border, along with Elwood.) Any permutations of l's and t's is said to be permissible except Elliott, which for some reason the family affect to despise. The old rhyme says;*

*The double L and single T  
Descend from Minto and Wolflee,  
The double T and single L  
Mark the old race in Stobs that dwell,  
The single L and single T  
The Eliots of St Germain's be,  
But the double T and double L  
Who they are, nobody can tell.*

<sup>7</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh\\_Elliot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Elliot)

<sup>8</sup> ‘The Steel Bonnets’ George MacDonald Fraser 1971. A history of the Anglo Scottish Border Reivers.

## HISTORY OF BURLEIGH PARK BY LYDIA MORTON

On the 27 July 2018, an elderly gentleman visited the museum in the hope of finding where he was actually born. His Birth Certificate indicated was that he was born at Burleigh Park, Townsville, when his family actually resided in Walker Street. He was born around 1937.

I spoke to Trisha Fielding, local author, who at the moment is researching on the local midwives to see if she had come across anything in her travels. She was unable to help.

This request really bugged me and upon a moment of quiet reflection, remembered that a school friend of mine's father owned Burleigh Park. I used to walk past it every day to primary school at Mundingburra.

A phone call later to Ian Walters, the son of the last owner of Burleigh Park, and the following story unfolded:

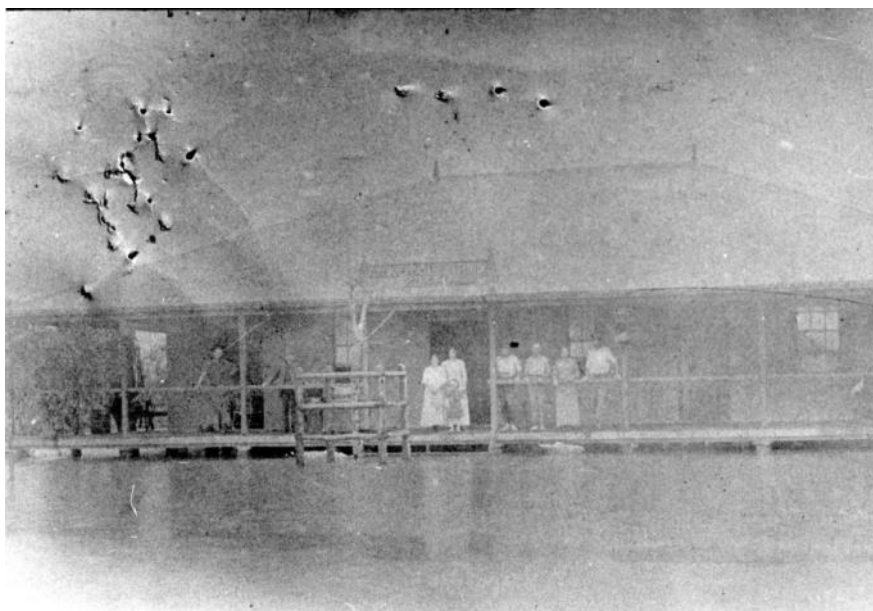
Ian advised me that his father had purchased Burleigh Park in 1952 from a Bill New. The address at the time of Burleigh Park was 110 Ross River Road. The Walters family lived in Burleigh Park's homestead until Ian was 15 or 16 years of age. At this time Ian's father decided to subdivide Burleigh Park in conjunction with a well known builder. The Walters family retained a block of land in the new subdivision on which was built a new home – 5 deCoursey Street, Mundingburra.

Ian also recalls having heard conversations as a youngster about the homestead having a connection to a hospital.

All that remains now of Burleigh Park is two large black bean trees in DeCoursey Street which grew at the side of the homestead.

### **Additional Information:**

It pays to talk about history and upon having a discussion with a friend at lunch this week, she mentioned that her mother and father lived near the Aitkenvale Arms Hotel and in 1935 her mother walked down the road to Mundingburra to give birth to her eldest brother. So it is highly likely, 'down the road' means Burleigh Park and supports Ian's recollections.



Unknown (1917). *The Aitkenvale Arms Hotel during the flood of 1917.*

Local History Collection, City-Libraries, Townsville.

## Museum Members on Excursions

Hervey Range Heritage Tea Room Visit - 8th June 2019



From "A Pattern of Pubs" by  
Dorothy and Bruce Gibson-Wilde

The first recorded licensee in 1865 was Charles Seville Rowe, one of the first settlers to reach the site of Townsville, having come north with John Melton Black in 1861. He left Hervey Range in 1867 to start the *Commercial* in Townsville. His place was taken by William Randall, described by A. J. Boyd as 'a very active old man...who could race any younger man for 100 yards'.<sup>1</sup>

....Until the new road to Ravenswood and Charters Towers via Ross River opened about 1870, all traffic to the goldfields used the Hervey Range road. There were times when 100 wagons or more were strung out along its length. It was 'Tramp' again who recalled 'the carriers usually travelled with several teams and many a jovial evening was spent at Rolfe's old hotel'.<sup>4</sup>

1 A.J. Boyd, *Townsville Jubilee Carnival Programme*, 1913, p. 6.

4 'Tramp', Hervey's Range Road, *Cummins & Campbell's Monthly Magazine*, March 1933.



## Townsville Museum visits Ravenswood 27 July 2019



A large group of Museum members visited Ravenswood in July, to visit the Ravenswood Museum specifically.

This small Museum is full of mining and local history and we spent a couple of hours here viewing the collections. The Museum is spread over a large area and includes a lockup and a section for vehicles and machinery.

We met at the Imperial Hotel for a lunch in the dining room where the conversation lulled for a little while, as we enjoyed our repast!



When Nick went missing, Gary found him in the lock-up down the back of the main building!

A grisly hand on a rather large model standing near the stairs at the Imperial Hotel. I think this model has caused a few heart flutters (...personally speaking) when you get a glimpse out of the corner of your eye as you walk past.....



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