

My Time in Woolgoolga 1951-2015

I came to Woolgoolga in 1951 as a young, enthusiastic chemist to a town without that facility. I had been misled on the population figures of the town, and it soon became evident that for me to succeed in business, the town needed to grow...and quickly! So I set about making an effort to do that. The detail sheet lists some of the positions I occupied during the first thirty years here, in a supreme drive to stay afloat myself, and assist in the town's progress.

So here I am in 2015 talking to you.

In 1990 Probus asked me to give a talk about the difference in Woolgoolga since I came in 1951. Subsequently it was repeated by request from Rotary, and again at an assembly at Red Rock Bowling Club. So I have used that as a basis for to-day, and upgraded it.

In preparation, I loaned a copy of that address to your executive, and there was comment that there was not much detail on the early days. But of course, I had not been here then. The Jetty was there, and the timber and the banana industries were in full swing. But if you find the details in this offering interesting and need more, I commend you to contact Rotary's historian David Fayle from Mullaway and Joyce Richardson from Dalgety Street, who, with her husband has extensive data on the timber industry, bullock teams, forestry etc., and you will find them enjoyable raconteurs. Dr. John Kramer has a vast knowledge of railways which involved him in research into the lines which serviced the jetty. He's full of detail.

But I want to quote from "Light Railways" Magazine of December, 2014, which sums up the position in early times:

"White settlement came late in the piece to Woolgoolga and didn't really get underway until the 1870's. There was little good agricultural land to attract settlers, and access by land and sea was difficult. The first settlers tried their hands at growing sugar cane, but soon turned their attention to the district's real wealth – its magnificent forests. Virgin stands of blackbutt, ironbark, flooded gum, mahogany, tallowwood, and grey gum grew in abundance. But early development was hampered by need to barge or float timber from Woolgoolga beach out to vessels anchored offshore. It was a risky procedure suitable only for high-value softwoods such as pine and red cedar. The NSW

Colonial Government of the day was successfully lobbied to provide an ocean jetty to develop the timber industry and encourage settlement. After a two year construction period, Woolgoolga jetty was opened for business in February 1892 at a cost of thirteen thousand two hundred pounds. It was 1560 feet long and equipped with a five ton steam crane at the outer end and a single track 3'6" gauge tramway running its length. Early hardwood exports consisted mostly of logs and hewn timber – girders, piles, and railway sleepers – for city and overseas markets.

In 1970 – remember 1970 – Alvin Tofler published his notable book “Future Shock”, and part of it carried this quotation from economist and sociologist Kenneth Boulding :

“The world of to-day is as different to the world in which I was born, as that world was from Julius Caesar’s. Almost as much has happened since I was born, as happened before. If the last 50,000 years of man’s existence were divided into lifetimes of approximately sixty two years each, there have been 800 such lifetimes. Only in the last seventy lifetimes has it been possible to communicate effectively from one lifetime to another. Only in the last six lifetimes did masses of men ever see the printed word. And the overwhelming majority of all material goods we use in daily life to-day has been developed in the present ... the 800th lifetime. During this lifetime man’s relationship to resources has reversed itself. Within a single lifetime, agriculture, the original basis of civilisation has lost its dominance, in nation after nation. To-day, in a dozen major nations, agriculture has lost its dominance, in nation after nation. To-day ,in a dozen major nations, agriculture employs fewer than 15% of the economical active population. If agriculture is the first stage of economic development and industrialism the second, 50% of the non-farm labour source in the U.S. ceased to wear the blue collar of manual or factory labour. Blue collar workers were outnumbered by those in the so called white collar occupations. The central stupendous truth about developed economies to -day is that they can have in anything but the shortest run... the kind and scale of resources they decide to have. It is no longer the resources which limits decisions....it is the decision that makes the resource.”

Remember that quote was made in 1970.

In 1990, one third of another lifetime had then occurred and in 1990 I had lived in Woolgoolga for two-thirds of such a lifetime; and as each lifetime

proceeds, happenings and events ,are taking place at an ever-increasing rate. And it was happening in exactly the predictable way in Woolgoolga as in any other part of the world. Influences outside the area eventually exert forces inside the area ...and so comes change

In a photo taken in 1920 you can see the railway lines at the jetty in the large area opposite where “Bluebottles” restaurant is now located. You would note very few buildings in that part of town at that time. There is a large place facing Beach Street, which was said to have been a cheese factory at Corindi, and was transferred to Woolgoolga by bullock wagon. And its location would have been where the Post Office is in 2015. And there is a Presbyterian Church on the top of the hill. Nightingale Street is not yet constructed.

Referring back to 1951 again, we need a thumbnail sketch of the town and district.

At that time young people did not own or have access to motor vehicles, and so as a young pharmacist I arrived in Coffs Harbour after a particularly grimy overnight train trip , and waited until 11 a.m. to catch an old brown Ryan Brothers Reo bus to Woolgoolga.....a town of 928 people. In Coffs Harbour I noted the old buildings, the High Street shops with veranda posts under bullnosed awnings with hitching rings to which the reins of horses were attached while farmers did shopping. The road to Woolgoolga was gravel surfaced, and badly and deeply corrugated and wound round the contours of Kororo to make a tortuous trip. And the bus driver delivered bread and mail to every box on the side of the road...all the way.

In Woolgoolga there were a few houses on the side of the road and no subdivisions at all. Most of the homes were on the east side of the Pacific Highway and the impression was that if you lived on the west side, you lived “up the bush”. There was a sawmill, Allen Taylor and Co. on the side of Creek Road inside the town boundaries and another in Dalgety Street. There was one home at Sandy Beach, two at Emerald Beach, quite a few at Corindi Beach (mostly week-enders of people from Grafton) ,some at Arrawarra, one at Mullaway, and none at Safety Beach. Red Rock had some week-enders too.

The bus pulled up at Avery’s Café located above the current tavern- a building again with veranda posts, no hitching rings, but enhanced with an enormous sitting bench for the full length of the frontage ...a place for people to sit, talk and wait for buses and a place to rest when late night shopping. Bill

Avery made the best milkshakes on the coast because he had learned to keep raw milk under refrigeration for five days before using it. Tourist buses called in for his milk shakes ! The Pacific Highway ran round through River Street, then round the corner at the Hotel which was built on the site of the existing tavern and then back out to where the roundabout is now. That corner was the site of many near misses, so later on The Main Roads Department resited the highway to eliminate it. The late Joan Prior's mother, "Ma" Ratcliffe cooked the meals for the café and made the best gramma pies you ever tasted, in a fuel stove. A member of another pioneer family, Oscar Featherstone, ran the town's butcher shop, killing his own meat at a slaughter house in Holloway's Road, bringing in the carcasses on the back of an old utility truck with the tray lined with galvanised flat iron and with little covering. Charlie MacPherson ran the town's barber shop over the road. It was a place where you went for a haircut and shave with a cutthroat razor skilfully stropped with a flamboyant action only reserved for expert barbers of the day. You got a haircut, the latest gossip, the newest story in town, and to top it off you could have a game of billiards in the back room.

Billy Richards had the 1950's supermarket...the "Dinky Di Stores" ...the general store with groceries, haberdashery and –well- you name it! There was even a library in the back part! It had a big awning – with posts but no hitching rings – which served as a bulk storage area. Mostly it might have one or two tons of cement, a ton or so of flour, 20 to 50 bags of sugar. There were two green tables for use by the CWA or other town organisations for street stalls. And when not in use the town identities sat on top of them, leaned against the wall, stretched their legs and told stories. Billy had faith in humanity. He gave no thought to theft, there was no security, and mostly the goods remained there-not stolen. Somebody did take a green table.

And there was the picture theatre which had originally been a town dance hall. A pioneer bullock driver, Jock Blackadder now deceased told me that " somebody threw a dorg in through the window one night ..in the middle of a waltz,... and that caused a bit of a stir."

And then the most important building in town...the Seaview Hotel. It was located where the tavern is now....an imposing two storey building with an underground cellar accessed from a trapdoor in the footpath, and down which kegs were lowered by ropes. Its upper level veranda had ornate decoration with wrought iron and timber panelling and at street level a big mirrored

framed picture with a bearded man in apron holding up a mug of foaming beer, and the words "Toohey's Sheaf Stout". And there was six o'clock closing. Diagonally on the corner was Waterhouse's newsagency and general store and a sky blue and white sign which said "Daily Telegraph. Four pence."

George Newman, J.P. ran the unofficial Post Office opposite the present RSL Motel on the high bank. It was the only post office in Australia where you could run an account, charge things up when you were down on your luck. If you were really broke, George would give you an interest-free personal loan. And the other item of distinction was that the books would never balance and George's accountancy system was the despair of the PMG's auditors. You could hand mail in for posting from 6 a.m. up to 9.30 p.m. by taking it up to George's residence above the office. And despite George being a builder, the locks on the office were secure...only occasionally. He was a forgetful man. He used to go to Grafton off and on and take his wife for a day out. On one occasion he returned to Woolgoolga without her, and had to go back and bring her home on the second trip.

The National Bank ran a receiving office in unlit fibro premises just above Avery's Café a couple of days a week. It was about the size of half a garage and two officers with money in a Gladstone bag, each with a revolver in his pocket, came out from Coffs Harbour. Later a full time branch was established in an augmented building. As you can guess, "security" was not the buzzword in those days.

Rae Potts, who was a mechanical genius and who left school at the age of fourteen ran a service station in River Street. He thought up the design for a rotary mower and made up an electric prototype years before Victa started making the motor version. And he modified the front suspension of a Morris Minor car to enable it to stand up to Australian roads two years before Lord Nuffield adopted the same principle in the U.K.

There was no RSL Club but on its site was the traditional huge Soldiers Memorial Hall which was the place where any entertainment was held in town. And in those days there was always a Friday night dance. And there were about 6 or 7 full scale balls each winter. These were the times when most of the town went out. Most Friday nights too, there was usually a card night in the supper room while the dances were on in the main hall. One night per month there was a meeting of a now defunct lodge organisation – the Royal

Antediluvian Order of the Buffalos- a sort of masonic –lower case “m” - lodge for ordinary blokes!

And there was the “tuckshop” where the Pizza Place in Beach street is now. Mrs Miller made the greatest puff pastry meat pies in a Metters “Bega” fuel stove. And Roy Atkins later opened his “Meat Palace” on the corner where Vision Real Estate now has its office. Next door was a large drapery store run by Mrs. Malley, wife of Lt. Commander Malley, former harbourmaster of Darwin during the Second World War. Further down was Dave and Mrs. Hart’s Newsagency, Reg. Creighton’s Beach Store, Tom Gillette’s Real Estate Agency (for which he never bothered to get a license) and last of all on the corner of Beach and Queen Streets was Mollie Booth’s General Store . Mollie was a highly educated alcoholic with as University degree, who delivered groceries anywhere and as far north as Barcoongerie State Forest on the way to Yuraygir National Park in a bull nosed Ford van. There are many stories, quite a number of which are untellable, about Mollie and her escapades.

The Beach Reserve was an open paddock mostly overgrown with long paspalum in which it was possible to find relics of decades of jetty use...old railway lines, carriage wheels, old rusty mooring buoys including one of the two now preserved in Wharf Street and recently so well restored. The reserve was available for camping and recreational purposes and in a strategic position were erected a picnic shelter which doubled as a “housie housie” booth in holiday times...and the Beach Hall. It was an old wooden building with heavy wooden shutters which were lifted up and secured with steel hooks to allow lighting and ventilation for the concerts and dancing which ran for about a fortnight or so at Christmas as entertainment for campers who came from all over the State. There was always a big contingent of people from the coalfields near Newcastle who used Woolgoolga as an annual get together. The other buildings were pan system toilets which were supposed to cater for the campers and visitors in peak holiday times....but they never did! And the whole area was held under a committee of trustees, and they had a one legged caretaker, Jack Munro.

Of course there was the Maritime Services Board storage shed at the base of the jetty with huge thick timber doors, where all the cargo from ships was stored. And the remains of a crane, and railway line on an

embankment which had done sterling service in bringing down timber from Woolgoolga Creek and Bark Hut to the Reserve along part of the footpath area in Beach Street, thence to be taken along the jetty and loaded on to ships.

And there was the jetty. About 1/3rd mile long. And people could walk out on it for a stroll after the timber trade had ceased. You could look down into the water and see fish, and catch them. All the town fished – men women and children, and it was a great attraction for tourists then known as visitors. And it was in effect, a bonding place.... a place where all the town came together quite often with a common interest....early morning, during the day, at evening, and again at night when the dull twinkling of sooty kerosene lanterns indicated that people were out there. And visitors got instant integration by using the words “catchin’ any?”. Some deep sea fishing boats moored off the jetty were lifted on to it by the crane at the end of the railway line during rough weather. But above all the jetty was part of the people and remained so until time and rough seas pushed it into disrepair. And in a cyclone some of the piles broke loose and drifted around the bay and floated into the line of surf. There was a near tragedy when one jagged pile rolled on top of a young child swimming at the beach, and then rolled back over her again when the surge went back. Miraculously the child escaped injury. The loose piles were also considered a danger to shipping, floating about in the ocean. So the Public Works Department and Maritime Services Board decided on removal and for five months bulldozers pulled and gelignite blasted to remove all the remaining piles and the jetty was no more. Somewhere I have a beautiful slide of the last blast of 32 sticks of gelignite removing the last one. It is interesting to note that it was generally believed that the cost of removal was far greater than the cost of repairs. Had it been repaired we may still have had the jetty as is the case in Coffs Harbour. But the Public Works Department contended that in time it would have required more maintenance again, and there did not appear that it would have any commercial future because the timber supply had nearly expired and loading ships in unprotected locations (as opposed to those in places like Coffs Harbour) was hazardous. Whatever logic you follow, in the final analysis Woolgoolga had lost an integral part of its identity and a meeting place which tended to weld the town together in a common interest.

But the town had its firsts.

For all that, Woolgoolga had its characters. Whilst the Commissioner for Taxation was discovering the “Bottom of the Harbour” scheme, I’ve got news for him....that sort of thing was going on in Woolgoolga for quite a while beforehand. There was a character who contrived to lose his identity during the war years and he did not exist officially. This was his first step to buying a series of properties in the names of his very young grandchildren. From the rents of these, he lived very well. And when he died there was no trouble with Probate. Death Duties, or conveyancing. I’m sure he died with a smile on his face. Then there was the man who delivered mail around the outlying areas under contract to the Postmaster General. He was also the local Starting Price betting man, and a sly grog operator. He reckoned the Government was paying all his business expenses with the money he got from the mail contract and he had a ready-made bet collection system and beer delivery service which did not attract attention. Then again, there was a chap who ran a banana case business on the vacant block next to the barber’s shop. In the early days of the banana industry all fruit was consigned to market in special sized wooden boxes, which came from the mill in parts, and needed to be nailed together. A truck would pull up with all the sections neatly bundled and drop them on the block of land. The local growers collected what they needed, and went to the barber. The barber had a large roll of brown wrapping paper on a stand on a shelf, and he would record the quantities of cases taken by writing the details on the paper roll. The grower would pay for the cases, the paper would be torn off the roll and burned. There were no records, and everyone was happy.

But the Commissioner did catch up with a grazier at Upper Corindi. He used to ride into town on a horse, usually with what was then known popularly as a Colonial Sugar Refinery suitcase.....a sugar bag with a rope tied round a stone on one bottom corner and again at the neck when it was filled, and then slung over your shoulder. He’d been caught up in an examination of cattle sales records in Grafton. He rode in for the interview with the officers and was finally assessed a very substantial sum. He rode off home to get the payment. Next day he came back with a large cream can on the pommel of his saddle, dismounted, and went in and tipped the contents of the can on the table in front of the tax men. “That’s it...check it for me please” he said. It was a pile of notes! It turned out to be more...far more... than was needed. The officers

looked up and advised him, of it, and without so much of a smile he said: "Put it all back. I'll have to go home again. I've brought the wrong can!". The fortunes of the town were presided over by the most senior Senior Constable in the NSW Police Force.....Cecil Marsh. He would not take a promotion because it would mean that he would be shifted from Woolgoolga to a bigger station. And so he finally retired in Woolgoolga. But with respect he was an enigma. A fountain of kindness, woe betide anyone who transgressed especially when he was cross. He believed in quiet summary justice including the knuckle if necessary, or a good kick in the backside for a young offender. But he always delivered a stiff lecture beforehand so you knew why you were getting it. And it saved a lot of bookwork, and was more effective anyway. Nobody tangled with him. He'd been in two wars and had taken a bit part in the filming of "Forty Thousand Horsemen" in the Cronulla Sand Hills, where he sustained an injury when his horse fell. But he met his match from a bird. There's an odd emu around this area and during one time when the lake was running out and the water level low, one got over into town and into a backyard. But that was just the challenge Cec Marsh enjoyed. Now everyone knows you don't tangle with emus. A flamboyant character at any time, our intrepid policeman set off with a full kit of things which one might need to catch an emu. There are many versions of what happened. Some said the emu viewed Cec with distain while Cec tried to lasso it. Others said the emu got upset because it was being chased. But the confrontation came to a preliminary end when the emu ran at Cec and, as emus do, launched itself feet first in mid air, knocking the guardian of the law to the ground, leaving an instant bruise of a well defined emu footprint on the constable's cheek, thereby advising the town that at last he had met his match. And his failure to subdue the emu stayed advertised and needed to be explained until the bruise disappeared.

And that's a thumbnail sketch of how I found Woolgoolga. A frontier town? Maybe. But a town so real in itself. And so real to those who lived there. Tough strong bushmen, sleeper cutters, banana growers, fishermen...all human beings most of whom drank beer in fair quantities.... some of whom settled differences in the only way they knew ...a few of whom would turn a glass upside down in the bar on a Saturday afternoon to liven the place up a bit, and get rid of a bit of "agro". And there were women who saw their role as homemakers caring for hard working men in all the ways they needed...used to having

only an average amount of money and making things do. But in adversity ...totally united to the last man and woman. Largely, socialising was restricted to drinking, dancing, fishing ,sports, and there were the CWA and Church groups and a lot of town organisations whose simple functions absorbed the few spare hours most people had.

There was one doctor and no ambulance in town. There were ambulances in Grafton and Coffs Harbour and it depended on which one you joined whether you would have a free trip to hospital or whether you paid. Getting sick was a bit of a lottery too. If you got hurt the Doctor had to decide whether you were bad enough to send to Grafton where there was a base hospital and superior operating facilities; or whether you could get fixed up at the cottage hospital in Coffs Harbour. And if he sent you to Coffs Harbour and they could not attend to you there, the ambulance had to turn round and take you north towards Grafton where the Grafton ambulance would meet you and take you the rest of the way! Not very good for the patient or the pocket. So it was important to know how sick you would be before you joined the ambulance!

The Doctor and I seemed to work together fairly well. Once he was stricken with a kidney stone, and I was able to help him through his renal colic. Another time we had an epidemic of virus pneumonia and he got it. So I did his rounds of his patients for him. After he retired to Port Macquarie there were a number of times when there was no Doctor and those times were stressful and had their own complications in town health.

In the sixties Woolgoolga had not grown significantly and the banana and timber industries had suffered the ravages of drought and bushfires. One night the hills round Woolgoolga were ringed with fires. Sawmills were burned down, plantations burned out, families left town, and it needed more population. Whilst a lot of people had come down from Grafton and thus had business roots there, Coffs Harbour was growing and slowly the attachment to the Clarence frayed away and people looked south and Coffs Harbour became the recognised area centre. About this time it was recognised that an area between Nambucca Heads and Yamba and inland to Dorrigo was ideally balanced for tourist promotion. The Woolgoolga Chamber of Commerce was responsible for forming the first regional tourist promotion group in Australia, the Mid

North Coast Tourist Authority. Its concept was five years ahead of the U.S. Slowly this promotion brought more people to the area by introducing them to the attractions of a place for permanent residence ; and it is safe to say that the region's economy is now significantly based on tourism. The organisation failed after about five years due to the lack of support from local councils.

In 1968 I addressed a meeting of the Kororo P & C on the future of the Kororo basin. To the incredulity of those present, predictions were made that the coastline would carry tourist accommodation. Professional people and outsiders who, having money, would buy and settle in permanent homes there. You can see what has happened. During that same period the classic example was the establishment of the hydroponics enterprise on the side of the highway just north of the town, known then as "Wonder Gardens". There, at one stage, 80,000 lettuce were under production. It was a very early introduction to the present fruit and vegetable industry, a good proportion of which uses modern hydroponic culture, and which is destined to become a major factor in local economics.

And in those early days there was the beginnings of the Indian Community . I recall Booja Singh, who lived opposite the recreation ground, and Jageer, and Gurbechin, and Pritam, and Chanan. It was said they came from Punjab, the farming province in India and from Fiji to supplement the labour force for canecutters and banana growers when all the local young men went off to the war. They liked things here and did not go back after the war. They brought their wives and families out to Woolgoolga and so their community grew. Their custom of arranged marriages also had an effect. History proves them to be shrewd businesspeople, and history also records them to be the very best neighbours. It is interesting to note that there are a number of factors which are conspiring to weaken some of their philosophies, especially greater education opportunities, and the family structure of the Indian Community seems likely to alter in the next generation or two. Their ambition is reflected in the augmented Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, and the new temple nearing completion in Hastings Street Then there is the advent of the flourishing Ozberries Co-operative, now spreading its wings to cope with the expanding industry. In the 50's and 60's the banana industry was considered the most affluent and major money earner, and Woolgoolga certainly grew good bananas. And everywhere

now you can see lessening areas, and the industry presents itself as one in slow decline.

As population grew ,so did the number of children, and the single primary school was elevated to a central school. High school students travelled by bus to Coffs Harbour for fourth and fifth year studies. It was far from satisfactory. And so Woolgoolga achieved high school status with a high school in a tree studded location for 800 students, now near capacity at a cost then of \$5,000,000. Additions were made to the primary school ,and the Sandy Beach school was built to cater for children south of the town.

When the dangers of having the Pacific Highway through town with a dangerous corner was realised, it was relocated behind the top town shopping centre. This meant that the shops there were not getting the benefits of passing traffic. I was speaking to a prominent architect in Sydney who advised that to be successful you have to have premises somewhere close to a focal point in town. It became obvious that the place to be was at the beach. So my wife and I bought the land and built Surfside Plaza. It triggered the relocation of some existing businesses, and prompted people to build new premises there, and so, in some ways the town changed its direction when the Highway changed its direction.

Several months ago I loaned the Yeates History of Woolgoolga to a visiting American. When he returned it he said it was obvious that Woolgoolga had been treated as the poor country cousin of Coffs Harbour. I am prompted to tell you the story of Lake Road. In the 50's and 60's it was just a track of grass over sand with two wheel tracks and a low area on the north end. It was possible to get bogged in the soft dry sand, and a guarantee of getting bogged in the low area in wet weather. It was Crown land and Council would do nothing to improve it. The Beach Management Committee had one member who was a large Sawmiller who had a lot of mechanical gear. The Committee took a lease over a gravel pit at Knobby. The chemist, the doctor and the butcher as committee members, laid out the road! The sawmiller loaned the grader and bulldozer, and the committee engaged tip trucks and paid the drivers' wages. In one week-end the road was surfaced with gravel. The location of the road altered to eliminate the bog hole, and some beer was consumed at the RSL Club. When the Council did assume control of

the road, it was surfaced with a tar seal. And that is the road to the lake to-day.

Over the time, Woolgoolga got its RSL Club and a Bowling Club. The story about the Bowling Club is another one about resident participation. They have been augmented under pressure of patronage. The Highway was sealed and they took out the posts and hitching rings in Coffs Harbour. Coffs Harbour, got a bigger and better hospital and another private hospital, more Doctors there (and in Woolgoolga) , and so many new facilities that the grip by the Clarence area died. Woolgoolga has looked to Coffs Harbour as its larger centre. The homes on the subdivisions round the town are in such numbers now, that, in fact, Woolgoolga is slowly taking the position of Coffs Harbour thirty years ago – as the centre for the area Red Rock to Moonee Beach, and the rural subdivisions. So in recent times it has become the rurally oriented beachside northern suburb of Coffs Harbour.

A revelation occurred on 7th. June, 2013. It was connected with Rotary's celebration of the 125th Anniversary of the establishment of the Village of Woolgoolga, and the opening of its Heritage Walk project. I viewed the parade from the roof of Surfside Plaza. It gave a great overview of the masses of people all there because it was Woolgoolga. Whilst the crowd was cheering, a great feeling of quiet came over me. I had read Professor Yeates' History of the Village several times and had been a resident from 1951 to 2013, but never before had I witnessed such a demonstration. The feeling was that Woolgoolga had come of age by this mass of people united in joyous celebration.

If only Alvin Tofler had been there.

But all the characters have gone. They have been replaced by personalities. The truth is that the characters were locals. They never had the opportunity to become personalities. But as I look around the room I see people who have had that opportunity. Whilst the characters had all the colour to inject into the day-to-day events in the town, a personality is prompted to make a contribution in direct proportion to his / her worldly experience. So the town has not only grown in population over the years but it has grown in breadth and depth.

In the 1950's the residents were fiercely proud of their town, and that pride came from a common sense of not having much but being able to do and be happy- and of course that final knowledge that they could depend on one another. And there were limits to that because of relative isolation.. But some years ago I detected a new sense of pride developing. I believe that population growth and with that the arrival of personalities and their families has influenced the thinking and definition of "pride", and so the last part of the Alvin Tofler quote is coming true.

"The central stupendous truth about developed economies (and we are now in the developed economy of Coffs Harbour) is they can have the kind and scale of resources they decide to have. It is no longer the resource that limits the decision. It is the decision that makes the resource".

Woolgoolga in the 50's and 60's and even before that was limited by its resources....natural and human. But the resources allowed the town to live...or exist. Progress brought those secondary resources....those personalities. In their numbers they have reversed the process and made decisions to make decisions.

My notes do not run in chronological order, nor are they in any way remotely complete. Dates have become irrelevant in this sort of presentation.

** So don't worry too much about time in Woolgoolga. As I and so many people have found out. It's not a bad place to find yourself, and to realise who you are.**

Thank you. Don Clinch 25 March 2015