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A History of the Buderim Tavern

With notes on Early Hotels in the Landsborough to Yandina Area

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An interesting fact about Buderim is that the town, which was established about 1870, had no licensed hotel until 1985 when the Buderim Tavern opened. There were several early hotels in the Sunshine Coast area including one at Woombye, known as 'Cobb's Camp Hotel' dating back to 1877. This, in common with several others, was on Gympie Road. A new hotel was built on a different site in Woombye near the rail station in 1900 and named the 'Criterion'. Also in 1877 Isaac Burgess built the 'Sportsman's Arms' at Mellum Creek on Gympie Road. This was replaced by the 'Mellum Club Hotel' in 1886. However the Gympie Road closed and the new railway bypassed Mellum Creek in 1890. But not deterred, in 1914 the two-storey hotel was placed on skids and was winched and towed by bullocks about one kilometre to a new site near the railway station in the new town which was named 'Landsborough'. This operation took two weeks. It then was renamed the 'Landsborough Hotel' (see above the hotel in 1917 finally settled in Landsborough).



In 1885 a hotel was built at Shelly Beach, Caloundra. In 1889 the Australian Hotel in Yandina was granted a liquor licence. There was a hotel on the Show Ground Hill in Nambour in 1884. Later this was closed and a new hotel was built at the northern end of Currie Street to serve the newly opened railway. It was named Petrie's Creek Hotel but later changed to Henry's Nambour Hotel. It then became the Commercial Hotel. In 1911 the Maroochydore Club Hotel opened (see left on opening day), followed by the Mooloolah Hotel in

that year. In 1912 the Club Hotel and the Royal George Hotel opened in Nambour and the Palmwoods Hotel opened. Latecomers were Mooloolaba Hotel in 1937 and Chifley's Hotel between Alexandra Headland and Maroochydore in 1975.

Given the foregoing, it would be reasonable to expect Buderim, which was first settled earlier than all these, to have had a licensed hotel in the first part of the 20st century if not earlier. So what was different about the Buderim community? Why was there no licensed hotel until 1985? After all Maroochydore, which was nowhere near the highway or the rail, had a hotel in 1911. The reasons appear to lie in the religious and lifestyle beliefs of many of Buderim's early settlers and date back to the early 1870s.

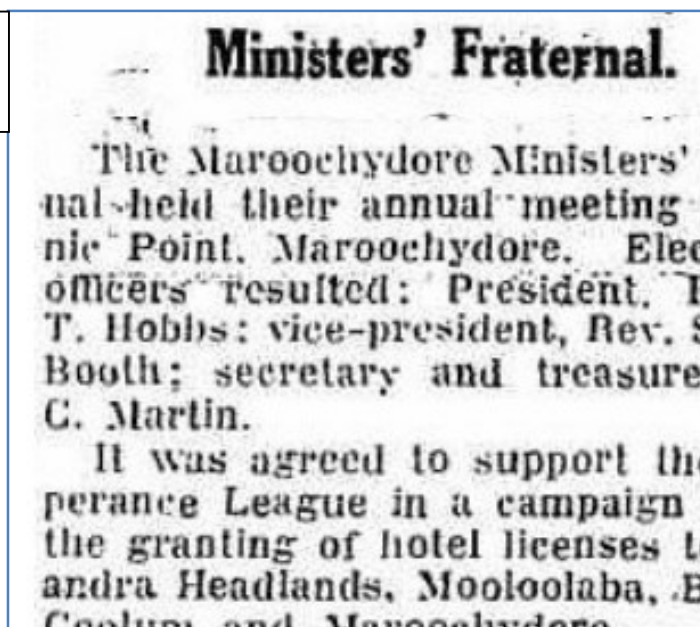
Buderim's first settler, Joseph Dixon, was a Quaker as was fellow pioneer Gustav Reibe. The Quakers frowned on the use of liquor as did another well-represented group – the Methodists who strongly, even fiercely, opposed any source of intoxicating drink on Buderim. Masons too were well represented and they also were opposed. An early example of this attitude was in 1888 when about 60 people attended a temperance meeting at the Buderim School. This represented about half the population. The Good Templar Lodge, a tee-total group, held regular meetings including a picnic, as early as 1876 at Mooloolah Heads.¹ Another example in 1915 was an application for a liquor licence for 'Birdwood' guest house on Buderim by the original owner William Watt, which was vigorously opposed by the predominantly farming community and was refused. So notorious was Buderim for being 'dry', that in some quarters it became known as 'Holy Hill'.² While this lack of a hotel was well accepted by most Buderim residents, this was not necessarily the opinion of all visitors, as the following from 1919 makes clear:³

Buderim Visitor's Impressions – If any holiday maker or tourist wishes to go to a resort, to which he will wish to go back again for another stay, let him or her go to Buderim. A pretty little township and settlement is Buderim, with everything most convenient, saw-mill, stores, school and unique in having no hotel. I believe that if you wish for anything stronger than banana juice, you must walk five miles to Maroochydore, and by then you will have earned what the song calls 'a deep, deep draught'.

In 1935 this appeared in the *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser* March 15, 1935, page 5.

The report opposite indicates that opposition to a hotel on Buderim remained strong in the 1930s. However down the hill, despite some opposition, the Mooloolaba Hotel opened in 1937.

In the 1960s there were two or three licensed restaurants on Buderim where diners could get a drink with their meal, but no other places selling liquor. The first of these restaurants was owned by Rex Nettleton who gained a liquor licence for his motel in 1963.⁴ He intended to upgrade his motel to a hotel, but the business was poorly located and was not a success.



¹ *Brisbane Courier* February 21, 1894.

² Wilson, Amanda, 2015, *Sunshine Coast Library, Town Histories, Buderim Tavern, Holy Hill and Liquor Licences*

³ *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, April 11, 1919.

⁴ Wilson, Amanda, *ibid.*

On January 1, 1976 the Licensing Commission surprised the Buderim community by calling for tenders for liquor licences at Currimundi and at Buderim. This resulted in immediate protests from some sections of the Buderim community, as these newspaper clippings from the *Nambour Chronicle* in 1976 demonstrate:

Tavern for Buderim?

The Licensing Commission wants a tavern established on Buderim Mountain.

"We are of the opinion that Buderim needs liquor facilities, other than those in the form of a licensed restaurant," the commission's executive officer (Mr. L. T. McQuillan) said yesterday.

The commission had invited tenders for the operation of a tavern at Buderim and these would close at 10 a.m. on January 30.

"The tenders will be considered by the commission and the successful tenderer will have to advertise for objections to the site of the tavern," said Mr. McQuillan.

"Such objections may be lodged by a local authority, an owner or licensee of a hotel or an elector within an area which will be defined by the commission — a radius of three miles from the site of the proposed tavern," he added.

Storm brews on tavern proposal

Many Buderim residents have voiced their opposition to the Licensing Commission's intention to have a tavern established on the mountain.

The commission has invited tenders, closing on January 30, for the operation of a tavern in the township.

A large number of people objected in strong terms, but asked that their names be not mentioned in any publicity; others gave their reasons for their objection and said that they had not heard of the possibility of the granting of a tavern licence by the commission.



Public meetings were called by a community group, the Buderim Anti-Tavern Committee, where loud voices were raised against the granting of a licence on Buderim. There were numerous letters to the editor of local papers predicting traffic problems, increased noise and that a tavern would attract anti-social groups such as bikies, hippies, drunks and criminals.

Despite several vigorous attempts to oppose a liquor licence on Buderim, Seaforth Nominees were granted a liquor licence for the 'Buderim Tavern' in 1980. In the following months the opposition in the press to a hotel gathered. Opponents had predicted drunks causing problems in the streets and other social problems. Public meetings were held, and objections in the local newspapers increased. On the other hand, Seaforth Nominees claimed they had 90% approval in the community for a tavern.

It should be noted that a Hotel provides accommodation while a Tavern does not.

Seaforth wins tender

The Licensing Court of Queensland has accepted a tender of \$103,000 submitted by Seaforth Nominees Pty Ltd for a tavern in Burnett Street, Buderim.

the final decision on whether the tavern would proceed, on July 21.

Four tenders were received for the Buderim tavern when applications closed on April 11. The tender submitted by Seaforth Nominees Pty Ltd was the highest received.

Estimated cost of the premises is \$947,000.

Strawberry grower appeals

Noosa Shire Council has referred an appeal by strawberry grower Mr Steven Hogie of Cooroy to its town planning committee.

Council previously decided to disallow Mr Hogie's application to establish a strawberry winemaking industry on his land which is near the ponding area of the soon-to-be-enlarged shire water supply at Six Mile Dam.

Seaforth Nominees and the Licensing Commission won the initial skirmish with the Buderim Anti-Tavern Committee in 1980, but still had a battle in front of them to convince the Buderim community, as the newspaper cuttings below from the *Sunshine Coast Daily* in 1982 show.



It was a long-term and bitter battle that Seaforth that Nominees were to win. Times had changed markedly from the temperate days of the early Twentieth Century. From about 1900, when Buderim had less than 200 people, the population had now grown to over 5500. This increase was due to people from outside the Buderim area, including many retirees and business operators related to the serving them, and serving the expanding tourism industry. By and large, these 'newbies' were more liberal than many of the original farming community in their approach to the sale of intoxicating liquor, and saw no insurmountable problems, indeed some advantages, with a tavern.

The End Result:



A major figure of the community group who were in favour of the Tavern in the local debate was Sylvia Robson, who lived opposite the site of the proposed tavern. Sylvia was to be honoured when the Tavern opened by the naming of a bar, 'Sylvia's Bar', in her honour.

Acknowledgements

Carol Hawley, Heritage Library Officer of the Sunshine Coast Council Heritage Library kindly provided the newspaper cuttings on page 3 and the photographs on page 1 and also assisted with information on other hotels in the area.

The Buderim Historical Society Inc. provided the newspaper cuttings on pages 2 and 4.