INTERVIEW WITH MRS JAN BROWN REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FIRST NOOSA LIBRARY IN 1973

Jan Brown and her husband Graham arrived in Tewantin in 1965 and brought the Tewantin Pharmacy at 112 Poinciana Avenue, so they have good recollections of the town in those early days.

Jan was one of the members of the Noosa Library Establishment Committee, which was formed in 1971, with President Carolanne Bowden. Carolanne and committee member Pam Milliner, as well as other committee members, recognised the need for a free public library. Both these ladies knew from former work postings about the benefit of a town library, and together with the other committee members, set about talking to Noosa Council in an effort to convince Council that the town needed this service.

These two women, along with Mrs Jenman of Ward Street (who according to Jan “took no prisoners”) were a very effective lobby group, resulting in Noosa Council recognising that times had changed, and it was much easier to agree to the setting up of a small library than to say NO. Jan does not remember if Mr McDonald from Cooroy was a councillor then, or Geoff Gall, or Jack Hassett.........or all of them

About 1972 the ANZ bank branch was being built on its present site, prior to that the bank operated out of a small demountable building which was then named ESA bank. By means of convincing the ANZ bank of the advantages of donating the demountable building to be moved and established as a library, the committee learned that Noosa Council would donate land in Moorindal Street, Tewantin to house the library. The area of Ward Park that was donated was the site where all the soil from the building of the town sewerage system was dumped.

So the small bank building was turned into a library, the first free public library for Noosa residents. The first librarian was Mrs Margaret Schmidts, who was well known to the local people and the library was very convenient for many children going home from school, mostly on foot.

When the Noosa Council Chambers were built on the Noosa River bank some time later (replacing a caravan park that gave big business to the local shops) the library was moved from Moorindal Street to the ground floor of the new building. It was a great library and sometimes had other things happening there, for example Jan’s daughter learned to make a doll at one of the children’s activities sessions. The Council Chambers on the Noosa River bank were very central and convenient to most residents.

Tewantin was blessed with two wonderful doctors at this time, Geoffrey Bowden and Des Milliner. Both were skilled, available and caring and were very much part of the community. Pam Milliner was a former teacher and sometimes taught kindergarten. Carolanne Bowden was also a former school teacher and sometimes did some relief teaching.