



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

February 2016

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482

OPEN: FRIDAY 10 AM – 12 PM

MARKET DAY (3RD SATURDAY OF THE MONTH) 9 AM-1 PM

BVHS INC NEWS



BVHS Inc looks forward to seeing you in your museum in 2016! It keeps changing and is always interesting. Check out the great comments in our Visitors' Book.

EXHIBITION



Our latest exhibition, **Back To The Garden**, a display about the alternative lifestylers in the Rainbow Region has had a great response. Sarah, Jacqui and the Nortec participants have created a very interesting display that will engage and delight you. Thanks to Cr Basil Cameron for launching it so eloquently.



SUMMER MAYHEM

Over the summer break the DVD, **Mullumbimby's Madness – The Legacy of the Hippies**, continued to sell like crazy. Peter Tsicalas's last book **Mullumbimby In Transition 1968-1988** was the perfect accompaniment to it; selling well. BVHS's latest publications, **Mullumbimby Now & Then: a pictorial history**, **Brunswick Heads In Focus: a pictorial history** and **Ocean Shores: Foundation Events 1968-1988**, have also been steady sellers especially the Brunswick Heads version. Our thanks to The Bookshop Mullumbimby, Mullumbimby Newsagency, Brunswick Heads Visitor Centre and Park St News Brunswick Heads for their fantastic support in promoting and selling our publications.

REMINDERS

Your membership subscription for 2016 is now due. See the form at the end of the newsletter.

Next Market: Saturday 20th February. Museum open 9-1.

Next General Meeting: Thursday 3rd March 2016 2.00pm.

Next Acquisitions Meeting: Thursday 18th February 2.00pm

TRAVELLERS' TALES

Following is the first in a series of tales that appeared in the newspapers in the latter half of the 19th century by travellers through northern New South Wales. We trust you find the descriptions of their journeys informative; they are abridged. For the full article go to <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>
N.B. Spelling and grammar as published in the articles.

PREMIER ROBERTSON'S VISIT 1869

Governor and Lady Belmore, Premier Robertson and party left Grafton for Casino on 31 July 1869; arriving there Monday 2 August 1869. The Governor returned to Grafton on Wednesday 4th. The Robertson Party pressed on.

The first articles on the trip appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald (SMH) on Tuesday 3 August 1869 and Friday 6 August 1869 and covered Grafton and district. The second major article appeared in 16 August 1869 was about Casino and district. The third major article on Wednesday 18 August covered Casino and Coraki.

SMH article of 23 August 1869 covered the trip from Lismore to Tweed; not much was mentioned on Lismore, as Casino and Coraki were bigger and more important places at this time.

SMH of Thursday 26 August 1869 covered Tweed and mentioned the reserve for the future site of Murwillumbah. SMH Tuesday 7 and Wednesday 8 September articles were on Robertson visit to QLD.

In SMH of Thursday 30 September 1869 Premier Robertson presents to parliament a 997 signature petition from residents of the Clarence, Richmond and Tweed for increased parliamentary representation of the district.

Sydney Morning Herald 23 August 1869

MR ROBERTSON'S VISIT TO THE TWEED RIVER

'From Our Special Reporter'

...The road from Lismore to the Tweed is, I should think, one of the worst in the world. It is encumbered with every known kind of obstacle which can baffle the struggles of the weary traveller... There are some of the finest hills which ever came under my observation – mountain ranges of the most picturesque and steepest description. There are several series of bogs..., countless creeks, with treacherous banks, where the soft mud quakes beneath your feet in a most alarming way. And there are scrubs of the density and extent of which no words which I have at command can give you a true idea. The journey of the present Premier of New South Wales over this exceedingly pleasant piece of country was a journey worthy to be recorded....

Our party consists of the Hon John Robertson, Mr Thomas Garrett, Mr Samuel W. Gray, Mr John Brown (superintendent of Police), a constable, a black tracker, and myself. We started from the inn at Lismore about 8 o'clock on the morning of Thursday, the 5th of August, and intended to reach a place called Primapanbill where we were to camp for the night. Altogether the party presented a rather formidable appearance, and it is probable that such an invasion from the ranks of civilization was never before made into that wild and barbarous region. The troubles of the travellers began before they were out of sight of Lismore - a township which I may here state is not in a particularly advanced condition, and seems to be composed almost wholly of three-railed fences. The road lay across a piece of open country, lying at the foot of some picturesque hills, which were clothed with thick forest and patches of scrub, out of which the tops of tall pine-trees reared themselves conspicuously. The flats were for the most part covered with water, and were rather boggy, so that the horses could travel only at a foot-pace. At first the way lay between fences which enclosed some farms.... There was not much cultivation to be seen, some withered maize stalks, and patches of sugar-cane, being the only evidences that the soil was productive. The land was very rich – a black clayey loam, which might perhaps be rather stiff to work, but which was capable of growing anything. After crossing a plain, which was very wet and boggy, the party rode along the foot of a ridge, where the ground was comparatively dry, and where there were some excellent sites for homesteads. On the right was a small stream, bordered by tall and lofty trees, and called the "Back Creek". On the left were high hills, the spurs of which ran down into clear glades and open flats, where the soil was of the richest description. There were a few farms to be seen. There was a hut here and there upon the bank of the creek, and once or twice we came upon a letter-box nailed to the trunk of a tree by the roadside.... A few miles from Lismore the creek was crossed, and the party came in sight of a station belonging to Mr E. Flood, at which they stopped for a few moments. Just beyond the station, which is located upon a verdant flat, Back Creek was crossed, at a place which, if it was the best ford thereabouts, certainly could not have been much better than the worst. The banks were high and steep, the ground boggy, and the foliage near the water so thick that one could hardly see the dangers of the place. The creek was forded without accident. On the northern bank were the remains of some old huts and a few scraggy fruit trees which stood there giving to the passers-by a dismal sort of evidence that there had once been a garden around the dilapidated huts. The course of the creek – which bore away to the westward at the foot of some low ranges – was indicated by the tall trees and heavy foliage, which were most beautiful. The wonderful profusion and variety of vegetation were very striking. The banks of the narrow creek were clothed in thick draperies of verdure, the trunks of the vast trees were swathed up with creepers, and the great coils of the vines hung from the boughs, and writhed along the ground, and twisted themselves into knots in the most astonishing and fantastic manner; while at intervals the tops of the pines showed themselves above the

brush, with tufts of moss clinging to their branches. The road ran along the base of a thickly-wooded range. Every two hundred yards or so there was a gully to cross; and as these miniature ravines were for the most part full of loose stones and soft mud, the crossings were not always pleasant. Nothing appeared to have been done to the road. It was simply a bridle track among the hills – a path worn by the early travellers in the district.... The track was originally made by Mr S.W. Gray, who, after dodging about among the scrubs and mountains for several months in his search after a practicable route, discovered the one in question, and marked the trees along it.... It was full of twisting and turnings, rendered needful by the natural obstacles which barred a direct route.... The ground was for the most part exceedingly boggy; the creeks, which had to be forded at short intervals, were most objectionably muddy; the hills were numerous and steep, and the brushes full of prickly creepers, obstructive vines, and fallen logs. To pass all these dangers without getting one's clothes torn, or shins abraded, required some little dexterity and watchfulness.... There were several varieties of the "Stinging tree," a gigantic species of nettle, the touch of whose leaves causes excruciating pain. There were myriads of vines, whose pendant loops menaced the invaders of the brush with strangulation. There were hosts of thorn-covered stems sticking out across the narrow path. And there were armies of "lawyers" – long withes, whose tendrils are furnished with sharp tentacles, and famed for their power of sticking to anything that comes within reach of their feelers....

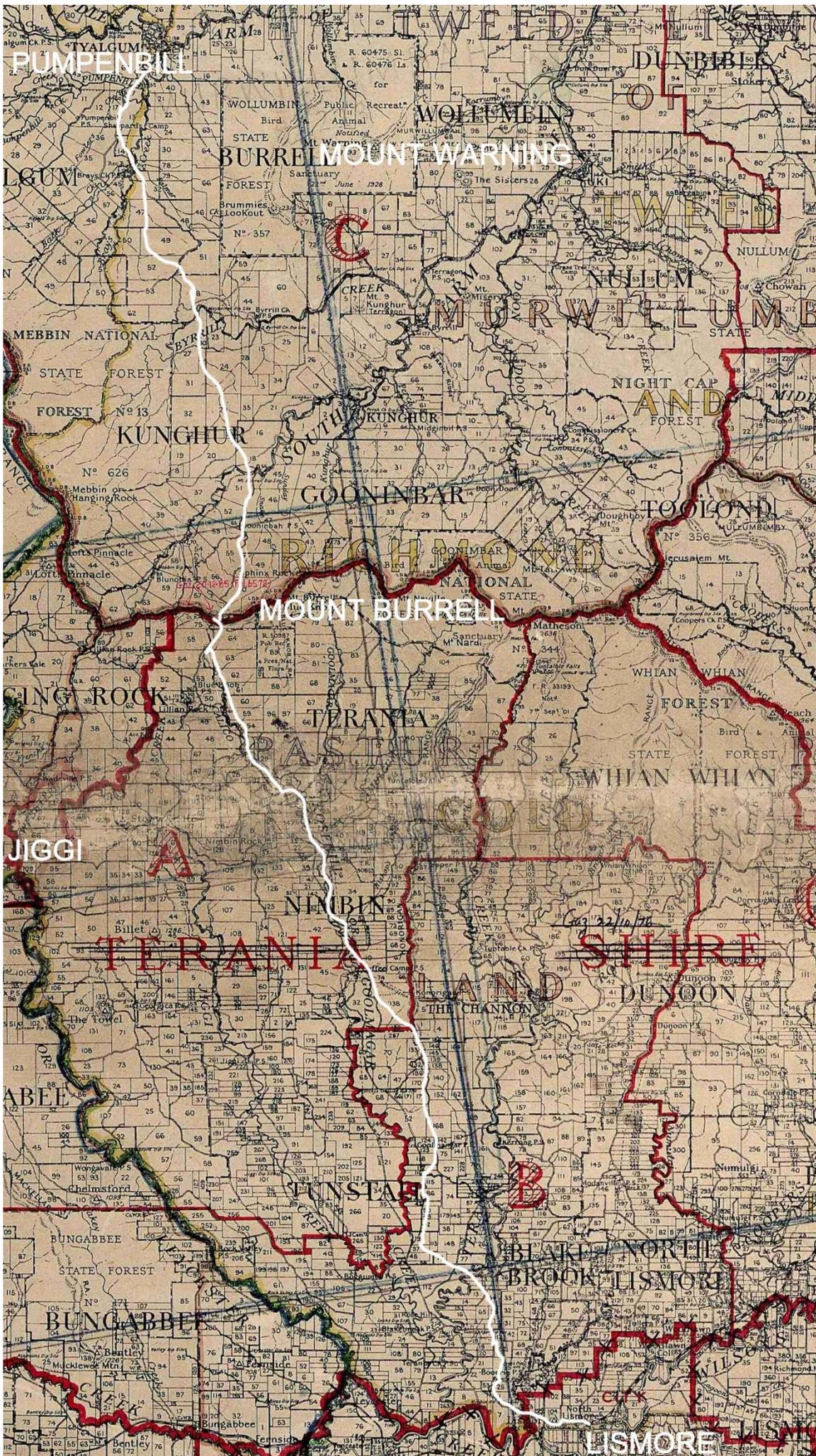
These brushes are not found only upon the banks of the creeks and the flats about the feet of the ranges.... The heavy timber within their depths is of vast size and great regularity. The Eucalypti tower up to a dizzy height, and their stems are sometimes straight, smooth and branchless for over a hundred feet above the ground. There are noble groups of pines straight as an arrow, but in nearly all cases withered at the top, and with curious fringes of white moss hanging from the upper branches. There are immense figtrees whose roots form themselves into the most fantastic shapes and whose leafy crowns rise up among the noblest giants of the forest. These and the Moreton Bay chestnuts – which are magnificent in their proportions and foliage - are the most beautiful trees that can be imagined....

Among the other curiosities of the brush there are the "Bat and ball" trees, and the "Walking-stick" trees. The former are very handsome, and bear a large round nut almost as big and solid as a cricket-ball. The latter are a species of palm usually growing very straight, devoid of branches, and having a tuft of broad leaves at the top. They make excellent walking-sticks, being of a convenient size, straight, jointed and very pretty.

The country through which we passed appeared to be well watered. Some of the creeks – such as the Jiggi and Coolmangar – were of considerable size and in all there was an abundance of clear water rippling over a pebbly bed. Near the brink of one of these rivulets the party halted about midday, and proceeded to satisfy the cravings of hunger with some bread and salt pork. The spot chosen for this rough luncheon was a bit of open forest just at the foot of the Mibben Range, whose sombre peaks rose up into the western sky. Within a quarter of a mile of us... were the "Gnimban Rocks," and rose, I should think, between seven and eight hundred feet above the flat. One weather-beaten block, scarred and rifted with a thousand tempests, formed the abrupt end of a spur of the range. Another huge peak stood by itself braving the winter storms, and looking like the battered ruins of some gigantic tower.... It must have been over 760 feet high, and yet so narrow that Mr Robertson named it "The Countess Needle" in honour of Lady Belmore. There were some patches of furze, and a few stunted trees upon the summit, and all down its southern side among the interstices of the stone. The eastern face of the rock was a bare wall, broken and seamed, and split into a myriad of crevices....

From the "Gnimban Rocks," the road led us into greater difficulties than ever. The brushes became continuous, the hills grew more steep, and the creeks more frequent and dangerous. There were no extensive views of the country to be obtained, as the forest was so thick, but every now and then some tremendous mountains came into view, looking very black and gloomy. The whole of the land through which we passed was excellent for agricultural purposes, and there seemed to be small difference in quality between the soil of the hill and dale, brush land and open forest. Occasionally the long-deserted camp of some former travellers was passed and once or twice a bark gunyah, in which some of the timber-getters had lived while at work in the mountains... and the solitude of these mountain brushes was something appalling. There were no signs of animal life within their gloomy recesses. All was silence and stillness.... When threading the mazes of the brush, one felt as though shut in for ever from the world.... The narrow path wound along between dark walls of foliage amid which the great white tree trunks started up like sheeted ghosts. No sunbeams pierced the leafy coverts, or gave life to the beauties of the dusky groves....

To the eastward of our course rose Mount Burrell, a huge mass towering above the circumjacent hills, and clad with dusky woods. There were mountains all round us, and we did an amount of climbing which was exceedingly distressing to the horses.... After travelling for the greater part of the afternoon (I can give no idea of the distance traversed), the gigantic peak of Mount Warning came in sight. This vast mountain, which is one of the most remarkable landmarks on



the coast, is nearly 6000 feet above the level of the sea, and stands upon the head waters of the Tweed River. It is peculiar in shape, and, once seen can never be mistaken. Its native name is "Walumbin".... We had to make a tedious detour round its western end, and as may be imagined the road was by no means level.

Night had closed in long before the camp at Pumpanbill was reached, and albeit that place of sojourn possessed few of the comforts of civilisation, all of the party were glad when they arrived thereat.... (And it was here the party spent the night).

Their coming had been notified to the residents of the Tweed, and some of the good folks from that river had come up to Pumpanbill to meet them. Not only so, but they had brought provender for the refreshment of the hon. John Robertson and his companions.... The persons who met us... were Mr Joshua Bray (partner of Mr S.W. Gray, our guide), Messrs Louis and Arthur Nixon, Mr T. Clarke, and a constable. After a pleasant hour spent in devoted attention to the eatables, and

yarning round the camp fire, all hands turned in; and though the beds were made upon of bark, every one slept as soundly as though tucked up in the cosiest and most comfortable four-poster....

Trail marked on the map is only an approximate of their journey. If anyone can give a more accurate depiction, please send it in.

Brief notes re the people mentioned:

Sir John Robertson, KCMG (15 October 1816 – 8 May 1891: Premier of New South Wales on five occasions. Robertson is best remembered for land reform and in particular the Robertson Land Acts of 1861, which sought to open up the selection of Crown land and break the monopoly of the squatters.



Samuel William Gray
Courtesy of NSW Parliament

Samuel William Gray (1823-1889): First landholder to take up residence in the region on upper Tweed River. Was the Richmond MLA representative 1882-1885.



Joshua Bray (1838-1918): Brother-in-law of Gray, took up a share of Gray's run in 1863. Was the first Post Master, Police magistrate and Coroner of the Tweed and then Crown Land Agent and Clerk of Petty Sessions. He was the person most responsible for administration of the Brunswick; until 1886 cases were heard at the Tweed.

(Courtesy of "Joshua Bray" by Mary Kinsman)

Louis and Arthur Nixon: brothers-in-law to Joshua Bray. Their brother, Frederick, became a resident and leading citizen of Brunswick Heads in 1884.



BRUNSWICK VALLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

MUSEUM

RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP 2016

Membership Fees	Payment Options	
Adults \$15 Students \$5 Printed mailed copy of newsletter \$5 p.a.	<i>Cheque/postal order payable</i> Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc PO Box 378 Mullumbimby 2482	<i>Direct deposit</i> Bank: Sth Cross Credit Union BSB: 722-744 Account No.: 150163 Reference: Your name

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I wish to receive the newsletter by: email post pick up at museum.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by and for the members of the BVHS Inc

Cnr Myokum & Stuart Sts
Mullumbimby
P.O. Box 378 Mullumbimby 2482
02 6684 4367
bvhs84@yahoo.com.au
www.mullumbimbymuseum.org.au
Facebook:
www.facebook.com/MullumbimbyMuseum

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Experience Participants
Public Officer: Susan Tsicalas
All members are invited to contribute to this newsletter

*Please leave material with Sarah or Liz
Tues Wed Thur 10 am - 2 pm.
Or email to:
bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au

NEXT MEETING
Thursday 3rd March
2016 2.00pm
See you there!

*Deadline for agenda items
Wednesday 2nd March 2016

MUSEUM HOURS
Friday 10am - 12pm
Market Saturday 9am - 1pm

BVHS Newsletter is produced by NORTEC Work Experience Participants and BVHS Inc.

