



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

# MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

April 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

### Byron Bay High School Year 11 Visit

Last Tuesday we were delighted to welcome 14 Year 11 students from Byron Bay High School. They visited to explore and discuss social changes over the years. Our exhibition, *Back to the Garden*, was the enticement. However, several of the students found other areas of the museum on which they preferred to focus. They were an engaged and engaging group.

Thanks to their teacher, Drew. Also thanks to Lorrie, our education co-ordinator, for organising the visit. Special thanks to Sharon and David who came to share their Hippie experiences with the students.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

RAHS Affiliated Historical Societies of the North Coast Conference is to be held in Lismore at the Richmond River Historical Society on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> May 2016. Kyogle Historical Society is in the chair. The first talk will be by BVHS Inc on the making of the documentary *Mullumbimby Madness – The Legacy of the Hippies* with a screening of a section of the DVD. The second talk is to be by Jacki Moore of Catholic Education about working with school children and making history interesting. If you wish to attend please let us know asap.

The next screening of our documentary will be at Murwillumbah Regent Theatre on Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May at 4.00

Ruth Bonetti, who is a descendant of William Back, has written a book "Burn My Letters". It focuses on her great uncle Karl Back who came from Finland, lived many years in our area and died at Yelgun. Ruth is launching a crowd funding campaign to help cover the cost of publication of her book. If you would like to help go to <http://www.pozible.com/project/203453>. We have supported her and wish her every success.

Even though we have insulation with the new roof, we have sweltered for most of the summer due to the high humidity. Consequently, we have decided to put air-conditioning in the Reading Room. It will be reverse cycle.

## REMINDERS

**Your membership subscription for 2016 is now overdue.** Thanks to those who have renewed. Much appreciated.

**Next Market:** Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> April. Museum open 9-1.

**Next General Meeting:** Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016 2.00pm

**Next Acquisitions Meeting:** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May 2.00pm

**N.B. The Annual General Meeting has been changed to Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2016 at 2.00pm**



## TRAVELLERS' TALES

Following is another tale that appeared in the newspapers in the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century recounting a journey through northern New South Wales along the coast. We trust you find the descriptions informative; this is an abridged version. For the full article go to <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper> N.B. Spelling and grammar as published in the articles.

*The Brisbane Courier* Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> May 1880

### From Brisbane to the Clarence Overland

By Ramrod

#### Part 1

*...I shall proceed to give a necessarily brief description of a journey from Brisbane to the Clarence River on horseback, along the beach.... Anyone desirous of visiting the Clarence or Richmond will find a ride of a hundred miles along the beach much more agreeable and inexpensive than a trip by steamer to Sydney....*

*...We left Brisbane at 6 o'clock on a Thursday morning, on board the Iris, accompanied by two saddles, a light single-barrelled gun, fishing line, oyster knives and some "clean billed cloes" and other essentials, stowed away in a couple of valises.... Arrived at Southport the Iris went to sleep alongside Maund's wharf until the tide would rise.... Next day, at 3 in the afternoon, and mounted on two of Mr Muir's fiery untrained steeds, generously provided for us for the occasion, we cantered off to Southport, swam our horses across with a boat, and went out through a strip of scrub on to the beach. Before us was the vast Pacific.... Away to the north stretched the white sand hills and long monotonous beach of Stradbroke Island, while away south appeared the dark outline of Point Danger, and the nearer green slopes of Burleigh Head. From where we entered the beach to the Clarence Heads lies a sandy beach comparatively unbroken for 115 miles. From Nerang to Burleigh is a beach about eleven miles long, and just before reaching the point it is necessary to turn in from the sea for about 200 yards, where a road will be found running up over the spur that ends in Burleigh Head, and this road runs down the other side into Tallebudgera Creek, which is very easily crossed at low tide, as there are no quicksands such as imperil the crossing of all the other creeks between there and the Richmond.*

*...Three miles along the beach brings us to the notorious Carumbin, one of the most dangerous creeks on the coast, as the mouth is full of quicksand. At times in long dry seasons this creek, like most of the others, sand up at the entrance, but usually there is a strong current running... Carumbin can be crossed in safety about 500 yards up, at low tide, and a somewhat rugged path on the south side brings you out on to the beach again. We crossed just as darkness was falling, and finished the remaining six miles to the Tweed Heads in about an hour.... At the Tweed Heads we were most hospitably entertained by the pilot, Mr McGregor.... There is no accommodation-house here, and consequently Mr McGregor's hospitality must be considerably constrained at time by people passing...*

*The Tweed runs out under the south side of Point Danger, the precipitous rocks on one side and the sandy beach not more than 50 yards away on the other – a very narrow and difficult entrance. Point Danger stands out in the sea like the fragment of a huge hill, covered with scrub, and about 200 ft high. The Customs Officer stationed here has his house on one side and his kitchen on the other. The most of it belongs to Queensland, and is reserved. He cooks in Queensland and sleeps in New South Wales.... He did not examine our valises or turn out our pockets in search of smuggled or contraband goods.... Hitherto the trade of the Tweed has been nearly altogether in pine and cedar, but now the Colonial Sugar Company are erecting a large mill capable of producing about 20 tons per day.... I have no hesitation in saying that sugar will do for the Tweed what it has done for the Clarence, and what it is fast doing for the Richmond. The company are running a new steamer, the Terranora, built purposely for the Tweed, and she made her first trip a week after we passed. Five small schooners were lying inside, loaded with cedar for Sydney and Melbourne.*

*We crossed early next morning, one of the pilot men kindly towing our fiery chargers over.... Before us to the south stretched the white beach unbroken for ninety miles save by one or two headlands and the intervening rivers. That night*

we were to reach the Brunswick, a distance of thirty miles, and the following day thirty miles further to Ballina at the Richmond Heads. Two miles beyond the Tweed is a lighthouse and keeper's residence, both built of bricks brought up from Sydney. Opposite, out in the sea about 200 yards, is Captain Cook's Island, the abode of unlimited schnapper... South from here the view is beautiful...

## Part 2

Leaving the lighthouse on the point opposite Captain Cook's Island, two miles beyond the Tweed, we descend on to a beach about six miles long, and here is the first patch of black sand in which gold is found. It lies just close in to the rocks below the lighthouse; and here also in the face of the cliff is a huge perpendicular crevice said to pass right through on to the opposite side of the promontory, and voices can be heard from either end.... After leaving here there is one more patch of black sand met with before reaching Ballina. Six miles from the lighthouse is Cudgen Creek, coming out under a green headland on one side and on the other a huge sand "dune".... The rich scrub land at this point comes within 390 yards of the sea....

Cudgen Creek is another source of distraction to the traveller. Some go up a mile and cross on the flats, but the best place is just at the green point about 200 yards back from the sea, but this can only be done at low tide. We rode across close to the surf, incurring considerable risk, and just on emerging, one hind leg of G's horse went down about 3ft in a patch of quicksand, but he got out easily.

A point of rocks runs about 100 yards into the sea here, and from them at low tide the piscatorial traveller can haul in copious supplies of glorious schnapper, while Cudgen Creek offers him shoals of splendid whiting. From here is a long stretch of beach to the next point, and on the land side a rather monotonous succession of scrub patches, though just above the beach breadfruit trees and little cone-shaped sand heaps, draped in a broad-leafed creeper not unlike the granadilla, present a very beautiful appearance.... At the next point we come to Cudgerie Creek, where oysters lie around in "Bacchanal profusion", and we attacked them with all the energy of unscrupulous appetites. We cross this creek just at the first bend, where it is steep on one side with a sand flat on the other. Do not attempt to cross it near the surf. Here is another beautiful headland, from which we get a first glimpse of the long low dark outline of Cape Byron far way to the south, about twenty-five miles. Two miles further brings us to Moball Creek, a second Carumbin.... Cross this creek about 200 yards up, where a small track goes in from the north side, and it if is rather deep, better risk the water than the quicksand at the mouth. Eight miles further is another creek called Billinudgo, which can be easily crossed anywhere back from the beach. From here to the Brunswick is a distance of five miles; but before mentioning that remarkable stream I will throw in a "strange story of the angry sea." About thirty years ago there were only a few cedar-cutters on the Tweed River.... A cedar-cutter named Boyd (still alive on the Richmond) was travelling along the beach to the Brunswick, accompanied by a companion. They came to a wrecked vessel, driven ashore on the sand bottom upwards, and, in standing beside her tapping the sides, thought they heard responsive taps from underneath. Making sure that they really heard a noise, one went off to the Brunswick for an axe, and on cutting a hole in the side they discovered two French sailors, alive and kicking!... The men had lived on the air retained in the vacuum between the sea below and the bottom of the ship above.... The two men thus rescued from that terrible tomb.... worked many years after with the cedar-getters of the Tweed River. (This is one of many versions of the Boyd folklore tale.)

Just off the Brunswick, too, another vessel was wrecked about twelve to fourteen years ago and every soul was lost. The captain's body was washed ashore a few miles to the north of the Brunswick, and buried just in from the beach beside a small rivulet of fresh water. It is known as the "Captain's Grave,".... The Brunswick runs straight in from the sea for about 400 yards and then turns sharp round a scrub-covered hill, thence running away inland among the cedar brushes.



View of the North Head of the Brunswick from the south spit, date unknown.  
(The red-roofed Pilot House top left was moved to Mullumbimby in 1909).  
(Oddly 'Ramrod' doesn't mention the pilot, Captain George Simpson)  
(Courtesy H.J. Wakely; artist 'D.N.' unknown.)

At the mouth it is not more than 30 yards across, but the entrance is easy and safe for small steamers, and the Arakoon enters frequently. On the north side of the mouth is a reef of rocks, and when I passed there six years ago the "West Hartley No 1" had come to grief (24 February 1874. Her sister boat,

## Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

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

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**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 5<sup>th</sup> May 2016**  
**2.00pm**  
**See you there!**

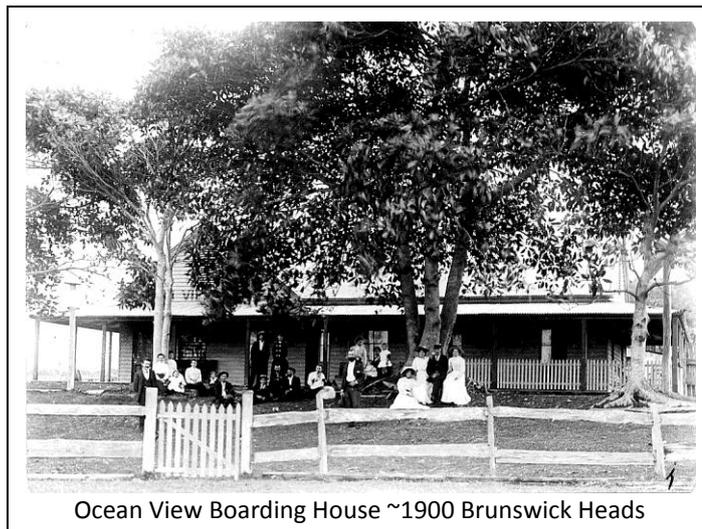
\*Deadline for agenda items  
Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2016

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

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



the "West Hartley No 2," disappeared at sea with all hands and not a trace of her was ever discovered.



Ocean View Boarding House ~1900 Brunswick Heads

We cross the Brunswick by swimming our horses with a boat. A mob of blacks are camped here, and they are very useful as axemen, falling and squaring. The Brunswick – in which are some of the finest oysters in the colony – is navigable for boats for about six miles. Death adders thrive here with great luxuriance on the red sandy soil. We hobbled our horses, there being no paddock. Night and morning we went over to the beach and revelled in the surf. Our appetites were colossal; we devoured fat salt beef and honey, and cheese, and bread, and strong tea in large quantities, and had sweet and balmy repose all night...

In the morning we started for Cape Byron, a ride of ten miles along a straight unbroken beach. We passed a Tasmanian schooner lying dead on the beach.... Many a wreck lies buried in the sand between Cape Byron and Point Danger, and many a fragment lies strewn along the surface. Scores of pine and cedar logs are scattered along the coast, the remnants of rafts broken up in the surf when being towed to the vessel lying outside. Brunswick cedar realises the highest price in Melbourne, more than any other, as the quality is superior. Cape Byron affords magnificent scenery. This, the most eastern point of Australia, gives a diversity of views, all lovely. The cape, where crossed, is about a mile and a half wide, with sugar-loaf and coned-shaped hills covered with a short green shrub like heather, small reedy lakes lying between, with little streamlets fringed with umbrageous trees running down the little valleys, and all falling into a vast expanse of green marsh at the base of the cape. The point runs out half a mile into the sea, a rugged rocky promontory covered with scrub, presenting to the sea a front of creviced cliffs against which the waves dash with a sound of thunder...

From here we travel along a beach of three miles to a rocky point, where we make a detour and travel two miles through dense scrub of an infinite variety of luxuriant vegetation – a perfect paradise for a botanist. Just before entering this scrub and in a little creek close to the beach we saw two lordly specimens of the Australian jabiru, or gigantic crane. The beach here is full of huge sand crabs and we saw several deep holes where the blacks had dug some out. This headland is the only barrier that would prevent a buggy being driven from the Tweed to the Richmond along the sand the whole way.

Emerging from the scrub on to the beach again, we dismounted and had a bathe in the surf, while our Arabs nibbled some vegetation.... From here to the Richmond is fifteen miles, and the first beach of nine miles brings us to Lennox Head – the divinest spot of the whole journey, a splendid lofty green headland with two small lakes.

The next instalment can be found at [Trove](http://trove)- Brisbane Courier Wed 26 May 1880