



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

May 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

We were delighted to have 37 children from **St John's Catholic School** visit the museum last week accompanied by their teachers and several parents. They were very interested in the first settlers and the rapid transformation they brought. Thanks to Lorrie for organising and to the members who came and assisted with the visit. A delightful group!



We will be hosting a stall at the **Brunswick Heads Old and Gold** again this year on the Saturday of the June long weekend in the Memorial Hall. If you have some time to spare on the day it would be appreciated if you could help man the stall. We will have displays, films running and books for sale. See you there!

The Brunswick Valley Cancer Action Group is hosting **Australia's Biggest Morning Tea** on Friday 20th May at the Uniting Church Hall in Mullumbimby. The theme for the morning is **TEA COSY STORIES**. Bring along a tea cosy that is special to you in some way – funny, heirloom, gift, etc- and share its story. They are hoping to photograph each tea cosy and record its story for the historical society. See attached flyer.

Murwillumbah Historical Society is advertising a bus trip to Redlands Museum and Ormiston House on Sunday 12th June. If you are interested RSPV to Sandra Jones 66722746.

Also they are commencing a series of Speaker Nights. The first is by Luis Weber - "The Border Ranges: Understanding the Past to Conserve the Future" which will be on Wednesday 25th May at 5pm. RSPV is essential to above phone number and leave a message if no answer.

REMINDERS

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

Next Market: Saturday 21st May. Museum open 9-1.

Next General Meeting: Thursday 2nd June 2016 2.00pm

Next Acquisitions Meeting: Thursday 9th June 2.00pm

N.B. The Annual General Meeting has been changed to Thursday 11th August 2016 at 2.00pm



TRAVELLER'S TALES

The Sydney Morning Herald published a series entitled *Sugar Lands* in 1884. The first two articles were observations around the Tweed River District - Thursday 30th October 1884 p5 and Wednesday 5th November 1884, p 5. In the third and fourth articles the correspondent journeyed from the Tweed to the Brunswick. The 5th article is about The Ports and Railway Line and the 6th & 7th cover The Richmond River District. These articles can be found at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

The Sydney Morning Herald Wednesday 12 November 1884 p5

SUGAR LANDS

III – The Tweed River District

(By Our Special Commissioner)

A visitor to the Tweed River will, before he bids farewell to the district, become very strongly impressed by the want of means of communication with the south. The unsuspecting stranger on his way south from Queensland, attracted by the picturesque scenery of the river, may enter this port with the intention of a brief stay; but once there, it may be weeks before an opportunity presents itself enabling him to leave it. It was graphically described to me as “the deuce of a place to get out of,” and the truth of this assertion I now heartily endorse. Occasionally a schooner visits the port, and returns south it may be the present week or three weeks hence. There is no coach, for the very good reason that from the Tweed to the Brunswick and from the Brunswick to near Lismore there is not a road upon which a coach or anything in the shape of a conveyance could be driven. The mail is sent on pack-horses; in fact, the only way out of the place southward is the bridle track overland across the mountains or along the newly-surveyed line. Whilst at the river I witnessed an amusing instance of the difficulty travellers experience leaving the Tweed. A professor of mind-reading and feeler of bumps – about the last man one would expect to meet in this isolated spot – had been on a visit to the district, and wished to go on to Lismore. For a week he tried in various directions to get horses for himself and a companion, but without success. Finally he wrote to Lismore, and a person there offered to send up a horse by the mailman to take him over the hills. The charge was £5. The professor wanted the man to “take it out” in character charts of his family; but as he refused this offer, the phrenologist determined to seek elsewhere for horses. At last he got them, and this is how the professor and his manager set out on their journey south. First, of course, in the procession came the seer and bump manipulator. He was mounted on a horse whose points were discernible even to the amateur. A cornsack across the back of the animal – which animal, by-the-bye, had a cold and sneezed violently – served as a saddle, and a halter twisted loosely round his nose answered the purpose of a bridle. A number of small boys gathered about slyly tickled the professor’s horse with straws. The brute kicked, and the professor straddled out on the animal’s neck, and grasped his ears. The horse, however, sneezing, he was knocked back again on the cornsack. The professor looked a very sorry picture. On the previous evening he had entertained a parlourful of rustics with anecdotes of his genius, his wit, and his accomplishments, relating how he had discovered, by the occult science of “mind-reading,” a priceless gem about the size of a rook’s egg, which Lady Fitzmuggins had concealed in the toe of her jewelled slipper, and how Sir Finnigan Fitzmuggins had said, “Professor, dear boy, you are a genius. Pray let me introduce you to Prince Krakapovskoff, the renowned Russian diplomat,” and so on. The professor’s agent, whose acquaintance with horse-riding appeared to have been strictly limited to a carpeted seat at the circus, followed his chief. He had a saddle with one stirrup-iron, and guided his animal with a combination bridle – partly leather, partly string. Whether they ever accomplished the journey they set out on I have not been able to ascertain.

The journey to Lismore I intend to briefly describe, as it may serve to convey some impression of the large tracts of rich scrub lands lying between the Tweed and Brunswick, and Brunswick and Richmond rivers, waiting only means of communication with centres of population to make them, I believe, a source of wealth to the colony.

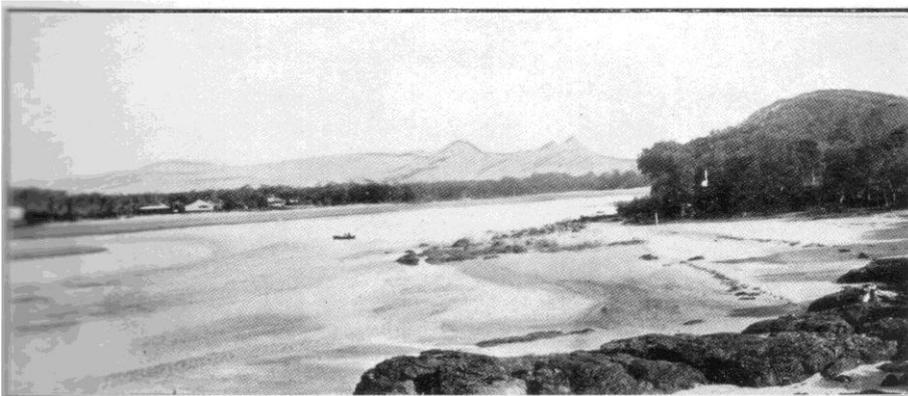
Leaving the Condong Mill, we followed the road along the southern side of the river, and turning off, rode over a bridge erected some two years ago across Dunbible Creek. Following the northern side of the creek for about three miles, we passed through fairly good country, where many patches of cane were growing. We then ascended a spur of the main range, between the two branches of Dunbible Creek, and followed partly as open road and partly a bridle track recently cut, the route we were following being the place of the old one it has been determined to abandon. Passing around the side of a hill, a deep gully with a glowing creek could be seen through the interstices of a dense matted scrub. One peculiarity of the country we passed through could not but be noticed, namely, that all the hills were covered with forest

trees and the gullies with scrub; afterward, beyond the Brunswick River, both hill and valley were brush covered. The hills were here and there stony, but would, if cleared, carry good grass; the scrubs had rich loamy soil, and would produce abundantly, as the luxuriance of the brush testified. As we wound round the hills many beautiful bits of scenery presented themselves, valley starred with the delicate green of fern trees, creeks rippling and splashing along their stony beds among the plants that margined them, or under the broken limbs of trees that had fallen across and arched in the water-course. On either hand was a steep hillside, with lofty forest trees. We descended into the valley, and stopped to lunch in a surveyor's camp pitched on a grassy spot near the edge of a creek; then resuming our journey ascended a mountain spur and reached the main range, and shortly afterward stopped for a few minutes at the highest point reached by the road. This is the dividing range between the Brunswick and Tweed waters. We followed this range to the junction of Burringbar and Mills Creeks. The country on the way was of much the same nature as that in the earlier part of the journey, there being rich scrub-covered flats between the forest ridges. It was here that I first noticed the number of splendid pine trees in the forest, also the many fine specimens of teak and other woods. We followed up the creek and came upon a clearing, where a quantity of heavy timber had been felled, and also much of the brush burned. A wonderfully neat bush house, made of the forest timber, was situated by the margin of a creek that flowed at the foot of a thickly wooded mountain spur behind it. Here we received the customary hearty welcome extended to all travellers in the bush, and rest for the night.

Night in this valley, surrounded by scrub and hill, brings with it a sensation of absolute loneliness. One almost recoils from the thought of night after night passed in such a spot. After sunset, when the sound of cricket and the call of bird have died away, when the vines drooping from the trees sway gently to and fro in the light breeze of night, and fire-flies sparkle in the depths of the jungle of vegetation, a sense of complete solitude comes upon one. But if night be oppressive, what can be more joyous than the breaking of the day, when the rising sun sets the dew-sprinkled trees and the grass glinting with crystal; when the coo of the forest dove, the long cry and sharp crack of the "coachman," echo and re-echo among the hills? How bright and fresh all looks; how clear the sky! We hear the clink, clink in the distance of the woodman's axe as we go down to the creek, to plunge in the cool water. The rocks are still damp with the night moisture, and as we brush past the trees they send a shower of spray upon us. The wild convolvulus is just opening its petals to the warm sun, and the herbs and plants yield a fragrance the sweetest perfume of the forest.

After breakfast with a cheery "good-bye" to the plucky fellows who are carving their fortune from the forest, we mount our horses and plunge again into the scrub, keeping a sharp eye out for the treacherous "lawyers," whose long thorny tendrils would else tear the shirts from our backs. From the scrub we turn up a hill, and strike the track we had left the evening before to descend into the valley. The bridle track becomes still rougher, and frequently trees lying across the way send us round them at the risk of a slip, and perhaps a fall down the steep mountain side into the valley beneath, whose trees are dwarfed by distance into tiny bushes. Eventually, we reach "the pocket" (officially named Billinudgel with the coming of the railway) on the north arm of the Brunswick River. Here we again leave the track which leads to the river bank, and is continued on the other side. No boat having yet been placed there, we turn eastward, and after splashing through swamps clamber over a ridge of sandy hillocks and reach the shore of the Pacific. The surf is breaking heavily on the long white stretch of sea sand, and the strong breeze is deliciously refreshing after the enervating heat of the scrub. As we ride along the beach with the swirl of the waves washing our horses' hoofs, we see two solitary rocks, black specks

on the curved line of the shore. From these rocks can be seen Wollumbin, or Mount Warning, its sharp-cut outline just visible against the sky, its rocks and trees melted into blue but a tint darker than the sky above them. The rocks are named by the blacks Wollumbingill, and in a legend it is told how long ago these two solitary boulders by the seashore were thrown from the great mountain. (Can anyone identify where these rocks are/were please?)



The Mouth of the Brunswick River 1922 - Pearl of the Pacific

We soon after reach the mouth of the river, and swim our horses from sand-bank to sand-bank till we gain the opposite bank.

Sydney Morning Herald Friday 14th November 1884, p.5

OUR SUGAR LANDS

IV – THE BRUNSWICK RIVER DISTRICT

(By Our Special Commissioner)

The Brunswick River has the double disadvantage of comparatively short length and a variable bar. So greatly indeed does the bar change from time to time that whilst at some periods it is almost impossible to float the cedar logs brought from up-stream over it, yet at other periods vessels drawing from 8 to 10 feet of water can pass safely into the river. The northern headland at the mouth is rocky, but the opposite head is but a bank of shifting sand. The tide follows the northern headland, so that it is quite possible that were this stony point carried further out by artificial means, such as a line of stone work, the flow of the tide might be so influence that it would sweep well into the bed of the channel, and the ebb of the river being carried far out into the sea, the entrance might be kept scoured. However that may be, it is very evident that some engineering works will have to be done if ever the entrance to the Brunswick is to be made reliable, and at all times accessible. The river branches into three arms almost immediately within the heads. The main arm takes a direction almost due west from the mouth, the remaining arms being the one to the north and the other to the south. The latter branches are only navigable for small craft, they being blocked by large sand-banks intersected by narrow channels of fairly deep water. The main arm, however, is fairly navigable at most times, and has a good depth of water at high tide, the tide rising about four feet. Both the Brunswick and Tweed are occasionally visited by heavy floods.

In the main and north arms there are fine areas of scrub land, through unfortunately in some cases beyond navigable water. The coast land, however, is a barren waste of ti-tree scrub, swamps, and sand hillocks. On the south arm there is not any great quantity of good land till some distance beyond navigations, when a fine area of country is reached ascending the range toward the Richmond tableland. So far very little has been done upon the river in the way of cultivation, and it looks the picture of desolation. On the northern headland is a group of dilapidated houses, with a poverty-stricken pig or two among the rocks, apparently hunting up cockles or oysters for a livelihood. On the opposite side of the river is a public-house, with the usual up-country group of loafers holding up the verandah posts. The prosperity of the Tweed is checked by want of communication with the outer world; but poor Brunswick is ruined by isolation. With large areas of rich land in its vicinity, it lies a wilderness, wasting its treasure in the growth of luxuriant scrub and dense forest. So far the exports of the Brunswick have almost entirely been the various varieties of timber grown in the district. Great quantities of cedar have been sent from this locality, also of beech and pine; but the cedar is now nearly exhausted, and the pine has been taken from those distances where it will pay to do so. The same also with beech. Of these two latter, however, there are large quantities in the forests back from the river and which are as yet without outlet. Even yet, however, the trade in timber at the Brunswick is of such importance that it is no unusual thing to see two vessels lying outside the Heads waiting for cargoes. Along the river one sees rafts of logs chained together, being poled down to the mouth, there to be surfed across the bar. So far as agricultural produce is concerned little or nothing has been done, as it is almost impossible to get it away to market. There are, as already stated, large areas of rich land in the district, and sugar cane or corn could, no doubt be grown upon these profitably; but although a great deal of the land has been selected, practically nothing has been done with it. A little timber has been felled perhaps, and scrub cleared, but everyone is waiting to see what will “turn up,” and in the meantime the majority of the settlers make a livelihood by working on road contracts, or simply loaf about, living the life of the ravens, and picking up what Providence sends them, which is generally precious little in this district.

At one time Brunswick was wrought into a state of excitement by the news that gold had been struck at Peter’s Grass (another place it would be great to identify), on a line due west from the mouth of the river; and it is said that large quantities of gold were taken from the spot, some of which was sent to Sydney, but the country was almost inaccessible, and nothing of any account came of the matter. And in connection with the find of gold there is a curious fact, that small quantities of gold can be obtained along the sea shore in the vicinity of the river by washing the sand. After a heavy gale men, I am informed, may here and there be seen working with pans along the shore between the Brunswick and Ballina at

the mouth of the Richmond.

Leaving the Brunswick we followed a track fairly parallel to the coast. Portion of it was sandy and swampy and unfit for cultivation. We then crossed a little headland partly cleared, it being about the closest point to the sea of any agricultural value. The road then became rocky, as we passed over some rough highlands, upon the opposite side of which lay another tract of sandy, swampy country, next to it a patch of poor-looking scrub, and then a desolate bit of ti-tree wilderness. Soon after this we once more struck the newly-surveyed track. Following this track we passed through Targarah, reserved as a common for the people, whilst settlement was going on in the surrounding country. Ascending from Targarah we reached Possum Shoot, originally used as a timber slide. The new track does not go up the shoot, but follows a gradient of about 1 foot in 10 feet, laid out by the Government. We soon after entered an outlying portion of the Richmond big scrub. A large area of that which we passed through was in its primitive state, but here and there we came upon a clearing. About here we got on several road cuttings, strung like beads on a string, a bridle path connecting each with the other. The vegetation became so thick that it was almost impossible to force a way through it. The "lawyers" were set like so many fishing lines to catch the unwary traveller, and at every yard the stinging tree spread out its broad leaves. These trees varied in height from a couple of feet to 30 to 40 feet. A sting from one of them is exceedingly painful to a man, and drives horses frantic. The effect of a severe sting on the hand will be felt there and in the arm for weeks after, and partly paralyses the muscles. Travelling in a south-westerly direction we came to Currable Creek, where there was a little clearing going on, and after passing a fairly good cutting we arrived at the main Richmond water, known at this point as Wilson's Creek. Following up the track, upon which at this point nothing has so far been done, we shortly afterwards came upon a road party, busy cutting down the scrub and making the road. We next passed Stony Creek, a tributary of Wilson's Creek, and, turning south-westerly, again passed a settlement, and arrived at the Whian Whian tableland. This is a little patch of grass 10 or 12 acres in extent, surrounded by scrub. It was here the timber-getters used to feed their bullocks. Following a fairly good road, with cuttings here and there, we arrived at Little Bennie's Creek, where we again saw some settlement. Crossing the dividing range we struck Big Bennie, where a township area of about a mile square has been reserved (presumably Clunes). A good road then led up to Bexhill, and after a belt of scrub has been passed through, Lismore came in sight.

In the trip cross country from the Tweed to the Richmond, one cannot be but favourably impressed with the general character of the country. It is mountainous truly, but there are large areas of scrub land and valleys luxuriant with vegetable life, where, if communication with some centre of population were but opened up, many families could be comfortably settled on farms that would grow almost any kind of semi-tropical produce. There are creeks in abundance interlacing the whole land. Beautiful as this country is, with its mountains crowned with pine trees, its valley filled with ferns, flowers, and many-tinted foliage, its cracks of running water splashing over mossy rocks and decaying wood, one cannot but desire, exquisite as all these are, that they should give place to the farm with its bending crop, to the orchard with its boughs drooping beneath the weight of fruits, and to meadows where fat oxen roamed or rested at will; that the perfume of the woods should yield to the scent of the orange blossom and the honey-bearing clover.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

This newsletter is written by
and for the members of the
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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 2nd June 2016
2.00pm
See you there!

*Deadline for agenda items
Wednesday 1st June 2016

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

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



