



Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc.

MUSEUM

NEWSLETTER

June 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

REMINDERS

OLD & Gold this Saturday at Brunswick Heads. We will be holding our stall in the Memorial Hall from 8 to 3. Come, visit and stay for a while to help out. We will have a display, books for sale and photos and DVDs running.

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

Next Market: Saturday 18th June. Museum open 9-1.

Next General Meeting: Thursday 7th July 2016 2.00pm

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



TRAVELLER'S TALES

Next in this series is an account by a travelling artist correspondent which was featured in *The Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney NSW 1870-1907) on 16th October 1866. Spelling and grammar are reproduced as in the article, which can be found at <http://trove.nla.gov.au/newspaper>

The Australian Town and Country Journal Saturday 16th October 1866 p26

N. S. Wales Coastal Districts

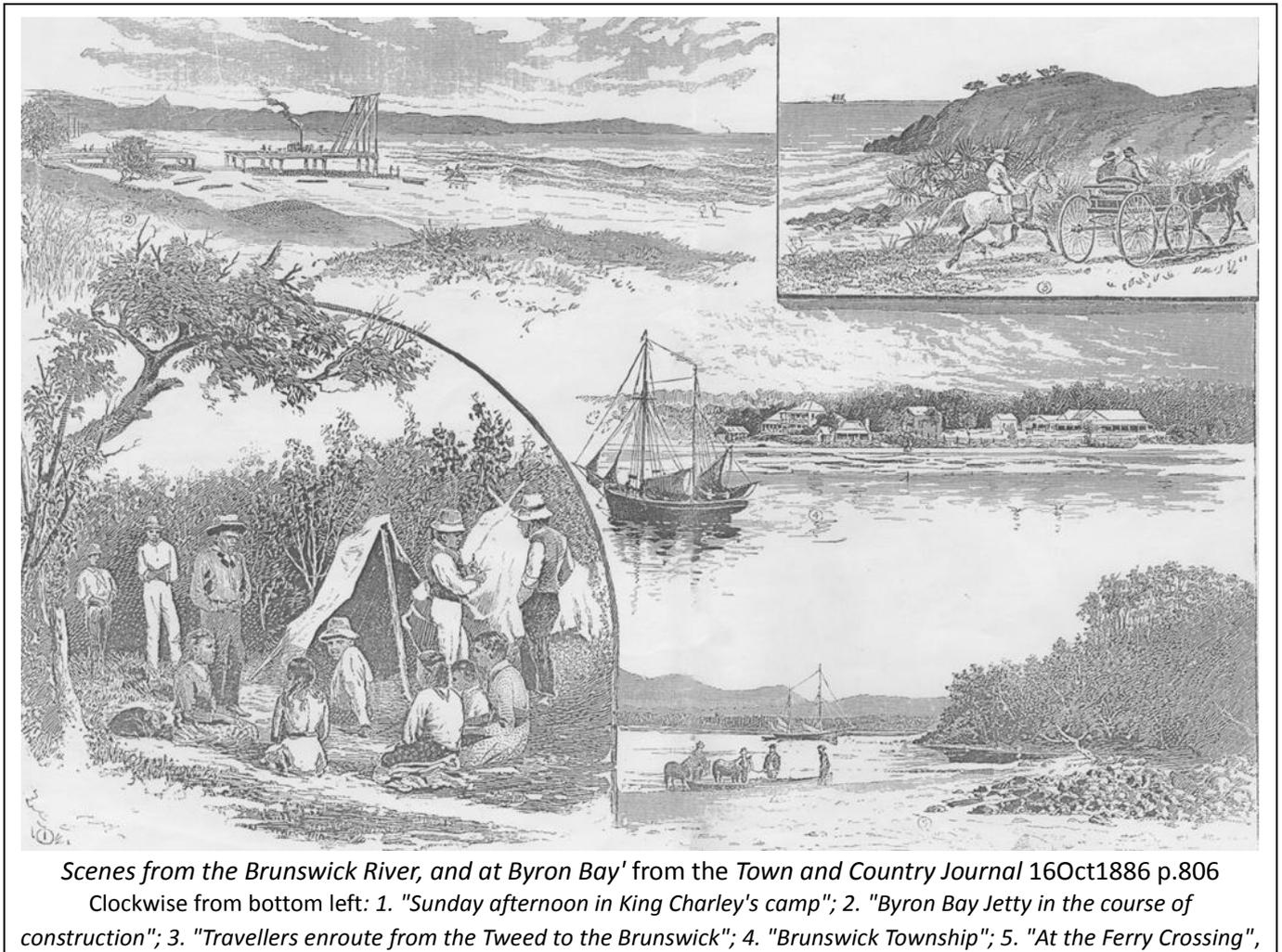
Brunswick River and Byron Bay

By our Travelling Artist Correspondents

There are two routes available from the rich fertile district of the Tweed to the more recently opened up lands which lie along the banks of the Brunswick River. One of these starts from the little township of Murwillumbah, and, for the greater part of the distance, is a mere bridle track: in many places winding round the sides of steep hills, and deep rocky gullies, affording glimpses of scenery of the most beautiful description, graceful tree ferns, luxuriating in the dense bush; while bright hued creeping plants are seen clambering, in the most fantastic fashion, up and down the immense trunks and spreading boughs of gigantic forest trees, the topmost branches of which in many cases are studded with bright green-leaved birdsnest ferns. Signs of life also are visible in the scrub, a frightened paddymelon being occasionally seen scampering in haste across the path, and the chirping and chattering of the birds, and ever and anon the fiendish-like cacchination of the laughing jackass being heard by the passer-by.

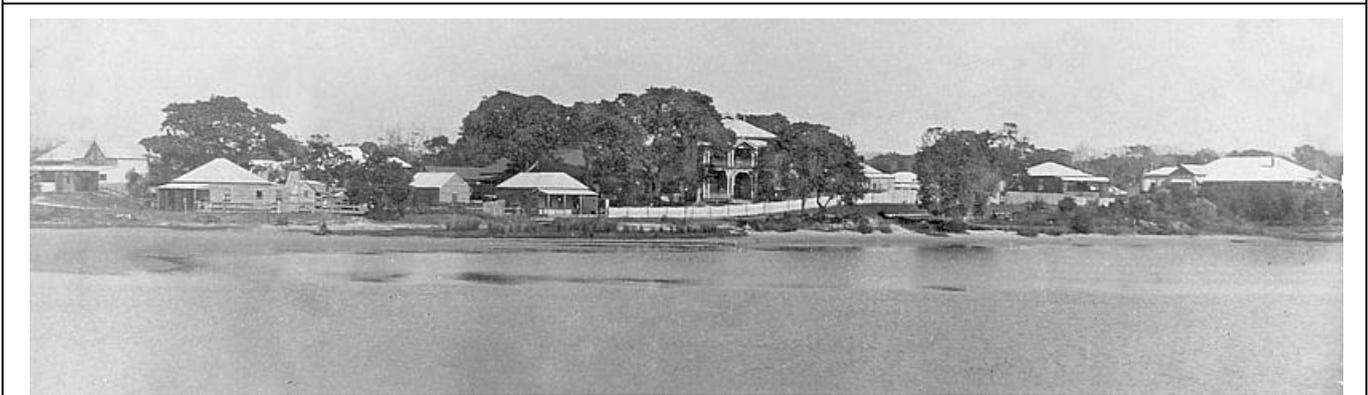
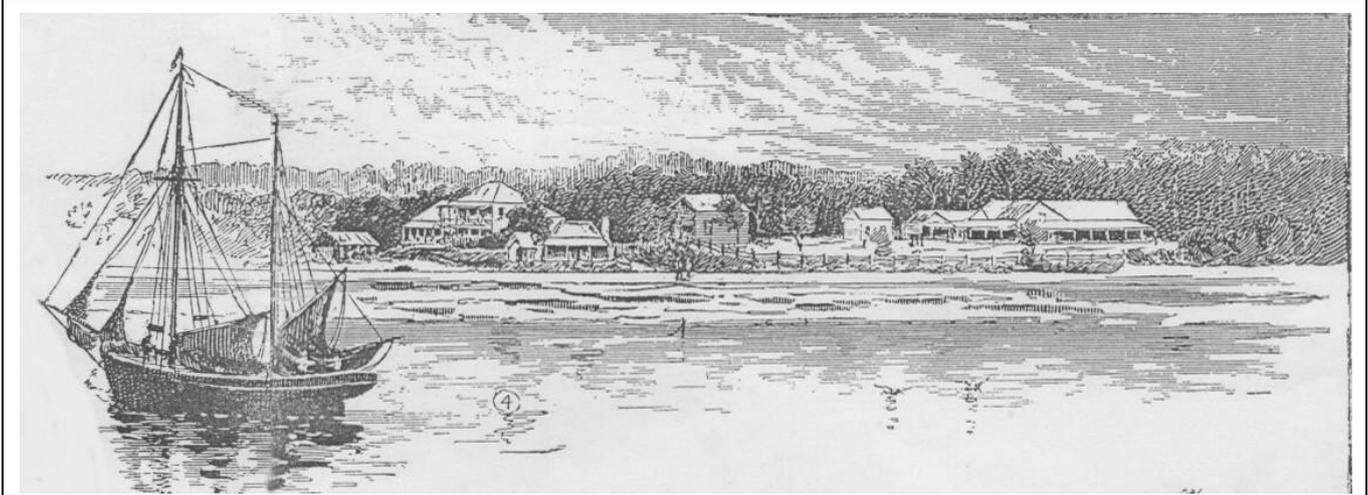
Turning off from the main track, some few miles from the Brunswick River, is a path leading to a locality commonly known as the "Pocket" (Hainsville or Billinudgel), where numerous selections are to be found. The soil here is of a rich nature, evidently admirably suited for the cultivation of almost any subtropical product; but, unfortunately, the means of communication available are so irregular that little has been done in the way of agriculture up to the present time. Returning again to the main track through the tall dense scrub, we find the ground much cut up by the heavy wheels of the lumbering bullock drays, many of which are employed around here in drawing logs of valuable timber, the cutting of which forms one of the chief mainstays and the principal export of the district. As this track was not available for vehicles, we were compelled to choose the other route, which starts from Cudgen Scrub on the Tweed where Messrs Robb and Company have set up their large and complete sugar-crushing and boiling plant. Making an early start, so as to catch the tide at a favourable time, we proceeded along the rich chocolate-colored road, hemmed in on both sides by immense fields of bright green waving sugar-cane. After we had gone some distance we found that the bright red soil disappeared,

giving place to loose white sand. Dragging our way slowly through this, we presently gained the hard, wet sea beach. Away we went at a good rate, keeping as close as possible to the rippling waves of the broad Pacific. A fine, clear, blue sky overhead, the roar and dash of the curling foam-capped breakers, and a fresh, keen sea breeze all tended to make the drive most enjoyable.



On we went until we came to a standstill at Cudgera (probably Cabarita, scene 3 above), a headland running out to sea, and which we had to cross. The ascent, although short, was very steep, necessitating the unpacking of our traps and carrying them up to the summit of the ridge, then a stiff climb for the horse and trap up the broken, stony face of the hill, which afforded but very poor foothold. Upon arriving at the top we found before us a sharp descent down a sandy slope, so we were compelled to fasten a rope to the hind axle of the buggy, and to hang on, in order to prevent the possibility of a capsize. The next awkward spot to cross was the creek, which is extremely dangerous to a stranger, by reason of the treacherous quicksands which are ever shifting in its bed. Getting safely through this, we again proceeded down a long straight stretch of white sandy beach with a low, dark, scrubby fringe of bush growing along the terraces at the back. A mast standing out from the sand attracted our attention, and caused us to pull up. Upon examination we found that a fishing boat was buried underneath the drifting sand. Scraping some of this away we found the deck hatches of the little craft, in which six unfortunate wretches made their escape about three years ago from New Caledonia. When discovered by someone who chanced to be riding along the beach, they were reduced to the greatest extremities, having been no less than six days without water and four without food. They were all brought in to the Brunswick with as little delay as possible, and when sufficiently recovered they were removed to Sydney, whence they were once more dispatched to the care of the French authorities in Noumea. (Trove records that the 6 French convicts landed at Bruns November 1883 in the boat 'La Rose', which they donated to the Bruns inhabitants who had paid for their passage to Sydney per schooner 'Brilliant'.) We were also told another yarn about this part of the beach, concerning a man who was capsized in a boat and washed ashore. The craft turned bottom up over him, and he was completely imprisoned, in which awkward predicament he was compelled to remain until liberated by some passer-by, who was attracted by hearing the knocking from the inside. (Probably referring to the Boyd story of April/May 1849 mentioned in the last newsletter).

The beach seemed almost of interminable length, one portion being so similar to the other. Every few hundred yards huge logs of timber were to be seen thrown up high and dry, evidently having drifted out to sea from some of the rivers, and then been washed up by the incoming tide. Some of the logs had evidently been in their present position for years, while others appeared to have been only recently cut. We kept pushing forward until at length we had the pleasure of seeing the flagstaff of the signalling station at the mouth of the Brunswick River. Soon we were struggling up a hill of loose sand and then down again, finding ourselves then on the northern bank of the river, at the mouth of which we could see the breakers foaming and dashing over the bar, which is a very bad one, and retards in a considerable degree the progress of the place.



Mullumbimbi Street, Brunswick Heads, 1886 top (from sketch above) and 1910 bottom

Some little distance up the river, a couple of schooners (likely to be 'White Cloud' and 'Dolphin') were engaged in loading timber for which the river is noted. The look-out station, and a store kept by Mr Haines formed nearly the whole of the buildings on this side. Walking down to the rocky and sandy beach we succeeded in attracting the attention of the ferryman on the opposite bank. He has anything but an enviable billet, having to pull his boat by a most serpentine route in order to avoid the numerous shoals and sandbanks with which the mouth of the river is choked. Horses are either compelled to swim across, being towed behind the boat, or to ford at low water higher up the river.

We finally landed after a journey of more than four times the width of the river, and found the township to consist of Marshall's Hotel, a little wooden post and telegraph office, a store, the new courthouse which had only just been finished, and another hotel in the course of construction. A sawpit was occupied, and men were busily engaged in sawing the huge logs of timber into suitably sized planks. In close proximity to Marshall's Hotel was a blacks' camp, over which a sable patriarch rejoicing in the title of King Charlie of the Brunswick holds supreme sway (coincidentally King Charlie had been identified as senior elder of the Durrumbul/Durungbil/...mob 14 years earlier by a similar bunch of intrepid explorers from the Town and Country Journal). There were about twenty of these aborigines altogether. A few were full-blooded blacks; but many were half-castes. A great deal of the rough housework in the hotel was done by these girls, and it was amusing to watch them scrubbing the floor, every now and then taking a rest to light or fill their pipes, so that they could enjoy the pleasures of a comfortable smoke while engaged in their duties. On the Sunday the blacks smartened themselves up considerably, Old Charlie coming out with an ancient pith helmet ornamented with a spotted crimson "puggaree" upon his head; while the women were nearly all attired in clean print dresses, gaudily set off with neckerchief of turkey red.

Around the township of Brunswick there are many selections, the majority of which would produce handsome returns to the owners if they were enabled to properly cultivate them, and means were available of regular transport to a market. It is the want of this which keeps the place so much in the background, as it possesses all the advantages and everything necessary for the development of a fine agricultural district. Doubtless the works which are at present in the course of construction at Byron Bay will, when finished, prove a great boon to many of the inhabitants of the neighbourhood, and will give an impetus to the progress of the locality. Being desirous of visiting the bay we crossed over the South Arm, by means of the ferry, and were landed on the soft sandy shore, over which we made our way to the sea beach. Here we found a long stretch of some eight miles in length, gradually sweeping round and out to sea, terminating in Cape Byron which is noteworthy from the fact of its being the most easterly point of Australia. The bay is well protected from southerly winds, and has long been a resort for vessels when overtaken by bad weather. A large jetty is being constructed for the benefit of the shipping. When completed it will be 1240ft in length. The original plan was for a jetty measuring 1080ft only; but upon due consideration, and in order to obtain a greater depth of water, a length of 160ft was added to the original. The first pile was driven in at the latter end of May last, but the works have been most sadly hindered by the rains. When the works are in full swing about forty men are engaged, in addition to an army of timber-getters. At the present time the piles are being driven into the sand, the bed rock being met with at a depth of 18ft. When the water is reached, divers will be employed in boring this. The timber used is turpentine for the piles, with ironbark for the girders and top work. The pile-driving machine possesses a travelling platform 63ft long, so that when it is required to go ahead the necessary distance between the piles, the whole concern is moved forward in order to overhang the spot where it is required to sink the next pier. The whole of the work as far as completed appeared to be of most solid description; the main structure being strengthened by two batter piles being driven on the outside of each pier. Close to the jetty is the surveyed Government township of Caavanba. Some little distance away is Simmond's subdivision, a portion of which has been



David Jarman 1906

sold. At the time of our visit there were no buildings erected save a few rough workshops for the men engaged on the works; but about half a mile away on the cape are Jarman's Hotel and Perry's store. About six or seven years ago a good influx took place of farmers from the southern coast, who selected on the Byron, and had to send their produce overland to Richmond twenty odd miles distant for shipment.

Some two years ago the settlers formed themselves into a body called the Byron Bay Association (formed September 1883 in an acrimonious split from the 'The Selectors and Settlers Association of the Brunswick River'), and agitated for the building of a jetty in the bay, and so brought the matter to the front. At present the railway line being surveyed will touch Byron Bay, coming up from Grafton to Casino thence to Lismore, from there through Bexhill and Clunes to Byron Bay. Of course this is a matter for the future; but there is little doubt that with such a line, Byron Bay will, from the facilities which it offers to shipping, become one of the great ports of the Northern district, forming, as it would, an outlet for the trade of the Richmond River and the Brunswick.

Brunswick Valley Historical Society Inc. Newsletter

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

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Kim Pedersen

Sarah Newsome

Newsletter team:

Susan Tsicalas & Work

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 7th July 2016

2.00pm

See you there!

*Deadline for agenda items

Wednesday 6th July 2016

MUSEUM HOURS

Friday 10am - 12pm

Market Saturday 9am - 1pm

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

