



NEWSLETTER  
AUGUST 2010

# Brunswick Valley Historical Society MUSEUM

Cnr Of Stuart & Myocum Streets MULLUMBIMBY 2482  
OPEN: FRIDAY 11 AM - 3 PM  
MARKET DAY (3RD SAT OF THE MONTH) 9 AM -12 PM

## THE HUMBLE BANANA



Carmela Dichiera – Blindmouth, Main Arm 1953



Lance Mott – Main Arm C1940

The humble banana, believe it or not, has been in cultivation for centuries. Alexander the Great saw banana groves thriving whilst on an expedition to India, and they are often mentioned in early Greek, Latin and Arab writings. So, how did they manage to end up half-way around the world in the Brunswick valley.

Well, consider that there are four important factors in the successful cultivation of bananas: good soil, good rainfall, suitability of situation and freedom from frost. In addition, the best banana land has either a north or an easterly aspect, and is sheltered from westerly winds. We all know that the Brunswick valley has all these prerequisites in spades.

By 1933 our district had come into its own as one of Australia's

most important banana growing areas. But it had survived two serious threats: the notorious "bunchy-top infestation", in which most of the area's banana crops were completely destroyed by a disease initially discovered in a Mullumbimby backyard, and the even more pernicious, yet little publicised, "Chinese invasion".

By way of explanation, between 1911 and 1920 affluent Chinese merchant wholesalers from the southern capitols took advantage of existing market conditions and, by using their excellent business acumen, began purchasing large tracts of land in northern New South Wales for banana growing, employing Chinese labourers to man their new plantations.

At the same time Australian soldiers returning from World

War 1 were keen to purchase cheap land for banana growing. However, they were often prevented from doing this by the Chinese wholesalers who engaged in the practice of offering unfair inducements to local freeholders to sell land at higher prices that only they, not the Aussie diggers, could afford. Public meetings and street marches became commonplace with much ill will directed toward the so-called "Chinese invaders". A time-bomb was ticking.

But thankfully common sense prevailed and the parties eventually came to see that there was room for both to prosper, and that a peaceful, yet sometimes tenuous co-existence was best for all concerned.

An extract from Ron Leonard's display on the local Banana Industry featured in the Machinery Shed

## **Brunswick Valley Historical Society Newsletter**

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

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Treasurer  
Susan Tsicalas

Assistant Treasurer  
Sarah Newsome

Market Co-ordinator  
Gordon Wright

Newsletter team  
Liz Walton

Patron: Frank Mills OAM.

**All members are invited to  
contribute to this newsletter**

\*Please leave material with Sarah or  
Liz Wed - Fri, 10 am - 3 pm.

Or email to:

bvhs@tridentcommunications.com.au

**NEXT MEETING**

**Saturday 21ST AUGUST 2010  
1pm. See you there!**

\*Deadline for agenda items  
Friday 20th August 2010 .

**MUSEUM HOURS**

**Friday 11am - 3pm**

**Market Saturday 9 am - 12pm**

BVHS Newsletter is produced  
by NORTEC Work for The Dole  
participants and BVHS

**PUBLIC FORUM** e-news  
mullumbimbymuseum@gmail  
password - mullumbimby



## **HELP!**

**You're Museum needs YOU!**

It has already happened once this year that we were unable to open the doors due to lack of volunteers and it would be disappointing to have it happen again. We have a few very dedicated volunteers who are currently filling the roster as much as they can and I'm sure they would appreciate a few more people to spread the load.

Some Fridays are very quiet but most weeks our visitors are a mixture of people travelling through the region, locals and people doing family history research. Saturdays are usually busy unless the Market is rained out.

We need some members who can welcome our visitors and assist them with book sales and research request forms. You do not need to be a font of information; it's very easy. You can bring a friend or your knitting.

Ashley Mills our Volunteer Coordinator has the rosters for the rest of the year. If you can help us out on any of those Fridays or Market Saturdays, drop in to the Museum, e-mail or leave us a phone message. He will be very pleased to hear from you.

**THE STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE** has had its last meeting and the final plan will be put to the August General Meeting.

It has been a long process through first meetings, to preparing the grant proposal, to more meetings and finally the finished document. With the aid of the grant money we were able to access professional help to

produce the final document to a standard recognised by national arts funding bodies. As well as reviewing our Mission Statement and Collection Policy to reflect our current position.

If you would like to review the BVHS Strategic Plan before the August meeting it is attached to your newsletter if you get it by e-mail or you can read it on the notice board in the Reading Room. The Mission Statement and Collection Policy, which was adopted at our July meeting, is included in the newsletter for your attention.

**THE ACCESSION COMMITTEE** seems to have fallen in a heap as no one has been available on Fridays. Since the Strategic Planning Committee has completed its mission we are going to try its old spot Thursdays from 10am - 11:30am. If you are interested in helping us assess donated items against our collection criteria to see if we want to make them part of our collection, then we would love to see you there.

**THE RAFFLE** is not drawn until November and we are still looking for people to sell tickets. You can pick up a ticket book from the Museum or come and help out on the street. We have booked a spot on Burringbar Street on Friday 13th August and Friday 29th October from 9am - 1pm outside the newsagents.

**THE FAMILY TREE** software as well as the photo data base has been loaded onto our new computer which is located in the photo display area. If you already know how to use it you can come in and do so but for those who need to learn there are procedures being written so that anyone will be able to do family research and view any of our photo collection.

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Brunswick Valley Historical Society seeks to collect and conserve material including objects, images and documents that record the social, economic and civic history of the Brunswick Valley. The Society seeks to publish material relevant to the area, interpret and display the collection to educate and engage the community in local history and provide research facilities.

## COLLECTION POLICY

The Brunswick Valley is defined as the catchment area of the Brunswick River and its associated coastline, including Huonbrook and Goonengerry. In agreement with Byron Bay Historical Society the BVHS will collect and conserve visual images of Byron Bay.

### Major collection areas/themes:

Social	Economic	Civic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Migration waves                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chinese</li> <li>▪ Kanakas</li> <li>▪ Greeks</li> <li>▪ Italians</li> <li>▪ Fins</li> <li>▪ surf</li> <li>▪ 70's alternative culture</li> <li>▪ 80's till present day</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Domestic Life</li> <li>• Local Families</li> <li>• Local Identities</li> <li>• Recreational and Social Life</li> <li>• Religious Life</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timber</li> <li>• Agriculture                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Bananas</li> <li>▪ Dairy</li> <li>▪ Sugarcane</li> <li>▪ Pineapples</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Meat pools</li> <li>• Fish Cooperative</li> <li>• Local Businesses</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hydro Power</li> <li>• Post Office</li> <li>• Hospital</li> <li>• Schools</li> <li>• Railway</li> </ul>

### Acquisition Criteria

- The material falls within our collection themes/areas.
- The material has local significance.
- The material is in an acceptable condition, meaning the cost of bringing it to display standard or of preparing it for storage, is relative.
- The material can be appropriately conserved, catalogued and stored.
- The intending donor has legal title to the material.
- The material is donated free of encumbrances.
- The material has a clearly established provenance to enable it to be interpreted sufficiently.
- Will not unnecessarily duplicate material already in the collection.
- Will not compete with the acquisition policies of other collecting institutions.

The BVHS committee will consider all potential donations against our stated aims and selection criteria. Items must comply with a majority of the criteria.

We understand significance to mean the **Historic, Aesthetic, Scientific and Social Values** that an object or collection has for past present and future generations. Not just the physical fabric or appearance of an object.

It **incorporates all the elements that contribute to an object's meaning**, including its context, history, and its social and spiritual values.