

*Bago Bluff as it looks today.*



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WAUCHOPE BRANC

## FRIENDS OF TIMBERTOWN

# Bago or Bagho?

Whatever you like to call it, the mountain range overlooking the township of Wauchope is very impressive especially on the western extremity known as The Bluff.

Nowdays we call this mountain Bago but the earlier name of BAGHO could have had its origins in the native Birpai dialect and it must have been just as imposing to them as it was to the first white man who ever climbed it.

John Oxley's party entered this valley in 1818 and the botanist Charles Frazer was given this task. From the heights he described the valley... "of the richest description with numerous cedar trees."

The date of his climb was the 1st October 1818 and the tell-tale colour of the cedar leaves would have been a dead give away as to their location with their distinctive copper-red colour, that comes with the new spring growth.

So impressed was the botanist that John Oxley decided he had to see it for himself and they both climbed the mountain the next day. The creek seen in the distance from the Bluff was named Frazer's Creek in the botanist's honour.

By 1866 history books were pronouncing the range as BAGHO. We know that the Aboriginal word for the mountain is Bulkara, and Bagho had to have some special significance that is still unknown to us. That name does suggest a phonetic sound that is familiar to their language but we have accepted the simplicity of the word Bago.

The late Keith (Frizyl) Bain lived in Brunner Avenue which faces the mountain range from across the Wauchope Golf Course. I asked him a question many years ago. "Would you ever like to travel?"

He sucked hard on his pipe for a moment, giving thought to his reply, and answered me. "Well yes, but only on one condition."

When asked what that was, he replied, "I don't care really, where I go in the world, just so long as each day when I

wake up in the morning. I can walk out on my verandah AND JUST SEE BAGO!"

That statement is probably a pretty fair indication of how most Wauchopians feel about our impressive mountain range.

Our frustrated sportsmen when beaten in competition have sometimes been heard

muttering their disappointment in a statement of... "Well I'm headin' fer Bago." By that they meant they were going back home.

The title BROKEN BAGO appeared later in the gold mining days when the search was on and experts who examined the strata content of the rock, declared the seams were "broken". In cons gone when the mountain was spewed up from the seabed there were many petrified shells and clams in the rock content. This is a positive fact from studying the rocks mined from the old quarry.

Many mine shafts were sunk behind the Government Apiary (The Beefarm) and the broken seams proved a frustrating business because they just did not go for a continuous length; but went up, down, and sideways either way. Hence the term Broken Bago.

The Eastern Promontory is shown on maps as Mount Wauch with a height of 1178 feet.

The western end with its sheer drop and fortress-like walls, is referred to as Bago Bluff with a height of 1435 feet. The striking and picturesque appearance here has been a popular subject for the talented people of the Hastings Valley.

Fine Arts Society at Timbertown where many exhibits feature a painting of Bago Bluff.

The mountain has its share of history too. A newspaper article appeared in Sydney papers written by the late Henry Lewis Wilson of Telegraph Point and he described conditions of the times under the heading of "The Early Days of Port Macquarie." This is now in the Mitchell Library, Sydney.

His father was Mr William Wilson who was superintendent of works to Capt. Alman in the penal colony days

when it was known as Port "Misery". Reference was made to the time when the 48th Regiment was relieved by the 3rd Reg. under the name of "The Old Buffs". Apparently there was a large discipline problem with the 48th Reg. who were given the title, "The Priest Killers", and its ranks contained many Orangemen.

In 1821 a party of convicts escaped into the bush and two large parties of soldiers were sent out after them. One company comprised

Roman Catholics and the other company comprised the Orangemen. The two represented very biased and bigotted shades of opinion and the hunt was on to see which side was the most successful. Unfortunately they came across each other in the wilderness areas and came to the conclusion that it would be an excellent opportunity to settle their own differences.

Muskets were fired, with each side taking pot-shots. One man was seriously wounded and brought back to camp. He died shortly after.

It was then that Captain Rollan appeared on the scene with the 3rd Reg. The 48th were recalled, and in exercising discipline to regain control, a number of convicts made an open attack on their soldier guards in a cedar cutting party in the vicinity of what is now Wauchope. They took all the arms and ammunition, and a months supply of food rations... "and headed for Bago".

They climbed the steep ledges and entrenched themselves and it was quite some time before a capture could be effected. When the Redcoats attacked, the convicts retaliated by rolling huge boulders down the sides which had the effect of injuring and halting the attack. Many of the convicts were killed but those finally captured were handcuffed, marched over to the river where boats transported them back to Port "Misery" where they went to work on the chaingang.

Perhaps this may be one "Battle of the Hastings" that you may not have heard about. It is true, and it happened on BAGO.

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LSVF-Mountains-

BagoMountain-5





## BAGO STORIES – “A SENSE OF PLACE”

### BAGO BLUFF BUS TOURS.

Come and experience the majestic views from the summit of Bago Bluff.

National Parks and Wildlife Service Rangers will be conducting two Discovery tours of the Bluff on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October. You will have the opportunity to stroll along the Bluff, enjoy the views and hear local stories.

**DATE:** Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2004.

**TIME:** 10.00am & 1.00pm.

**WHERE:** The minibus tours will start & finish at the Bago Vineyards, Milligans Road off Bago Road, Wauchope. **Parking available at the winery.**

**COST:** \$7.00/adult, \$5.00/child & \$19.00/family of four (includes, 2 adults & 2 children).

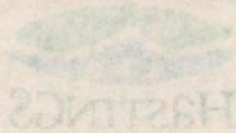
Children under 14 years must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

**BOOKINGS:** essential, contact Port Macquarie Visitor Information Centre on 65818000. Pre payment when booking.

**NOTE:** A reasonable mobility is required for short walk to lookout. Must wear walking shoes with treaded soles, hat & bring thermos/drink. Tour will proceed unless weather is very severe. If rainy or windy, bring a jacket.







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**DATE:** Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2014  
**TIME:** 10:00am - 1:00pm

**WITNESS:** The bus tour will start at the Bago Visitor Centre, Millers Road off Bago Road.

**COST:** \$20 per adult & \$10 per child (under 12 years). 3 adults & 3 children.

**BOOKING:** Essential. Contact Port Macquarie Visitor Information Centre on 65818000. Pre-booking.

**NOTE:** A reasonable mobility is required for short walk to lookout. Must wear walking shoes with treaded soles. Hat and sunscreen. You will proceed unless weather is very severe. If rain, wind or a jacket.

LSVF - Mountains  
Bago Mountain-6





# Climbing Bago Mountain

**C**HARLES Fraser, the botanist, on 2nd October, climbed Bago and told Oxley of the wonderful view, so, in order "to ascertain the principal points in this beautiful country," Oxley himself started for the mountain soon after daylight the next day, "leaving the horses with Mr. Evans to proceed to the north-east." Fraser accompanied the leader who was greatly impressed with the view: "Certainly a more beautiful and interesting view is not often seen." Having noted the country in all directions, Oxley and the botanist returned to the rest of the party.

On 4th October the explorers were confronted by both dense brush and King Creek, which Oxley named after his friend, Lieut. (later Rear-Admiral) Phillip Parker King (1791-1856), son of Governor King. After considerable reconnoitring, the party crossed King Creek at its mouth on 6th October, fortunately obtaining the assistance of a native canoe.

Sarah Creek was crossed by the same means the next day, and at this point one of the weakest horses fell in the mud. "To prevent a more lingering death," Oxley had the horse shot once all attempts to lift him had failed.



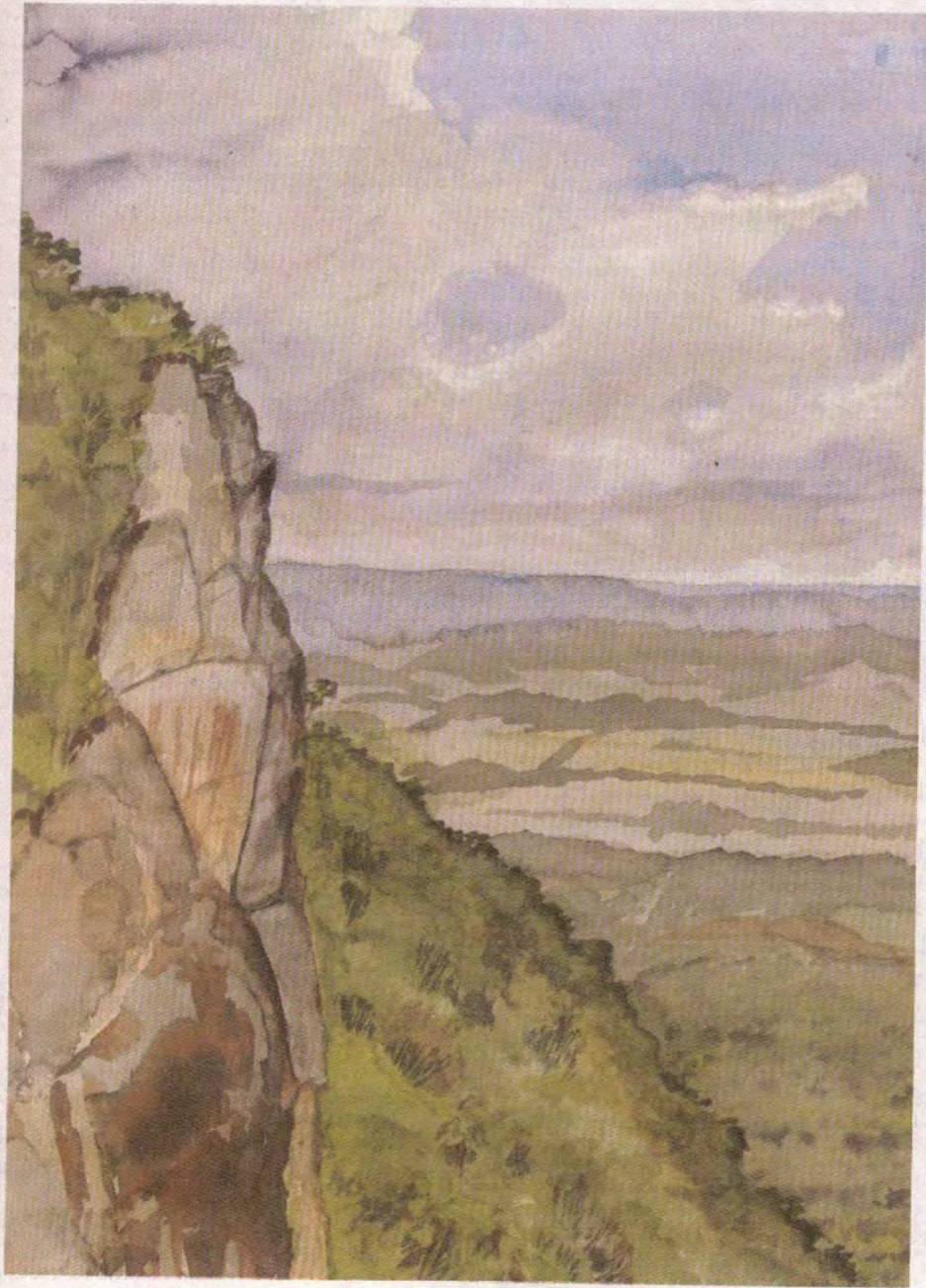
Hastings Shire Gazette  
Thursday, August 30, 1979  
p3

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Bago-2



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**View of Bago Bluff looking west across the hinterland  
Watercolour by Bryan Dowling**



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Bago-4.



## Broken Bago: A silent sentinel

Ever since its discovery, Bago Mountain, which stands like a sentinel, overlooking Wauchope from the south, has attracted much interest.

In 1886 it was described as "Broken Bagho" ... a mountain of considerable elevation ... terminating on all sides very abruptly, and presenting a strikingly picturesque appearance, particularly at its west extremity, where it terminates in a bold escarpment, quite perpendicular or even slightly overhanging ..."

More recent maps show the eastern prominence as Mount Wauch (1179 ft.) and the western one as Bago Bluff (1435). Both Mount Wauch and Bago Bluff were known as Third Class Trig. Stations.

The first white man to climb Bago was Charles Fraser, the botanist, on October 2, 1818. John Oxley accompanied him to the top next day.

"Certainly a more beautiful and interesting view is not often seen," he wrote.



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