

## BROMBIN

Brombin was five miles south of Beechwood and was known as Pappinbarra until August 1931. Originally, Brombin was a grant of one thousand acres given to Colonel Ackroyd by Governor Bourke in 1836. Later owners were Hewens, Dr McGlenn, Mrs Sims, Fowler Bros and WA and CK McKenzie. The name is thought to be Aboriginal for "hunting or meeting place". Colonel Ackroyd raised cattle, horses and sugar cane. The McKenzies came by bullock team from Camden Haven and purchased the property in 1855. During 1862, James Gurney settled on an adjoining property and named it Fig Tree Valley. The 1870s saw the Monaghan family settle.

At the end of the 1860s and during the early 1870s, the residents wanted a school. The first school at Brombin was built prior to 1885. It consisted of slab walls and shingle roof and was built by K and W McKenzie, J Summerville, J Gurney, a builder by trade, Mr Johns and Mr Monaghan. Later, it was removed and rebuilt on property owned by J Hewens, whose residence was the school residence. About 1906 the school moved to its last site, where it remained until it was closed and sold by the Department.



Brombin School 1931

The first teacher at the subsidised school was Miss Maisie Matherson, who later married Mr John Cameron of Crosslands. She was followed by Misses Killgrove, Thackeray, Swan, Hayes, Gilbert, Percy and Fox. Mr McDonald was the first teacher of the provisional school in 1905 and continued at the public school. Miss G Fowler was the teacher from 1943 until 1947 when the school was again subsidised.

Mrs Betsy Bradford (nee Woodlands) was interviewed by Alice Walker in 1995, when Betsy was ninety-four years old. She attended the third school on the hill when Mr Edwards (1908 until 1916) was in charge. Sometimes she walked the two miles to school, other times she went in the horse drawn sulky. Her mother had taught her, so she was in the upper first grade after her first day. The teacher's wife taught needlework, but did not receive payment because there were not nine girls.

Families who attended in Betsy's time included Adams, Bartlett, Bradford, Bubb, Colgan, Coombes, Cross, Fowler, Habbleshwaite, Herbert, Jones, McKay, McKenzie, Moore, Sims and Waldron.

From: Walker, A (2006) Barefeet and Blackboards. Port Macquarie Historical Society.



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## \$200,000 Brombin store gets the thumbs down

A \$200,000 retail nursery, general store, animal boarding house and rural tourist facility at Brombin failed to gain the support of councillors at Monday's planning, development and environment meeting.

The applicant, Mr Ken Reed, had proposed the four-lot subdivision and residual, consisting of three lots of two hectares, one four-hectare lot and a residual lot of 4.6 hectares, for Pipeclay Road. It was proposed the rural tourist facility would consist of two cabins.

A Brombin dairy farmer, Mrs Carolyn Fowler, called on councillors to reject the application based on its potential to impact adversely on neighbouring dairy farms.

She asserted compensation claims had been made by dairy farmers elsewhere in the state when their operations had to be modified because development had been permitted too close to agricultural land.

She said dairy farming had been an important industry for Brombin for more than 100 years and that dairying generated an annual income of \$80 million for the Hastings.

From:  
The Hastings Gazette  
23/1/97



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□ Brombin resident Robyn Keene surveys the scene at the front door of her home which was hit by last Wednesday's hail storm.

## Brombin cops a battering

A hailstorm which lasted for 17 minutes has caused extensive damage to trees and gardens in the Brombin area.

Robyn Keene said the storm came so quickly and was so intense, causing flooding in areas.

Mrs Keene said vegetable gardens

were ruined and fruit trees wiped out from the hail stones which fell at around 4pm last Wednesday.

Mrs Keene said the hail seemed to fall in patches, with sections of the property being completely covered and other parts hardly touched.



□ The Keene's backyard was covered in hail stones from Wednesday's storm.

From: The  
Hastings Gazette  
20/11/97

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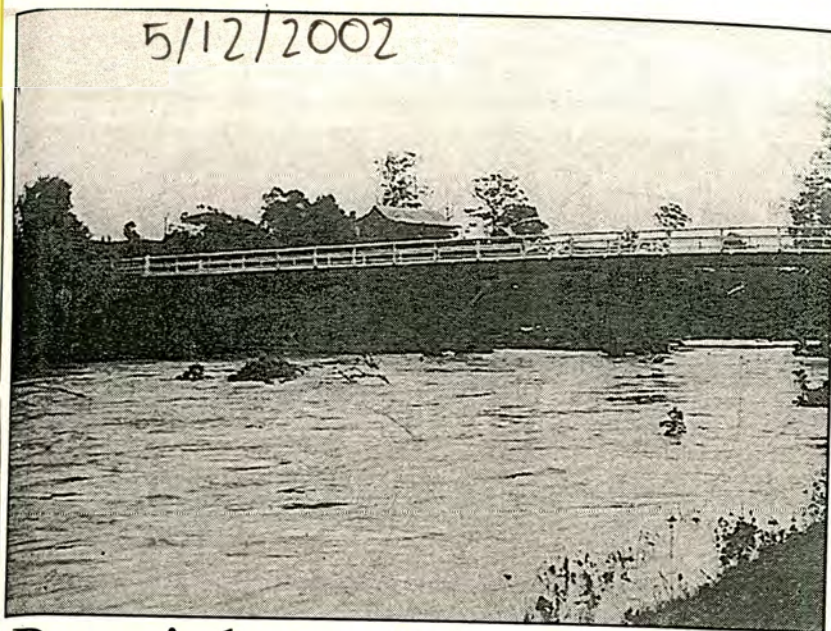
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5/12/2002



## Pappinbarra River in flood

**IT DOES RAIN:** This photograph was sent in by long time reader Gwen Hayward and shows the Pappinbarra River in flood in the 1930s. The photograph shows the old wooden bridge which was built in 1926 at Brombin. The bridge was wrecked in the big flood of 1968 and a concrete bridge replaced it. The Fowler homestead can be seen on the riverbank.

From:  
The Hastings Gazette.  
5<sup>th</sup> Dec 2002



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No 1

# Memories

No 1

People and their past

Compiled by Barry Jennings



## Life in the early days of Brombin

This was written by **Betsy Bradford** of Fig Tree Valley, Brombin, (now 93 years of age) for her sons when they have time to pause. She says the world is moving so fast there is no time to listen to their mother's talks. "I don't blame them. Life is tough, just as tough as it was in the early days — only everything was so quiet in those days. People were kind and enjoyed a neighbour's company. Now it's all competition. Everyone wants more and more, all striving to 'keep up with the Joneses'. Love your neighbour no matter who he is."

My grandparents, Mr and Mrs James Gurney, selected land at Brombin in 1862.

They named the property Fig Tree Valley on account of the Morton Bay and Port Jackson fig trees growing here.

They arrived on horseback. Mr Gurney built himself a hut under a fig tree — not knowing how foolish it was as fig tree limbs will fall any time without warning.

He built a house just above our present wa-

ter trough. He selected more land.

His brother-in-law, Mr Pat Monaghan, lived on one block and dummied it for Mr Gurney. (Mr Gurney had selected as much land as would be allowed). Today it is owned by Mrs Ivy Jones.

Mr Summerville bought the land from Pat Monaghan. Mr Gurney had built a house on it for Pat Monaghan.

Mr Frank Monaghan selected land on the Pappinbarra and nam-

ed it Oaklands.

Mr Gurney built a house for him also. The part he built is still standing.

When Mr and Mrs Gurney arrived at their property there was only one neighbour — the McKenzies of Brombin.

Mr Gurney gave Mr Trotter a clearing lease of some of his property. Mr Trotter reared 12 children there, including William, George, Arthur, Harry, Thomas, Ernest, Herb, James, Mary (Mrs Polley), Emily (Mrs Mathers).

They lived in a house on the brow of the hill near where an old hay shed stands. (Mr Hack owns this now).

Later Mr Trotter lived in another house on the property surrounded by a nice mixed orchard.

His two daughters Mary and Emily lived with him. When Mr and Mrs Gurney first arrived a few natives, very quiet, came along dressed in opossum skins, had a look at the new settlers, then left quietly.

Mr and Mrs Gurney employed a man called Andrew Abbott for 40 pounds a year and keep.

In 1863 a daughter was born to Mr and Mrs Gurney. Her name was Bridget (my mother). Mrs Gurney rode to Dungog before Bridget's birth, and remained a month in Dungog. They all returned to Fig Tree Valley.

Bridget was baptised in Dungog and her godmother was Judy Moylan.

On July 12 another daughter Sarah Rose Ann was born. Later a

son James was born. Then later another daughter Elizabeth.

Besides her own children Mrs Gurney reared her youngest sister Bridget and helped rear a nephew Peter Monaghan.

In the first three years at Fig Tree Valley all the crops were taken by floods. James Gurney wanted to go back to the diggings and mine for gold. Ann said "If you go I go". James would not take his wife to the gold fields so they battled on.

The ground was cleared and cultivated. Bullocks were used in the very early days for farm work.

Great dray loads of corn were driven to Port Macquarie and later to Mortons Creek wharf near Bain Bridge where a boat picked it up, and also pigs to be shipped from Port Macquarie to Sydney.

Butter was made on the farm and carried on horseback to Port Macquarie where it was bartered for food and clothing in very early days.

Mrs Gurney brought bungalow cabbage tree palms from Lighthouse which she dried, stripped and plaited for hats which she made for early settlers. Cabbage tree hats. She charged one pound for them. Mr Donald McClelland wore her hats until she died and then bought a black cap.

Mrs Gurney also nursed the ladies of the district when their babies were born or anyone was ill. When her son James was four days



□ Betsy Bradford at her Brombin home.

old she rode out to Oaklands and nursed her sister-in-law Mrs Frank Monaghan when her son Frank was born.

There was no doctor on the river in those early days. If a doctor was needed, Kempsey was the nearest and it cost 50 pounds for his fee.

When Dr Casement arrived he charged five pounds. If the people looked poor he charged nothing.

The children were growing up, and a school was opened at Brombin. The first teacher was Miss Maisie Matheson (later Mrs John Cameron). Other teachers came including Mr Swan and that remarkable scholar Mr A.J. Kilgour.

It was his first school and he was 16 years old when he took over.

Later a school and residence were built further down the road, now owned by Mr Hack.

Then another school was built this side of the bridge and named the Pappinbarra school, later the Brombin school. The first teacher at this school was Mr McDonald, then Mr

A.J. Edwards.

In the early days, beds and pillows were made of feathers or corn husks shredded and everyone saved the feathers for beds and pillows. Milk was placed in wide shallow dishes to set.

The cream would rise to the top and skimmed with a skimmer. The cream would be placed in a basin to ripen for a few days. It was then beaten with a wooden spoon until buttermilk was separated from the butter.

Butter was washed in several dishes of water until free of butter milk. It was then made into pats and wrapped in cold wet cloths, placed in a white enamel bucket and carried on horseback to Port.

The David Lindsays, Mr Johns and grandma would all ride together to Port.

In the early 1890s the Gurney family had a new house built by a Mr Brownlow.

James Gurney senior died in 1881.

His wife and family carried on the Fig Tree Valley property. Annie married Dick Hewens, a sleeper cutter in 1895.

They rented a Moropo owned by Johns, then came Tree Valley to live.

Bridget married Woodlands of angry. They lived for three years, wood three years Tree Valley five Beechwood three Maitland 27 years Fig Tree Valley.

Betsy married Hewens senior sleeper cutter.

She died 12 later. Her baby too. James Gurney bachelor, died in

**Neighbourhood**  
The hotel kept Beechwood was O'Neill. He was butcher and baker.

Mr H.D. Nicolson the store opposite hotel. Mr Dark store and post lower down. Mr White and Mr Bartrim were the smiths. Mr Bert lands kept a store down. Our baker Mr N.A. Hur Wauchope. Mr and Mr Har Rawdon Island the butchers. Church of E minister was Shaw.

— More next

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Brombin





## Continuing life in the early days of Brombin

Betsy Bradford, now aged 93, of Fig Tree Valley, Brombin, continues her story of the establishment of Brombin and life in the early days of that community.

I was born on November 17, 1901, at the Club Hotel, now the Commercial Hotel. Mrs Reid nursed my mother.

Mrs Reid owned a private hospital in William Street. A case of scarlet fever was being nursed there, so they could not take my mother in.

Mrs Halpin heard of her plight and took my mother in and I was born at her hotel.

An older child, their first baby, was born in Nurse Reid's private hospital. He died. His name was Bertie Hamilton. He was born on November 19, 1900.

Another son Robert James was born on March 4, 1903. He died at Concord Hospital 1964 after service overseas. Another still-born daughter was born to my parents about 1905.

When my parents married in 1899 at St Thomas's Church, Port Macquarie, they went to Bellangry to live. Where the Church of England stands was their farm. They lived there for three years and moved to a store at Beechwood where they lived for three years.

My grandmother Gurney died in 1906 and we came to live at Fig Tree Valley.

I remember that we had a storm that afternoon. I was very young but remember arriving and finding several hen's nests near the fig tree (the small leaved one).

I also remember how clean and tidy the old home was. A large chest of drawers in my grandmother's room was filled with nicely ironed table and bed linen.

I also remember one bedroom with muddy shovels in it. There were several minors camped in the room after my grandmother had died. I remember large mine shafts dug all over the lower paddocks where irrigation is now. Old Mr Trotter's horse "Prout" fell in a mine during flood time. The men and women, too, pulled him out after first tying a rope around him.

Little Ivy Fowler my playmate saw him first. He was plunging in the water trying to get out. She ran to her grandfather Mr J. Summerville and said Prout was having a lovely bath in the well. Grandma Summerville helped too.

Miners said there were traces of minerals but not payable quantities.

We lived at Fig Tree

Valley for five years. Mr brother Bob owned a quiet horse named Magic, and I owned a quiet horse named Araby. Roaney was my mother's mare.

Little Tommy was our first pony. He used to eat bread and butter and sugar.

We had another horse we bought from Mr Bain. His name was Tommy. Dad owned a fine trotting stallion named Caveller and another stallion named Comet. Old Silver was a silver mare and tail mare that he used to rear foals from.

Martin was a half draught that uncle Jim owned. He also owned a race horse named Charlie that raced under the name of Hastings. He won at Sydney pony races. Also he owned Sunbeam, another racehorse. Lass 'O Gowrie was another racehorse he owned.

I remember an old draught horse we had at Beechwood named "Flip Flop". She had great big feet, and one day walked on our little puppy and killed it. Another pony we owned was Jimmy Governor. He was full of tricks. We also had another horse that used to jib. My mother used to say she wished she had a

swarm of bees to put on him to make him move. We sold him and later he bolted and turned a sulky over.

We had nice cows named Cherry, Brindle, Magpie, Maisie, Bluey, Plum and Pony.

Dairying was registered here about 1907. Cream was sent in cans twice weekly. My father drove it in a spring cart to Morton's Creek wharf near Bain Bridge.

He also took the neighbour's cream for them. All milking was done by hand.

My father made friends with a man named Mr Price and his daughter Betty down at the wharf where cream was loaded. The Prices left Beechwood about 1907. Betty gave me her little black and white speckled bull terrier called Nancy.

My mother was washing the clothes at Morton's Creek near Mooneys when Nancy killed a snake, but the snake bit her and she died. My brother Bob was aged 13 and he cried bitterly about it. My father was away.

When I was seven and my brother Bob six we started school at Pappinbarra Public School out near the bridge (later named Brombin school). Mr

Edwards was our teacher. His wife taught sewing every Friday. We hemmed tea towels, handkerchiefs, pillow cases. They had two daughters Phyllis and Jean and a son Keith.

Phyllis was the same age as me, and we started school on her birthday, May 3. Bob and I learnt our lessons very well. Our teacher read the news from the Daily Telegraph. I remember topics about the Suffragettes in England fighting for votes for women, the trip to North Pole by Shackleton and Scott, pieces of news of our parliament.

Mr Edwards brought a lump of coal back after his holidays to let us know what coal was like. He also brought an emu's egg for us to see.

Mr Edwards rarely caned a boy and never caned a girl. He lived at Huntingdon until his residence was built. We used to play rounders, prisoner's base, drop the handkerchief, ring a ring of roses, pass the button, marbles and hop scotch.

My school class mates were Annie Waldron, Phyllis Edwards, Jim Moore, Mollie Moore, Jim Bubs, Annie McCormack, Frank McCormack.



□ Young John and James Bradford.

Bob and I shared a little garden at first and then I had a garden of my own. I grew flowers and Bob grew vegetables in the boys' section. My cousins Jim, Kate Hewens and later Tom, Annie and Mary Hewens attended school too. Their cousin Denny Garvin lived with them and he was very nice to us little ones and took care of us to and from school.

I grew snapdragons and had a pink begonia in a pot. All the girls owned a pot plant and the boys made a three decker stand to put our pot plants on. It stood

on the verandah. I had a nice little basket for my sewing. It was made of straw leather handle.

King Edward VII died and King George V succeeded him. The Princess Royal was a little older than me. Katie Hewens and I wore sailor suits like Princess Mary, a pleated skirt on a bodice with a blouse and sailor collar trimmed with braid. I had two suits. One was navy with navy braid and one was navy with white braid. We wore lace up coats.

(The next article will deal with the Bellangry Church).

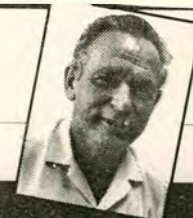


MONDAY  
magazine

# Memories

People and their past

Compiled by Barry Jennings



## Bishop of Grafton opened new church

Betsy Bradford, now aged 93, of Fig Tree Valley, Brombin, continues for her sons her story of the establishment of Brombin and the early days of that community.

Bellangry Church was opened by the Bishop of Grafton on September 11, 1914, at 10am.

The bishop stayed at Bellangry House for a night and I remember my aunts Babe and Nancy showing my mother and me the spare room where the bishop stayed.

A four-poster bed had valances top and bottom starched and ironed and lace curtains at the window were starched stiff and well ironed.

The bishop liked his stay at Bellangry and hoped to spend a holiday there some day.

Delicious food was served to him.

The church was opened and a picnic lunch was enjoyed by everyone at the creek. What a day!

My brother had a navy conway suit and I had a white embroidered dress starched and ironed with blue sash and blue ribbons in my hair. The Gardners and the Peads all helped to make it a nice day. We had sports for men and children, tug-of-war for men, and flag race for the horses that had been driven to the picnic. It was a sports day to raise funds for the church. Aunt Babe gave

me a doll to raffle at three pence a ticket. I made 26 shillings.

I was 13 years old and at first only sold tickets to other girls, until my Aunt Babe said "Betsy, ask the men to buy the tickets; they have the money".

The doll's name was Then and no one guessed it, so it was sold. Mr Sam McCudden and family had just arrived there. Mr McCudden was very helpful and organised the sports. We drove back to our home at Beechwood in a buggy and pair my father owned.

The church was opened free of debt and Aunt Babe Woodlands was vicar's warden. This was soon after the first world war started and we were receiving news at the Beechwood Post Office about how the war was proceeding. There was no wireless to let us know the news. The papers were slow at arriving before the railway arrived.

During the building of the railway some people would cart fruit, vegetables and poultry and eggs to sell to the navvies on the line.

A cousin (on my father's side) was working on the line and he called to see us each weekend. He came to

see us until the line advanced to Kempsey. His name was Billy Oxenbridge. He belonged to the New England district. Later he volunteered for the war and was killed overseas.

Several senior boys at Beechwood school volunteered for the war. Two killed were Colin and Billy Graham. They were nice boys at school.

Mrs Parker the teacher's wife was teaching the girls to knit socks for the soldiers. Colin came to say goodbye to us and Mrs Parker said "If you get any socks with dropped stitches you will know they came from Beechwood school".

I still feel sad when I remember how many of the young men were killed overseas. I well remember in 1915 and 1916-17-18 when living in Maitland the boys coming home. They were weary and would not speak of the dreadful war. Most of them were unsettled for a while but settled down and did very well later. I remember the recruiting rallies asking for men to go away to fight. Men who did not volunteer were sent white feathers and girls would not look at them. I was too young to be in-

terested in soldiers, but I well remember all that went on.

The funny stories about Australians telling the English girls some tall stories — about their kangaroo and emu farms. English brides were shunned in some districts.

One poor unfortunate girl arrived in Sydney looking for her husband and said he was Anthony Horden who kept a grocer's shop in Pitt Street. Some wag had married her under the wrong name. War, I hate it. The hardships and sadness that it brings. Let's hope for peace.

At the end there will be wars and wars and rumours of wars, the Bible tells us. If we only read our Bibles more we would have the answers to many problems, and prosper.

My happiest days were spent here at Fig Tree Valley. My husband George and I arrived here in 1940 with my parents. They were old and needed my care. Uncle Jim Gurney was here so we had the three of them. My mother died on December 15, 1941. My baby Fleurette June Gurney Bradford was born June 9, 1942, and died two days later. Very sad.



□ A young Betsy Bradford

Uncle Jim died while I was in hospital on June 12, 1942.

David Robert Albert Bradford was born June 22, 1943. Great happiness. June 23, 1945, Ronald Herbert Henry was born. My two boys have been a comfort to me and I hope they meet decent girls who will make their lives happy. Boys, always remember your mother had prayed for you ever since she first saw you, and before.

We left Beechwood in 1915 and went to a nice farm at Rosebrook, six miles from Maitland. My first trip in a train.

How happy we all were, my mother, father and brother Bob. We stayed two days at a hotel kept by Mrs Barry at West Maitland. We went to Capper's where my mother and father bought our new furniture and floor coverings.

We bought a buggy and had taken Roaney with us. We also bought a grey mare to drive in the buggy. Mr Alex Cameron came with us and stayed about 12 months.

Rosebrook farm had two nice houses on it. It had belonged to Wood's Brewery. We sold out in

1915 and my father took us to live in Royal Oak Hotel near Maitland saleyards. We lived there for 18 months. Then lived at East Maitland in a nice two storey home in Mill Street. Sold it and went share farming at Gresford for a German Jew named Sam Thalberg.

After relocating many times in the Maitland area we returned to Fig Tree Valley. The boys learnt something that their grandparents found out years ago — that a "rolling stone gathers no moss".







## Characters, fun, family memories

Darby was an old black man. Other abos that I have heard of Long Combo, Short Combo, Stock Keeper (or jockey), Tuckerwari, a black woman, Molly a black woman, Shilling a white girl reared by the blacks. All she could remember was her parents calling her Shilling. Some said the blacks stole her, some said a white parent was paying the blacks to rear her.

One old gin said "me no tell who she is. Me get big money to mind her".

Another white woman reared by blacks would cry and say the blacks killed all her family and she hid under the bed and they missed her and reared her as their own.

Mr Alex Cameron (after whom Cameron's Camp at Bellangry Forest was named) taught my brother and I a few aboriginal names, Woonda marella bow pie, where are you going today? Woonda waralla woondah, Where are you going tomorrow? Berrin means bread.

Krogi means doctor.

McKenzie's place was named Brombin but in early days it was named Barumbin.

The blacks called in Mungong.

Out near Tarrants the blacks called Kippara where the black boys were made men by initiation.

Mr grandma, Mrs Gurney, was riding along the road past "The Kippara", an old black man named Darby told her to keep on and not to stop as no women were allowed near them. My grandma rode, she noticed

**Brombin woman Betsy Bradford continues her memories of childhood fun in the Brombin area. This week she talks about some of the characters she has met and places she has visited.**

they were burning something in a fire. It looked like a bear or a child — she could not distinguish it. If a black woman had two babies they would kill one.

My parents (Mr and Mrs Bert Woodlands) and Mr Alex Cameron often told me about a ghost at Morton's Creek Bridge on Kempsey Road. One local man saw something when he went to water his horses at the creek. He said "By jove I got a fright. Something will happen there yet". A little later a young man named Calvin was drowned there. Another lady and gentleman were returning from Rawdon Island riding through the creek (where the man had been drowned) and a bright light shone over the water and they could see the fish in the bottom of the creek. A voice said "drowned, going to be drowned".

My father said it may have been phosphorous on the water and a frog croaking. He did not believe in ghosts.

My brother and I loved visiting Bellangry House. My father would tell us the night before that we were going to Bellangry in the morning. I would be so excited that I could not sleep.

When it was time to rise next morning I would be asleep. I was too excited to eat my breakfast. We would get into the two seater buggy and two horses

drew it. The roads to Bellangry were always very bad. My father would always inquire what the road was like. We would drive along, with thick bush both sides of the road after we left Beechwood.

The only two houses on the roadside was Mr Stevenson's and Mr John Lyne's.

Then away up near Bellangry was the small public school, further on was Mr Fred Peah's house, then Mr John's garden, then Bellangry.

The old brick "Bellangry House" was always lovely.

The food was nicely cooked. My aunts and uncles always made us very happy.

We often spent our school holidays there.

I slept in a four poster bed and would climb up on a chair to get in and slide down in the morning.

When my father Bert Woodlands was 16 years of age he attended a funeral of a lady. The clergyman was late (he had to come from Port).

Perhaps he was called away as he did not arrive.

As it was getting late the relatives were restless.

My father approached an old lady he knew and said if he could find a C. of E. prayer book he would read the service.

A book was soon found and the 16 year old boy read the service. Many old people spoke to his mother about it and said how well he had carried out the duties. He had been sent to the funeral as all his brothers were busy.

His father too.

During my grandfather's life at Rollands Plains, convicts were building a road.

Sunday was their free day. They came to grandfather's place to pull corn.

Their payment was an extra well prepared lunch which they all enjoyed, and were always glad to return the next Sunday. Besides a large family of 15 children my grandfather reared two boys from the ship Vernon. They were considered delinquents,

but they turned out to be two very honest hard-working men. They too selected land and were very competent farmers. They both at times visited Bellangry to visit the "old folk". With 15 children of his own and the two boys to rear a school teacher my grandparents did a mighty job.

Mr great grandfather William Mantle Woodlands was the first white man to live at Bellangry in 1859. My grandfather married and lived at Rollands Plains. Later all the family left Bellangry and went to live at Port. Dick was a storekeeper there. Thomas and John also moved to Port. My grandfather Robert Woodlands took over the selection. He reared a large family. He engaged an English gentleman to educate his children every day, and they attend Sunday school. Mr Morton was the teacher. Mr Doyle sent his son on horseback from Rollands to school at Bellangry for school. The teacher took a week off occasionally and spent it in Port. In his old days he returned to Bellangry and my father cared for him in his old days. He died there and is buried at Bellangry.

Mr Grandmother Woodlands knew the Waughs of Wauchope House. They travelled together once to Walcha, all on horse back. Their daughter Mrs Salway travelled with them. Mrs Salway later became a widow. She married Dr Wetherall. Grandma knew Wauchope House well. She was a very capable woman who made butter and cheese for the settlers.

In the early days floods ruined the wheat crops. Yes, wheat was grown at Bellangry. There was a mill at Port where the wheat was made into flour. William Mantle Woodlands carried wheat over the mountain to Port and brought the flour made from it back to Bellangry for food.

Mr and Mrs Robert Woodlands selected more land, grew corn and reared pigs. They built a brick home in



Betsy Bradford.

Bellangry. The cedar was pit sawn on the property. Bricks were made there too. My grandfather planted a nice orchard. It was fairland to me and I loved it when a child. There are lots of things I remember.

The main promoters to get the Church of England built at Beechwood were Mr Neville, Mr Johns and grandfather Gurney who was a staunch CofE member. There were no churches at Wauchope then. A man came around selling Bibles and grandfather Gurney bought one and grandfather Woodlands also bought one. Church was held at Bellangry House when a clergyman came along. Later a few new settlers would join in and stay for lunch. More settlers arrived and church was built.

I remember the first Church of England being built at Wauchope. Rev Shaw was first Rector. His wife died and he moved away. He and his wife and children would call at Fig Tree Valley, stay the night, then go up the river next morning. On their return journey they would spend another night with us. They drove a horse and sulky with a rack on the back. Mr parents would put vegetables, fruit and eggs on the rack for them to have when they arrived home at Wauchope.

I remember houses with shingle roofs, and a few with bark roofs. William Mantle Woodlands brought his wife and family from Kent in England. The sea trip took nine months. I have heard the old people say when they were coming out all the family would pray for the good ship to take them safely to Australia. We never lived in a house with shingles or bark or

earth floors. Our ancestors did. William Mantle Woodlands and his wife Mary are buried in the old cemetery at Port. Our teacher Mr A.J. Edwards of Bappin school later called Brombin school took the pupils and a few parents on the cream launch to Port for a day. A Mr Dick took us to visit the old goal. A coach and two horses were provided to take us to the lighthouse. Mr Dick took us to his house and to show us his aquarium of pretty fish. We all in turn were shut in a cell at the old gaol. Our people came down to Port to take us home.

When I was four years old my mother decided to visit Humtingdon, so with Tommy a pony harnessed to a sulky, a boy of 12 years my young brother and I set out. We were crossing the river at Korea Island. Heavy rain up the river had flooded the river and our horse was already in the water. The water came up into our sulky. My mother said to the 12 year old boy "you hold the children and I will try and keep the horse on his feet". She held the reins tightly and spoke to the horse. She was afraid the water would wash the horse off his feet. She got us safely over and drove to Wauchope to return that way. Our trip to Huntingdon was cut short as my mother was so pleased to get out of the river. Cream wagons had turned back that morning and would not cross.

I remember the first Wauchope show. It was dry weather and the dust on the road was easily 6" deep. We drove down in a buggy. It rained over night next day and the mud was 6" deep. My mother

dressed my brother Bob and I in our very best. I recall eating my first ice cream, and taking the cream back to the man. He said "of you eat that too". I remember Mr Radford Gamack riding a grey horse. What stands out most in my mind was a prize for the lady who can harness a horse and drive around the ring fastest. The lady who won it had an old horse and sulky. She was not as fashionable as the rest. She was smartest at harnessing her horse and was halfway around the ring before the rest had started.

I also remember the Bridging quite well. A Mr Reid worked on the bridge and camped on the river bank. His son Bob attended Beechwood school. I would be four years of age then. I remember Mr P.J. O'Neill driving across the bridge first. Old Mrs Graham cut the ribbon. We all had a picnic lunch. I can also remember crossing Cameron's Falls further up the river. The only crossing we had and some times we had to wait for the tide to go out before attempting to cross. They were strong horses those days, they had to be. Bullock teams cut the roads up in wet weather. The road workers only had a wheel barrow and a pick and shovel to keep the roads passable to drive on.

Native bears were plentiful when I went to school.

We often noticed one asleep in the fork of a tree.

They were unprotected and I know of a man who shot and skinned enough to build himself a comfortable house.

It still stands and as far as I know occupied. Mr A.J. Kilgour was a teacher at Brombin.



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# Memories

People and their past

Compiled by Barry Jennings



## Women's hard work on the farm Among the early days at Brombin

This is the final article in the series written by Mrs Betsy Bradford of Brombin about early years of the district. Today she recalls some of the pioneers of the Brombin area.

There are lots of old pioneers I would like to write about.

One of my friends was old Miss McLennan, a very lovely lady who was an extra good dressmaker. Everyone loved her. She loved to visit Bellangry and would stay a week before a wedding making the dresses for the family.

Miss Fachiney was her niece. She too was an expert dressmaker.

The first Mr John Neville's wife was Miss McLennan's sister.

Miss McLennan lived at Mrs Graham's home for quite a while when she was old and feeble. Mrs Stewart (Mrs Graham's daughter) cared for them.

Mrs Way snr of Beechwood lived with her family.

My grandfather broke his ankle and with no doctor available when it healed his foot turned outwards while

grandma did all the farm work. Several girls with several brothers and a father laughed at the Gurney girls doing farm work. Dear old Mrs Graham said "Don't take any notice girls, you are good girls to help your father".

Later he died and the girls and their mother did all the hard farm work as well as carting pigs and corn to be loaded at Beechwood. They would then be taken to Sydney. They were all hard workers on the farm and in the house.

I remember my grandma's funeral. No hearse. The coffin was placed on their spring cart and an old favourite horse harnessed to it. All the children were cared for by my father while the funeral was being held at Beechwood. Mr W. Reed drove the spring cart.

Old neighbours have told me in the early

days Grandma would be chipping corn with a hoe and a man would come galloping for her help. She would put her riding habit on, saddle her horse and gallop off with him perhaps to the head of the river.

She had a hand machine for grinding corn. The corn was made into porridge for the family. Several other families came to the hand mill to grind their corn. Any porridge left over they would fry for another meal. This was all they had to eat after the big floods had taken all their crops.

Patrick Monaghan taught the early settlers how to read, write and do sums. Now I must not forget the hawkers. They would arrive at sundown, buy some eggs, feed their horses, and camp in their vans. Next morning after breakfast they would bring a bundle of clothing, soaps and per-

fumes and sold some things to our parents and my brother sold them some horse hair. They always gave the children a small present.

Who remembers Mr Druitt who recited at our little Beechwood concerts? We only had the show, a picnic on May 24.

I remember Bill Kirkman at the Beechwood school. He used to sing to us. He had a phonograph at home and learnt the songs. Elsie Way played the piano nicely and Maggie Kirkman recited "Have you a grey haired mother far away".

We all had to do something. After tea at night there would be a singsong at our place. Not in tune sometimes but it was our only entertainment. I remember once our parents were helping a sick neighbour. My brother



□ Betsy Bradford in younger days.

was working around the yard. I was cooking cakes, scones and toffee. The clergyman Rev G.E. Morris called. I cleared one end of the kitchen table and made him a cup of tea. I also gave him some toffee. I often think since he must have laughed at my attempt at cooking.



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