

MBHS NEWS

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Top stories in this newsletter



How we became Mission Beach



Bicton Coffee



How we became Mission Beach

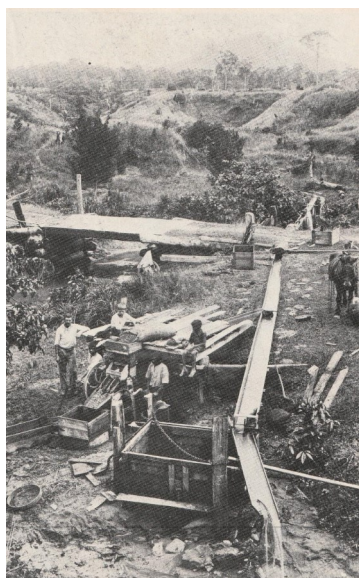
Originally it was 'Djiru country' and belonged to the Djiru people. According to the local historian, Helen Pedley, locals called it 'the beach' or 'the mission' because of the *Hull River Mission* for local indigenous people, although never a mission but more of a penal settlement, set up in 1914. In 1918 the mission was destroyed when an extreme cyclone ripped through the area. But the name 'Mission Beach' stuck. The way our town was named then was not planned; locals decided it for themselves and that is typical of our town. The district of Mission beach was surveyed in 1936, and Gazetted in 1961, as reported by Ken Gray, Secretary of MBHS.

Bicton Coffee

The Cutten brothers set up in Bingil Bay in 1885, to grow fruit, tea, coffee, chicory, tobacco, cocoa, vanilla, spices and timber. It was coffee that made them successful in the 1890s, and became Australia's largest suppliers of coffee. It was called *Bicton Coffee* and the Cuttens were named the *Australian Coffee Barons*. But they endured great hardships over their 35 years of farming including family disruption and loss, drought and cyclones. The cyclone of 1918 ended the successful farming venture.

The Cutten brothers were also activists, and lobbied the Council shire for money to build roads and infrastructure. They with Mackness and Garner families, and others, built the first road from Bingil Bay to El Arish. The Council followed later.

There are no descendants of the Bicton family named Cutten, and they are buried in Bingil Bay, Tully and Brisbane. But, if you look around town you'll see streets named after them.



Open air coffee mill 1902 – image from R. J. Taylor *The Lost Plantation: A History of the Australian Tea Industry*

The **Mission Beach Historical Society** is a friendly group of amateur historians. We are putting together stories of our local people, industries and events. We also collect photographs, family histories and newspaper articles.

Interested? Like to volunteer some time? Become a member?

Contact:

Facebook: Mission Beach Historical Society. **Like us** and subscribe.

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Today's events are tomorrow's history