

The Northern Beaches of Coffs Harbour By Robert Mill 2023

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This EBook is about Coffs Harbour's Northern Beaches and the historical events I have been able to research of the area. It also contains a selection of the Northern Beaches photos I have taken during the main stages of the publication's preparation during 2022 and 2023, with a 37-page gallery at the back of the book. The publication is as complete as I can make it. There's probably more that could be written, but I have done the best I could with the resources available to me, to complete this publication, within a fixed timeframe.

Where do northern the beaches start and finish? In this book they start with Diggers Beach to the south and finish at Red Rock in the north and encompasses 16 main beaches plus a few smaller harder to access ones.

The idea of writing this book comes from a number of areas – I am a high school teacher and prior to that I was a photojournalist for the then Coffs Harbour Advocate's Northern Beaches Extra. One of my previous publications was the Kororo School Centenary Book in 1993. Also, there is my deep love of the area, it's beaches and it's beauty.

All these beaches I have been to frequently, some more so than others. In particular my beach – Sapphire Beach, which I walk twice daily with my puppies and sometimes with the family. I have made many acquaintances on the beach over the years, some are still walking there today, particularly in the mornings, where we seem to gather at our 'usual' time of between 6am and 7:00am.

In 2023 I started working on the Beaches Gallery section of the book (page 68 onwards) featuring all the beaches in this area.

The history articles came from a Number of sources, including the Kororo Centenary book, interviews with residents (thank you) and my local research.

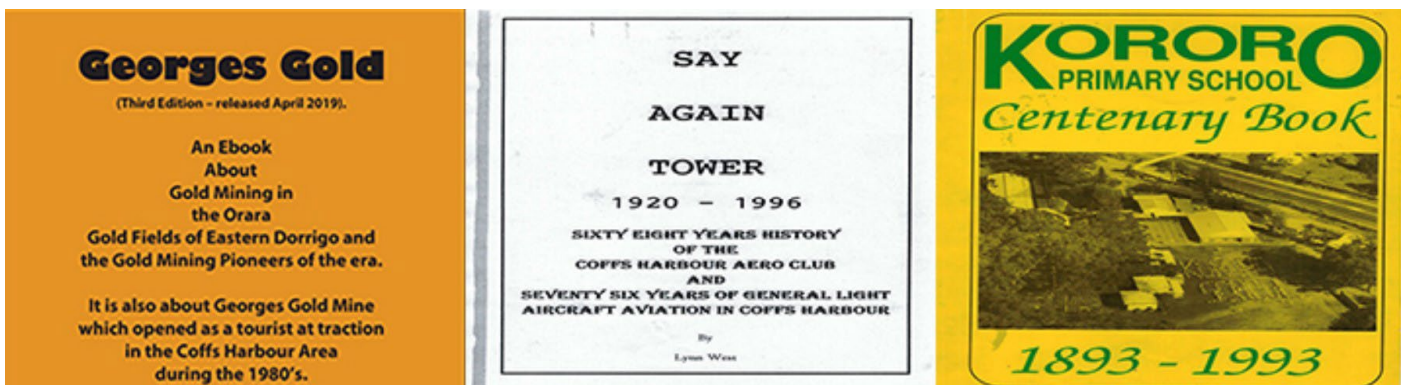
About the author.

I grew up on Sydney's Northern Beaches in a 'then' beachside hamlet called North Curl Curl, where houses were then cheap to build and buy (today they are worth millions!). Later, when older and married, I moved us to our own house in nearby Frenchs Forest before moving my family to beautiful Coffs Harbour's Sapphire Beach, where we live today. There we have raised our two sons, three grandchildren and three Toy Cavoodle puppies, following on from a series of other beautiful dogs.

Why did we move here and why the northern beaches? Well, we used to holiday here in Coffs mainly staying at Smugglers on Korora Beach. We needed to get out of the big city and all the traffic and this was the ideal place! After operating a small business for a few years, I joined the what was then the Coffs Harbour Advocate newspaper as their Northern Beaches Correspondent, also as an on-call duty photographer (I have always been into photography) and was also a professional photographer in Sydney. Until that section of the paper closed in 1997, I was really involved in the northern beaches activities, as well as children's sport in Woolgoolga – junior surf club, tee-ball, as well as Little A's. In the community, I attended nearly every possible Woolgoolga community event in the area.

After the newspaper closing my section, and ultimately ceasing publication all together, I decided on a career change and do a University degree, (in Multimedia – B.Ed.MM), then a double degree (in Teaching BTEchEd) and completed both degrees in 1999. I then taught at Toormina High School for 22 years, before switching to online teaching (Covid changed teaching and I felt quite comfortable with teaching online lessons). I returned to teaching (as a casual) in 2024, as I was bored with online teaching, though I kept two online students.

In the whole process of moving to and living in Coffs Harbour I have written three print books, which I have also published online. These are the Kororo Centenary Book, published in 1993, Say Again Tower - the history of the Coffs Harbour Aero Club, in 1996, Georges Gold – the history of the gold mine as a tourist attraction and gold mining in the area – in 1995 and updated electronically in 2019 and now this Northern Beaches EBook.



This publication was mainly written during a time when the Coffs Harbour Museum was closed, due to a re-allocation to the new Civic Centre, resulting in access to some possible information being unavailable. Their website was also closed – quoting from their home page as at 28/02/2022, 'Coffs Harbour Regional Museum was closed to the public at this previous location, as the team prepares for our transition to the new space, Yarrila Arts and Museum'. It has since opened, but the book is now considered completed!

My heartfelt thanks goes to the interviewees, whom I had the opportunity to meet and discuss my project with and share some of their recollections of an era which has passed. To these wonderful people I say thank you. They include (in last name alphabetical order): Jack Hancock, Gwen O’Gorman, Pat Schubert, Tom Millward, Peter and Madeleine Wardman, who I see almost daily on our beach.

My thanks also go to local News of the Area newspaper for publishing articles from me seeking assistance in my research for this book. This enabled me access to contacts I have been able to interview and include their recollections and photos.

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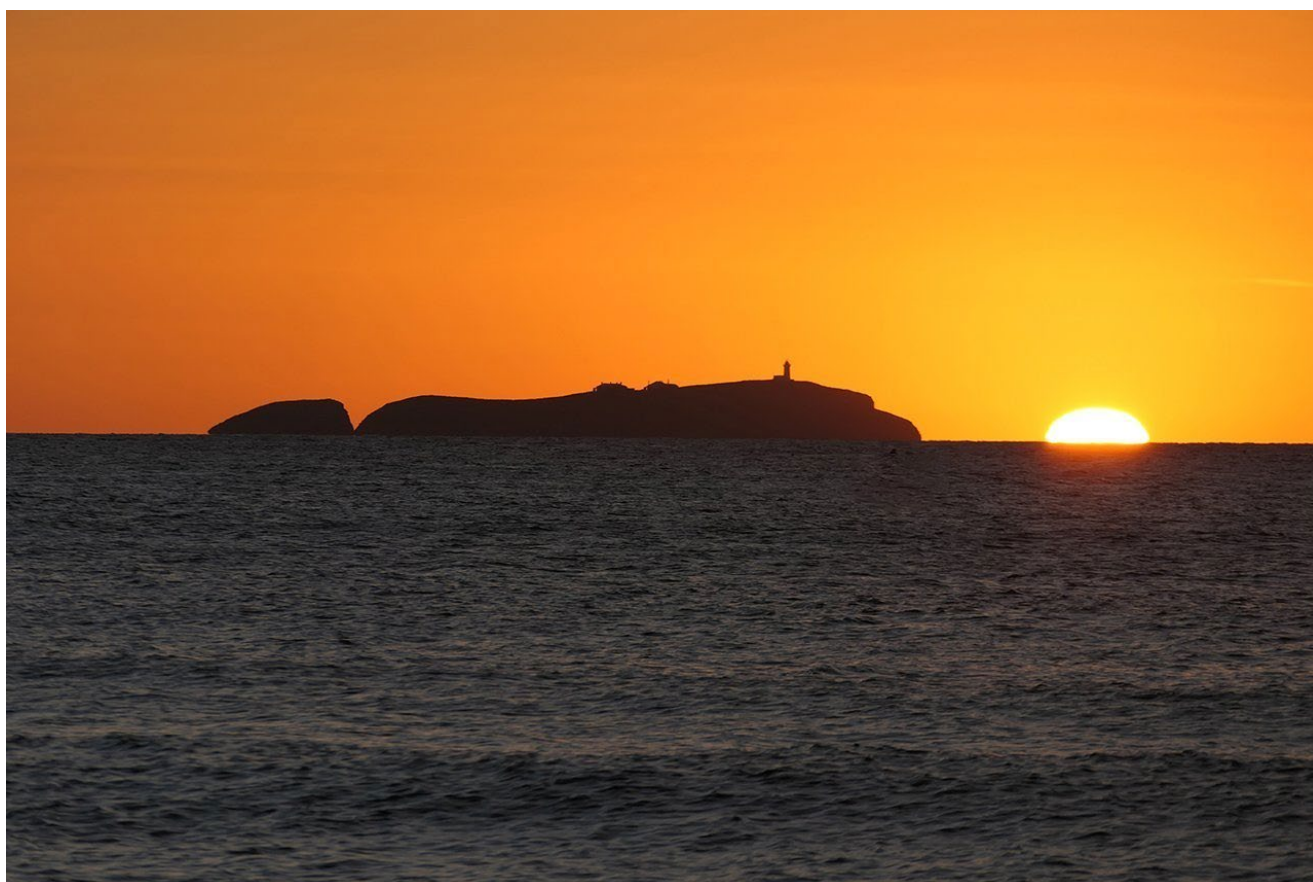


Photo: Lighthouse Island – at sunrise.

Let the book begin!

The Coffs Coastline was once called 'a string of jewels'.

Originally though this book was meant to be only of the Korora, Sapphire and Moonee areas, but it has grown to include the northern beaches of the Coffs Harbour, from Diggers right through to Red Rock Beach, together with the available history I have been able to source of these areas.

Included in this book are all the below listed main northern beaches of Coffs Harbour. Also, there is a reference to the smaller partially accessible smaller beaches are shown in the second column adjacent to their closest main beach/beach area.

The subject area includes the aptly named 'string of jewels beaches' - Diamond — Emerald — Sapphire — Opal.

The Northern Beaches - It all starts with - Diggers Beach



The first of our northern beaches is located to the south, and the turn off is virtually opposite the Big Banana. Diggers Beach is an excellent beach for surfing - body and board riders alike, as well as learning to surf schools, plus fishing, swimming, bird watching and beach walking.

It joins Little Diggers Beach which is an 'unofficial' nude bathing beach. It is also a short walk from Macauleys Headland just north of the Coffs Harbour city itself.

It also is looked over by a really beautiful housing estate, offering great views of the Solitary Islands. It has been described as 'two strips of sand totalling just one kilometre in length, rarely crowded and charming'.

A recent survey of Aussie beaches has shown what locals have long known. Diggers Beach has been named one of Australia's greatest in new book 101 Best Beaches – 'Brad Farmer's 101 Best Australian Beaches: Australia's top 101 beaches to visit in 2020'.

Also located at Diggers Beach is the Aanuka Beach Resort. The Aanuka Beach Resort was founded by Mal Fittler, a former Parramatta footballer, who studied landscape gardening and interior design after he hung up his boots. The \$6.5 million, five-star boutique resort opened in 1987, just as the east coast of NSW was hit by an extraordinary six months of incessant rain.

Charlesworth Bay – Beach



Charlesworth Bay is a quiet bay northeast facing beach, just 500 m in length. The Bay is protected from the south by 40m high Diggers Headland with smaller Fowlers Head to the north.

This secluded bay and its backing valley is now largely occupied by the Pacific Bay Resort Precinct. A road runs to the southern end of the beach where there is a really small parking area. There is also an old boat shed at the southern end.

Between the resort and the beach used to be a small lagoon with its shallow creek crossing the southern end, however this has since been diverted and the lagoon made into a centre piece of the resort. The upper beach consists of coarse sand and pebbles and forms a steep beach face, while at low tide a wider bar is exposed. Waves are usually less than 0.5m high.

It is a relatively safe location under normal low waves. Rips can form, particularly against the northern headland when waves exceed 1m. Surfing provides a low shore break only. For fishermen there are no gutters, with the northern rocks offering the best location.

Access is from Charlesworth Bay Drive to parking spaces, past the Solitary Islands Aquarium at the National Marine Science Centre. or a walk over from Diggers Headland.

Charlesworth Bay

The Pacific Bay Precinct which includes Pacific Bay Resort, Charlesworth Bay Resort and Club Wyndham Resort, is located in Charlesworth Bay, with a beach of the same name a few steps down the road.

The Pacific Bay Precinct was originally a rural farm and banana plantation, but that was all transformed in the early eighties when two car industry identities - Bernard Webb and Ron Auswild through their company Destination Resorts Pty Ltd, came up with a dream plan to build on the 93ha they bought - a resort complete with a golf course on the land and the master plan included at least 800 apartments and condominiums as well as 40 townhouses and more than 15 free-standing houses, as well as a 300 room international hotel.

There were delays in the grand plan, but in an extract from an article by Kathryn Bice from the Australian Financial Review – dated Oct 15, 1993, in it, she wrote “The grandest of all the 1980s dreams was the Pacific Bay Beach and Golf Resort at Charlesworth Bay. Coming upon the site, unsuspecting beachcombers could be forgiven for thinking they had stumbled on the Lost City of Atlantis. Magnificent apartment blocks, restaurants, a beach club and swimming pools stand amid the pandanus palms - but there is no splashing, tinkle of glasses or piped music to compete with the sound of the surf”.

“The 141 strata-title units, which constituted stage one of a seven-stage proposal, remained empty since they were finished about four years ago. Only three holes of the David Graham-designed, 18-hole golf course- the resort's centrepiece - have been completed.”

“However, the grand plan hit a snag, in the form of the airline pilots' strike, just as a cluster of buildings were about to open as a small hotel in 1989-90. The economy slid into recession soon after, forcing a reassessment of the whole project”.

“In 1991, Mr Webb, Mr Auswild and their backers at GMAC decided to sell all or part of the project, enhancing their prospects by maintaining it in its pristine, five-star condition. Marketed then for \$125 million, Pacific Bay was understood then have a price tag of \$40 million, compared with actual costs of at least \$70 million.”

In an article by Matt Deans of the Coffs Harbour Advocate newspaper on January 23,2018 – titled ‘Pacific Bay Resort is now in new hands’.

He wrote “The original Pacific Bay Resort, now that it is owned by Bonville Golf Resort, who now taken possession of the village centre of the former Novotel Pacific Bay Resort. The sale was completed yesterday, after the centre's closure on Friday.”

“Management are now planning to reopen Charlie's restaurant and bar with a new menu soon, focussing on modern Australian cuisine with an Italian influence.”

“Bonville Golf Resort's Brad Daymond said discussions are being held with owners of apartments in the complex including representatives of the strata body and the owners association.”

Mr Daymond said, “This will be critical in preserving the resort's capacity to host major events and use its outstanding conference facilities, in addition to providing regular income to apartment owners who are part of the proposed new letting pool.”

In an NBN News on March 16, 2018, they further reported “Sold to Bonville Golf Resort’s Peter Montgomery in January, a \$100,000 refurbishment of the re-named restaurant, Bayside Bar and Grill, is complete and open to the public from tonight.”

“Operations manager Graeme Martin says they’re working to build a permanent local workforce of more than 100 people and it’s hoped the upgrade will attract regional conferences and bring fresh tourism opportunities.”

We also hope to welcome the footy teams back here to stay and train would be another bonus is the re-establishing. It’s getting the big teams back which will boost the place, we’ve had the Swans here as well as lots of soccer sides, which is fantastic.”

With the resort and facilities open and the next important media release came on June 16, 2021, from Pacific Bay Resort itself.

Pacific Bay Resort Film Studios and Village

In 2021, Russell Crowe, Peter Montgomery and Keith Rodger announced the building of the Pacific Bay Resort Studios and Village: integrating coastal lifestyle and high-speed data technology with film production and career training.

The release went on to mention. “Pacific Bay Resort Studios & Village will be the first fully integrated feature-film production and postproduction complex in Australia, merging advanced virtual studios and sound stages with accommodation and lifestyle facilities: all located on 100 Coffs Harbour coastal resort acres”.

Peter Montgomery

Olympian and resort owner/operator Peter Montgomery had long dreamed of enhancing Pacific Bay with something such as film-making and cultural facilities to attract world-class productions.

“A great deal of planning and consultation have gone into the design of the proposed Pacific Bay Resort Studio and Village,” said Montgomery. “Its proximity to Coffs Harbour airport and the data centre are complemented by the region’s outstanding climate and natural landscape. Our studios will cater for major international feature films as well as local productions, giving them the bonus of resort lifestyle in facilities that are designed to bring employment to the region and work in harmony with Coffs Harbour’s Regional City Action Plan.”

“The NSW north coast is already populated by many skilled cinema technicians and artisans, some of whom have already contacted us to express their support and readiness to be involved. We have representatives here today from some of our prospective tenants – leading figures in the film world. We also hope to have a tertiary school based here that will include an Indigenous Film component.”

“The project will also involve the foundation of a new animation business together with a substantial postproduction capacity to support films shot at the studios as well as external projects. We are also including a Film and Olympic Museum together with an art gallery, integrated into a separate entertainment facility.”

Charlesworth Bay Beach Resort

Is part of the Pacific Bay precinct but shares a different ownership. It , provides permanent accommodation as well as 70 holiday units available for holiday makers.

B. E. Greenwood (son of Barry Greenwood who started managing the resort in 2007) tells the story of a family visiting the beautiful area every year for holidays they loved it so much they moved here permanently in the early 1990’s. We manage over 70 holiday units within the resort precinct, which is spread across 20 hectares of stunning, landscaped grounds, just north of the Big Banana.

Bodie recounts, “dad was doing a great job marketing and managing our family’s rooms. At the time, many of the other investors were not doing so well so some of them approached dad, asking if he could also manage their units. He came up with a strategy that they liked, and it steam rolled from there. Charlesworth Bay Beach Resort was born!”

“As the business grew it was clear that dad needed help and I happily joined the company in late 2015, after finishing schooling; Kororo Public then Jetty High, the CHEC and finally Southern Cross University for a Hotel and Resort Management degree”.

Club Wyndham Resort

It describes itself as an ‘aparthotel’ (apartments and hotel rooms) and sits at the northern end of the ‘Precinct’, providing access to all the facilities of the complex. It has an unspecified number of apartments/rooms available for tourists, but is a very elegant looking resort, enhancing the whole precinct.

Korora

This is where the idea of this book was originally ‘conceived’.



Korora which is 7kms to the north of Coffs Harbour with a combined population of Korora and next door Sapphire is nearly 5500.

The main part of the population lives on the eastern side of the highway, in modern and now fairly expensive housing estates- many of them built over the last 30 years, with some still under construction now, particularly in the northern section of Sapphire.

These estates are all adjacent to the beaches, with rural land and housing to the western side of the highway (M1 Motorway). The western side of the highway still mainly consists of rural housing and farming land, for blueberries and (some) bananas.

Korora, which translates from ‘the crash of the waves’ or ‘the roar of the sea’ first came to ‘fame and fortune’ initially as a banana growing area and to a lesser degree a sugar cane growing area and in more recent years a blueberry growing area.

Korora Bay is a small suburb located to the north of Coffs Harbour. It is home to a stretch of beaches from Hills Beach in the north, to Charlesworth Bay in the south.

Korora Beach (Also known locally as Smugglers Beach, after the resort of the same name located right at the beach).



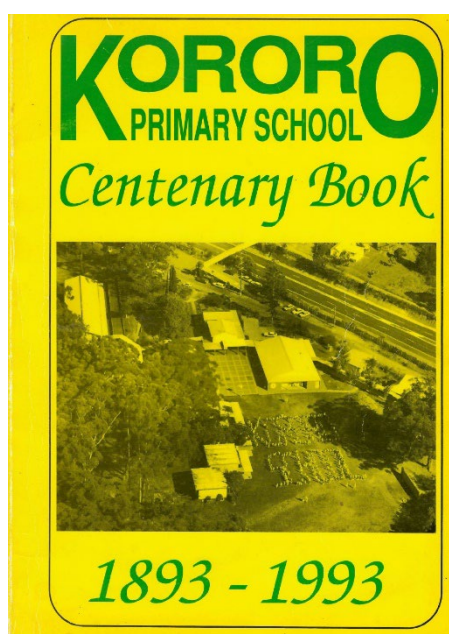
The beach is 50m long and is located next north after Charlesworth Bay. Accessed from Korora Bay Drive and home to Smugglers Beach Resort. It is also a home to a stretch of beaches from Hills Beach in the north, to Charlesworth Bay in the south. It is backed by slopes covered with residential housing.

It is accessible in the north from the Hills Beach car park and from Korora Bay Drive which winds through the residential area to a car park behind the centre of the beach. The upper beach is composed of coarse sand and cobbles and tends to be steep at high tide with a shallow bar at low tide. A reef lies

300m off the centre of the beach. Rips are absent under normal waves but will occur against both headland and rocks during higher waves.

Capps Rocks is located at the northern end of Korora Beach below the headland joining Hills Beach. In the early days timber logging days north of Caps Rock, was used to anchor sailing vessels so that timber could be floated down Pine Brush Creek out into the ocean and loaded on board. Facilities on the beach include a grassed area, a toilet block and a number of parking places.

It has one of the oldest public schools in the area, **Kororo Public School** (opened in 1893) and now with a population of some 635 students in 2022. The school is located on the highway with access mainly from James Small Drive. In 1993 the school celebrated its Centenary. (See the Korora School Centenary 1993 book). The URL for the book download is https://www.rmwebed.com.au/KP_Centenary_Book.pdf.



It has been said that a school (in particular a primary school) is the heart of a community, which is quite understandable, as a school brings the community together. Kororo Primary School, now with all it's 2022 student numbers being 635 and brings together families from Korora, Sapphire and Moonee, from both the eastern and western sides of the highway.

The following is an extract from the school's Centenary Book about the school's formation and impact on the community:

It all began with an application being granted on November 3, 1892, by the then Department of Instruction for a 'half- time school' (**see following pages for the description) to be built at Korora on land acquired on the intersection of Grafton Road and the northern boundary of what was then known as the Neuhaus family selection number 95; later called Amos's Hill.

The actual location of the first school at Korora was on a property about one kilometre south of the current school. The only significant landmark today is an old banana packing shed located at the southern end of James Small Drive and a letterbox showing the name of the current landowners - Sippel. The school was built on an 0.8-hectare block with a reserve of 3.2 hectares. The school single building was constructed by Mr William Neuhaus in 1892, along with the help of neighbouring families.

The building construction was a 3.7m x 2.5m x 1.8m high, of a cedar slab and shingle type – vertical pit sawn timber single room building, with a timber gabled roof, timber floor and a water tank.

It had an initial enrolment of 10, made up of seven boys and three girls, due to the small population of the area. It only opened in 1893 as a half-time school* shared with Coffs Harbour Public School.

However, due to low enrolments it was closed in August 1895 and then re-opened as a ‘house to house’* school with Moonee Creek School in 1897, then in September 1909 it was made a ‘half-time’ school with Moonee (a different school to Moonee Creek). Finally in 1914 it was made a ‘provisional school’***, then in the same year its status was raised to a public school. Finally, the area was populating!

*The house-to-house schools were to be composed of families residing some distances apart, with each forming a teaching station that could be visited in turn by a teacher employed by the department.

**Half-time schools were schools under the charge of a travelling teacher, where teachers managed two teaching stations in their circuit. Each school required at least 10 children to enrol before it could be established.

***Provisional Schools - Emerging in 1867, provisional schools were elementary schools which were established in areas where at least 15 children (but fewer than the 25 required for a public school) could be expected to attend.

The current school site of near 2.5ha and in 2023 accommodates 635 students and is at the time of publication, 130 years old. The main intake area’s population (Korora, Sapphire and Moonee has grown to 7700, Moonee accounts for 2200), with a number of new housing estates currently being built at North Sapphire Beach and Moonee Beach.

With the highway upgrade there has been considerable changes to the school’s grounds and School Road entrance. Even the Luke Bowen footbridge over the highway is marked for replacement! See next page.

In the early 1880s, there were attempts to establish sugar cane as a crop in the Coffs Harbour district. For example, at Korora, farmer James Small cut out the local supplies of cedar and pine, and as he had much softwood brush on his land, he decided to plant sugar cane. A number of sugar-crushing mills, horse-powered or later stream-driven, were constructed in the district. Cane growing, however, was eventually abandoned because the soils were not deep enough to allow the roots to expand, and the mills were handicapped by the lack of transport to refineries in Sydney. The last sugar was exported from the district in 1898.

Korora's 'Claim to Fame'



Historically Korora's fame started in 1880 with the growing of bananas. This was when Herman Rieck pioneered the growing of bananas in the region.

However, the first commercially successful banana farm was established around 1911 which grew to a plantation of about eight hectares.

Though a tropical fruit, it was found that bananas could be grown successfully on the steep north-facing slopes around Coffs Harbour.

Korora which was also frost-free and exposed to strong sun. At this stage the industry was profitable but remained small and local.



Photos: Herman and Fanny Rieck on their plantation

The Rieck family home in Korora Basin.

(Photos: Courtesy of Coffs Collections – coffsrecollect.net.au)

Following World War One, several soldier settlements were established in the Korora area and returned servicemen were shown how to grow bananas by local farmers.

Bananas were also doing well in the Richmond-Tweed area and south-east Queensland, but a 1922 outbreak of 'bunchy-top', a disease carried by the banana aphid, destroyed many of these plantations, while Coffs Harbour's crops remained disease-free. This gave an enormous boost to the local crop, lifting the price and demand for Coffs Harbour's bananas. By 1931 there were 735ha of bananas under cultivation and in 1932 the Banana Growers Federation (BGF) Co-op was formed.

After World War Two, banana-growing became Coffs Harbour's dominant agricultural crop. The hills surrounding Coffs Harbour, particularly Korora were covered with bananas, creating the popular and enduring image of the region. By July 1947 there was a record 1480ha under production, with around 500 growers. Bananas were transported to city markets by train and truck.

In the last week of January 1948, a record consignment of 14,870 cases of bananas was sent to Sydney by train. The banana industry also became associated with the local Sikh community who started arriving here in the late 1940s and they became major growers of bananas.

Today, bananas do not figure anywhere as strongly in Coffs Harbour's economy. Tourism has taken over as the primary economic force and blueberries. The growth of the Queensland banana industry and long-haul refrigerated transport have reduced Coffs Harbour's importance as a banana growing area. Blueberries are now the dominant crop in the region and the hills once dense with bananas are enclosed in protective nets protecting the precious blueberries.



Photo: A Korora Blueberry Farm and Banana Plantation – at the southern end of the Old Coast Road.

The highway (M1) Coffs Harbour Bypass has temporarily changed the access to and from Coffs Harbour, with slow speeds and rock blasting! The By-Pass is expected to be completed in 2027.

The construction and land preparation has resulted in chaos on the \$2.2 billion extension of the highway, with speed limits reduced from 80kph to 60kph and sometimes 40kph. Even the 110kph zone has been caught up in the speed limits with a section at the southern end dropping down to 60kph, then a fast resume north to accelerate to the normal 110kph!

At the time of writing, the current construction stage involves blasting of the rock to be removed from the western side of the highway, which will no doubt cause residents on that side of the highway and some on the eastern side wondering when it will ever cease, as happens with all noisy and blasting constructions!

There also has been also considerable changes to the vegetation, with many lovely trees on the western side from Charlesworth Bay Drive disappearing and replaced by huge roadwork constructions and now bare land. Near the Bruxner Road turn off the impact is huge! Kororo school has also suffered with part of their playground 'the forest' being chopped down -for their new bus bay and parking, which was relocated from the western side.

The School Road has been diverted off the highway to begin at Russ Hammond Drive, off James Small Drive, – pity the poor house owners, some who lost sections of their property grounds and the privacy of their hamlet! The impact put into and out of James Small Drive has been huge and pushing exiting traffic onto the highway to longer queues than ever before. (It was bad enough turning north in peak school drop offs and pickups before and now – totally incredible!).

The western side of the highway which was a student drop off so they could cross the highway over the Luke Bowen Footbridge has been blocked off for the construction, putting more pressure on School Road and James Small Drive! But that's unfortunately - progress!

These captioned photos show the highway land 'under construction' in August 2023. Where a church once stood is a huge hole, rural land and many trees have gone and the homeowners whose houses were kept now have lost their sound barriers and look straight onto the huge construction site!



Construction work on the western side – just past the Bananacoast Caravan Park.



More construction work making one of the ramps, south of the Bruxner Road turn off.



Bruxner Park Road – construction work on the hill.



Bruxner Park Road – with trees removed.



Land cleared below the bushes and construction work underway.



Mountains of soil being removed.



More mountains of soil being removed.



Pipes at the foot of the trees, ready to be laid.



Some buildings went and some were kept. The old derelict Stained-Glass premises still intact!



What used to be the Old Coast Road turn left into the western side school car park.



The now grassed in old School Road entry from the highway.



A small number of new marked parking areas on School Road off Russ Hammond Drive.



The front of Kororo School entry off School Road., closed to vehicle traffic.



Limited staff parking off School Road – entry from James Small Drive.



The James Small Drive – back of the school, with a playground fenced off from the construction zone.



The bottom playground area with construction drainage.



Re-growth from the cleared lower area at the back of the school on James Small Drive.



The now tree-less forest playground area, being prepared for the bus bay and parking.



The former 'forest area' playground from School Road.



The tree-less 'forest area' ready for construction.

The Luke Bowen Pedestrian Footbridge



The bridge made news again in 2022 when the original highway bypass plan was released in October of that year. When the planned relocation of the school bus interchange facility to the eastern side and new local access roads were to be put in place and the bridge would have less usage.

Kororo Public School deputy principal David Dodd said the pedestrian overpass was highly utilised by the school and the community.

“Community groups use the footbridge to access our hall, we have sporting groups who go to Korora Basin to play squash and art groups who use the reserve, and of course children use it every day to get to and from school, from the Basin Area” Mr Dodd said.

“So many things will be taken out of the equation if the footbridge goes.”

Residents were in an uproar, with many claiming the loss of the footbridge would 'cut the community in half'. But after such a strong response to the bypass plan, the RTA under community pressure has decided to keep the pedestrian access right where it is!

The landmark pedestrian bridge crossing the highway, to Kororo Public School. To many it's a high overpassing bridge for the safety of the school children crossing the highway from the western side and the buses. It also provides a crossing to all the northbound buses, school and public. The bridge was aptly named after the school's popular 'Mr B's' late grandson as a mark of respect for both Mr 'B' and his grandson Luke Bowen.

Luke was tragically killed in a motorcycle accident in 1997. Luke who was a keen trail bike rider and was out on a rural property pursuing his favourite sport when things went tragically wrong. Luke's father was Dennis Bowen, twin brother to Jeep enthusiast Mike Bowen. David Bowen's father was a Basin resident and the rest of the Bowen male members of the family lived on the southern end of the Old Coast Road on a three-family property. There was also an older daughter Dawn, who married a Bunt, of the well-established B & D Bunt Earthmoving Contractors of the Boambee Valley.

Kororo School access via School Road has changed significantly since the bypass roadworks have been in place. The final outcome will be parents having to enter school road from James Small Drive, then Russ Hammond Close. This has caused many issues, mainly getting back onto the highway and more so is attempting to do a right-hand turn, which has always been difficult and particularly in rush hour, very dangerous indeed, particularly for those turning north! It will only get worse as traffic volumes increase, particularly around going to school and getting home from school times.

Coffs Coast Changing Summers

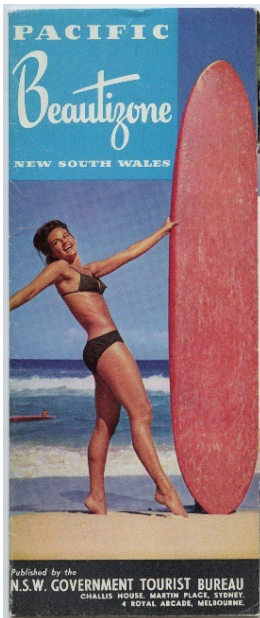
It used to be that summer was a time of hard, physical work for many residents of the Coffs Coast, in particular Korora. Tropical fruit was a mainstay of the local economy, and it ripened in the summer by rail and road to capital city markets.

In the 1950s however, tourism began to gain momentum and the region was instead promoted as a destination for leisure and relaxation: the Pacific Beautizone. This catchy title was chosen as the winner from over 1400 entries in a 1956 competition to name the area from the Clarence down to Nambucca.

The changes that took place in our summers in the post-World War Two period paved the way for the transformation of the Coffs Coast region and in particular the northern beaches region, which continues today.

Korora is at the time of writing suffering complexities from the M1 highway bypass with construction sites on both sides of the highway. Poor Kororo school is badly affected, losing the western side parking for parents taking and collecting their children from the school, as well as the students play forest. The road opposite the school on the highway, where the old Korora volunteer bushfire shed once was located was a 'best option' for parents dropping off and picking up their children, with the Luke Bowen Footbridge providing good and safe access to the school. At the time of writing, this is a construction zone and is closed off to all pedestrian and vehicular traffic!

Pacific Beautizone



The 'horticultural mammoth' – The Big Banana.



In the 1960s, the promotion of the Pacific Beautizone faced some unexpected competition. American scientist John Landi bought a banana plantation and set up a stall on the highway at Korora in 1963. This was the beginning of the now iconic Big Banana tourist attraction.

Seeing an opportunity for innovative promotion, he approached the Banana Growers Federation to pay half the cost of constructing a larger-than-life banana next to his stall. The idea was that the Big Banana would be seen by travellers on one of the busiest highways in regional Australia, encourage people to eat (and buy!) more bananas, while at the same time portraying Coffs Harbour as a distinctive place associated with tropical fruit.

Not all locals liked the idea, however. To some, unlike the town's natural setting and its picturesque jetty, arguing that a giant artificial banana was not a thing of beauty. It was something that 'might be seen in Hawaii or even Queensland' they complained. Despite their protests, the project opened in time for Christmas 1964 and was an immediate success. In its first week of operation there were 2000 visitors daily. The Coffs Harbour Advocate newspaper reported the 'horticultural mammoth ... held the spotlight'. The Mid-North Coast Tourist Authority had in fact shut down a few months earlier. The concept of the 'Beautizone' went with it!

Today the Big Banana is an 'icon' for travellers heading in both directions on the highway and is the real 'highlighted entry point and exit point' for Korora and Coffs Harbour.

Locals input information into the book.

The following are 'the locals' contribution Interviews, their re-collections and some articles written by then residents of the area:

The following are some recollections from various long-term local families who grew up and went to school in Korora and who volunteered to be interviewed for this book, to share their recollections and family records of a past era in their lives. To these wonderful contributors I say, "thank you for sharing these memories".

Gwen Mary O'Gorman, tells her story:

"Born in 1934, my parents were – Ray and Rhonda Plunkett. Dad came to Korora in the nineteen twenties and took up land at the top of the Korora Basin and with the help of two hired men cleared seven hectares by hand with axes, crowbars, saws and mattocks. Our home was a packing shed 6 metres by about 4.9 metres, which was built in a bush clearing."

"There were about a dozen families living in the Basin (Korora Basin Area) at the time. There were the Bensons, Caseys, Ulians, Ryans, Finlays, Hancocks, Williams, Becketts, Crumptions, De Neiderhausens and a few others whose names I cannot quite recall. It was a caring little community for the most part and social occasions were always of a great joy."

"Lighting was by hurricane lanterns and fuel stoves were used for cooking."

"I started school 'across the road at Kororo Public School' just before I turned five. The school had one teacher for all classes: K – 6, he was Mr Les Cluff, who was an affable man. His wife also came out from their Coffs Harbour home once a week and would teach us girls sewing."

"Vehicles were scarce in the Basin Area. Many had to walk into town and back, (some eight kilometres) to do their shopping. I think my dad had the only truck in the basin area and anyone who wanted a ride knew

when dad would be transporting the bananas into town, and they would get a ride with him. Not long after dad set up a real estate and auctioneering business in town, in Moonee Street. (Plunkett & Hives Real Estate – circa 1970)”.

Marie Ferris writes about recollections of her childhood and life in the Basin in her book ‘Barefoot on Goolies Lace Ups in Cloisters’.

“One of the first things I recall about my early childhood was that we used kero lamps for lighting, as there was no electricity in the Basin area, basically it was only available in the Coffs local township area. We bought kero from the grocer and it was delivered in four-gallon (15 litre) tins.”

“Beyond our turn off were our closest neighbours - the Fiddes family. I know our house was very basic, but theirs was even more so. Where we had timber floors with linoleum covering, many of their rooms had dirt floors. Their family consisted of the husband and wife and five daughters.”

“The slopes in the Basin were good for growing bananas but there was no mechanical means of turning the soil for planting, so the whole plantation was dug by hand and pick, which was back breaking work. We had no bathroom. Our plumbing consisted of a single external tap. The toilet consisted of a hole in the ground, dug out about 10 metres from the house, with a galvanised roof and hessian bags as a privacy screen.”

“There was one telephone in the Korora Basin Area, and it was owned by the Ryan’s who lived about 800 metres up the Basin Road.”

Norah Philomena McCudden, later Hancock - Memories and Recollections

Norah Philomena McCudden, lived at 144 Basin Road, Korora, who was 100 years old on 01/09/2016, had these memories to share in her published memoirs.

“In 1945 a bushfire burnt out the Basin. Our main house was saved by having the irrigation water sprayed over it, however all the materials, fabrics, curtains etc all turned to dust when you touched them afterwards. Though the other cottage on the farm was destroyed. During the fire mum had us all in the creek, for protection, as we had no car to escape in! Dad was manning the pumps to keep the water flowing to save the house, but in doing so suffered an eye injury and had his eyes covered for weeks.”

“Father became really ill towards the end of 1945 diagnosed with possible Hepatitis A, which in later years a doctor said it was possible that dad had Hendra Virus or Lyssa Virus. This was probably caused by about 20 farmers in the district using bat droppings from interstate as fertiliser, as no ‘real’ fertiliser was unavailable due to the war.”

“Mum took over the crop farming, also she made clothes and nursed dad when he also became ill with Tuberculosis in 1951. He was in hospital for about three years at New Lambton, Newcastle. Mum took the steam train and visited him in hospital with my young sister Vicki – 10 months. The five boys stayed home and looked after the house, the horses, the cow, the ducks and the chooks.”

“It was after dad came home from hospital; he started a market garden below the house. He also did leatherwork, which he learnt while in hospital.”

“Dad was also quite active in the community. He was a member of the Korora Volunteer Bushfire Brigade, Secretary of the Progress Association, a foundation member of the Agriculture Bureau of Korora, a member of the Native Plant Society, also a trustee of the Korora Beach Reserve along with Ed Hamey, Norman Hill snr, Harry Griffin and Doug De Neiderhausen and we were all present when the reserve was declared ‘a reserve’ by an officer of the Lands Department Grafton.”

Jack Hancock recalled in his interview:

“The nine of us kids all went to Kororo Public School.”

“I can remember as a child the big bushfire in late 1946/early 1947 which totally changed Korora. It burnt from the top of Hardy Close, off the Korora Basin Road right down and across the road through to where Opal Cove is today on the eastern side of the highway. It covered a vast area, right through to West Korora Road. The fire was so hot it killed off everything, leaving only an old Box Tree. Prior to the fire there were cottage industries in the area, producing things like Tung Oil (woodworking oil), big nuts and candle nuts. Everything was destroyed, bananas, horses!”

“The road to the Basin was all mud those days. It was cleared by bulldozer which was driven by Billy Hill. Our property’s end was near the sawmill on Hardy’s Road. Sawmills were plentiful at that time, as there was a huge demand for timber to make the wooden cases to get the fruit (mainly bananas) to the markets.”

“Mum was a dressmaker who in today’s terms would be called an ‘online order supplier’ and she would receive her orders by post, make them and then post them out.”

“As we had no car, it was not unusual for mum to walk us into town, about ten kilometres away, to the CWA (where the CEx, is in the city centre today). Although mum was not tall, about 150cms, she did the walk often. She would walk far and fast, over McCauley’s Headland, to Bray Street then along the highway into the town centre.”

“There was also a butcher’s shop in the basin at Wall’s Corner which was owned by brothers Peter and Ivan. There was a post office and general store – about 50 metres from where the Korora Bushfire Brigade shed was located, near what is the Luke Bowen Bridge.”

The Korora Volunteer Bushfire Brigade shed which was demolished in 2022, as part of the preparation for the Coffs Harbour bypass was located opposite the Kororo School, on the western side of the highway. The brigade consisted of volunteer bushfire fighters. The brigade has now merged and relocated with the Bruxner Park Volunteer Bushfire Brigade.

“There was also a shop was run by Les Cooper. Lionel Beggs also had a wood turning factory, on the site near the old fire shed and the Coopers had a vegetable garden there. There was also a Koala Reserve market garden run by the Coopers.”

“Ed Hamey, who was then an ABC reporter and a movie maker used to hold home movies at his house on particular evenings on his verandah. David Bowen’s father lived up Rowsells Road and he was president of ‘everything’. My dad was secretary of ‘everything’.”

“There were three boatsheds down at Korora Bay which is accessed from Sandy Beach Road and the beach area where Smugglers on the Beach is also located.”

“Electricity came to the Basin in 1965 and until then we had to use kero (kerosene) lamps. To make a phone call, it meant a walk up to the post office.”

“In the very early 1950’s Tom Fenton moved into the house next door to us in the Basin. He was an ex-TAFE teacher and had many models of working equipment.”

“Dad also grew a lot of different grass samples and potatoes for the Coffs Show Agricultural Display.”

“When I was 10 years old, I started to plough the land with a horse and furrow.”

“Eric Bowen (David Bowen’s father see Kororo School’s famous ‘Mr B’) used to live up in Rowsells Road. Their son David and his wife Helen later moved to the southern end of the Old Coast Road where they and their sons and families lived in three separate dwellings.”

Pat Schuberth and her sister Cathy’s recollections in their interview:

“Our family moved to the area from Sydney in 1947 and had a 3.7ha banana plantation in what is now Parkes Drive, which is located on the eastern side of the highway. Our family eventually sub-divided their land right down to the beach.”

“In the late 60’s the Hill Brothers owned the area – and sub-divided section now known as Norman Hill Drive. Dad also had underground power installed here.”

“Back in 1971 there was a Rutile Mine – near where Shellcove Lane is now located right next to Smugglers Resort. (rutile - rutile and ilmenite are found in mineral sand deposits associated with modern and ancient beaches and dunes on the east, west and southern coastlines of Australia). One of our uncles worked on that mine.”

“The mine was the main reason for the Sandy Beach Road construction down to the Bay. Until the road was put in there was only a walking track from the then highway (James Small Drive to Korora Beach).”

“A similar location at Korora, north of Caps Rock, was used to anchor sailing vessels so that timber could be floated down Pine Brush Creek, which flows from the northern end of Hills Beach, out into the ocean and loaded on board. The region had abundant red cedar trees and the timber was much sought after for cabinet making. The logs being a softwood floated easily and were put on a lighter (barge) to take out and load onto the sailing ships. Pine Brush Creek came out at Korora east, just below the headland.”

“North from us was Moonee Beach and at that time there were only five houses there, all on the creek side. The creek in the reserve was aptly named Stingray Creek, after the fish that swam in there – there was a footbridge at the headland that enabled people to cross the creek and get to there. The creek was well known then, as it is today, more so now for crabs and oysters.”

“There was a wedding reception place in Moonee located behind the Kumbaingerie Zoo. It was owned by Rob and Aileen Mutton. (2/3/74). It was very popular because of its beautiful bush surroundings.”

“The family name ‘Griffin’ was a popular name in the area and there were three unrelated Griffin families in Korora.”

Paul Plunkett’s Memoirs from his book ‘A Boyhood and It’s Times’ published in 2003.

Paul wrote about his life in Korora, as he was growing up and notated “This book is mainly about the atmosphere and the various environments of his childhood and youth and – perhaps a hint at the source of some of the real essences of the real me.”

“In 1931 on one of my father’s exploratory trips to Coffs Harbour my pop met Peter Gaudron, (Gaudrons Road is named after him). He was the ‘king’ amongst banana growers at the time. As well as Les Rippon (Rippons Road, is named after him). Pop was enchanted by the prospects of joining the banana industry.”

“Father acquired the last remaining virgin land in the Basin Area. The land was really steep, with a double-sided ridge and difficult access. However, within 18 months he had converted the land from a forest to fruit trees and he had fruit bearing. There was a one single room house on the property, which was built in 1932. It was small - four metres by eight metres, unlined, unsealed and it had a corrugated iron roof.”

“There was a curtain separating the living area from the bedroom. The bathroom consisted of a laundry bathtub located in the kitchen. Bushland consisting of lantana, mahoganies and eucalypts surrounded the house. Toileting was in a ‘primitive’ hessian-clad structure over an earthen pit. Most of the ridges surrounding the house were timbered and lantana covered and there were wind breaks on Crown Land. Bullock wagons hauled the felled logs.”

“Our neighbouring plantations were owned by town dwellers – Les Rippon and the Mulhearns. Our fruit was mostly the Cavendish variety of bananas. Dad bought a Chev truck to take the crates of bananas into town. The truck had side running boards which could accommodate travellers standing up and holding onto the vehicle. Also, dad would have a couple of empty banana crates on board in the back, to give anyone a lift along the way, when there was space.”

“In those early days there was no corner store. Eventually we had a bread delivery service and Athol Bray (the local grocer, who has Bray Street named after him) would also deliver the groceries right up to our door. The grocery delivery included such items as: (the essentials) tea, sugar, soap, canned and powdered milk, flour, pepper, salt etc, as well as potatoes, onions, turps, Aspros, senna pods, Epsom salts, boiled lollies and castor oil. How this all worked was Athol Bray would ride his bike out and take the orders, then his delivery truck would bring the shopping a couple of days later.”

Paul's recounts his memories about his neighbours.

“Not long after we moved in, George Manuel and his two sons Hilton and Doug pitched their tent in a windbreak of about 10 metres from our house. They eventually built a simple house and a packing shed. They also had a car! This was a slab-walled, iron-roofed house, intended for workmen, but mum's father, grandfather Neyle took up residence there. Next door to that was the Rippon plantation (Rippon Road named after them), which later went into the hands of Artie Benson.”

“Our second home in Korora was built when dad convinced the Lands Department to grant him six hectares of land of the then stock reserve directly opposite the Kororo School in James Small Drive and in 1938 a new home was constructed. In 1940 or was it 1941 Father Ryan started to hold an occasional mass for us children, as there was no transport into Coffs. The mass held at someone's home - usually ours.”

“When I started at Kororo School, it was a one-room weatherboard building at the front and all class levels were in that room. There was also a small 'hat room' and a small open three and four metre verandah. If you look at the school now, that room is now part of the front office building. We often had to carry our own drinking and washing water to school, as the water tank was occasionally empty. There was an extension to the school in 1935 with an extension to the classroom and the 'hat room'. Our desks were long enough to take four, maybe five students and the seats were backless. If we were lucky, we could lean back onto the desk behind. In my time at the school the numbers double from about 15 to about 30!”

“Monthly dances for the parents were held in our classroom on a Saturday night. Though until babysitting could be organised, all us children also attended and danced and played outside. This involved us kids also, in assisting with the setup. The desks had to be first unscrewed from the floor then stored under the school. Books, pens, pencils etc had to be placed in cupboards.”

“Then on the Monday morning the reverse happened. We used to love the superior aroma in the classroom after the dances. It was a combination of kero soaked sawdust. Christmas Tree Night was also another very special occasion. There was a present for every child under the tree.”

In an interview with Tom Millward in 2023

He talked about life in the Korora Basin area, when the family originally owned 52 acres (21ha). Their property was located between Finlays Road and Bruxner Park Road. He eventually moved from the Basin to where he now lives in Hardacre Street, in Coffs Harbour four years ago, where the family had owned a house for over 50 years. His mother and brother went to school at the Bucca Road Central School (Now the Lower Bucca Community Preschool). He was fortunate enough to attend the much closer Kororo Primary School.

His memories of his childhood in the Basin were him clearing the land with a brush hook and winning a prize for the best improved garden in the area. He had a long walk to primary school, across creeks and only missed school a few days when the creeks were flooded. On the property they grew bananas and ran cattle. Their bananas were a prize crop winning 'best bunch' at the Coffs Show.

He also recalled the crash landing of George Hardacre's flying machine onto the Moonee Headland. As the story goes - In 1897 George patented what is believed to have been Australia's

first flying machine and according to family reports, his last flight was from Woolgoolga to Moonee headland where it crashed into trees and the wreckage was later destroyed during a bush fire. Fortunately, George survived the crash.

John Hill's (Hills Beach) published memoirs:

(This is an extract from an audio interview March 3, 1987 – from Coffs Collections website link <https://coffs.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/31265> , accessed November 2022).

John Hill was the eldest of the Hill family who lived most of his life in this area, apart from brief visits away during the war.

“I was born in Coffs Harbour in 1920 and on his first trip to Sydney and when I was taken by my mother and lowered into the little coastal steamer, and my mother got hopelessly seasick. The trip was fairly rough indeed!”

“I don't have any recollections about the early years until I was about five, so now I'm recalling a little history of the area I do recall, near the family property at Korora. The first name that comes to mind was a 'fella' called James Small, who took to growing sugar cane.”

“The early settlers each set out an area to grow sugar cane when the land was cleared. A visiting reporter in 1883 commented on the vigorous growth these lots were showing.”

“However, Coffs Creek farmers decided not to go ahead with sugar cane growing, so James Small was able to buy their supplies of cuttings to plant up his area at Korora, where the cane thrived and within two years turned in a rich yield of sugar bearing juice.”

“While the sugar cane was growing Small, arranged to have a sugar mill erected across the plain (near Korora Bay), to evaporate the juice in 1886. The machine was ready for harvesting at the end of that year. The mill had a tall brick chimney made of local bricks from the clay in the creek banks.”

“The chimney which was in fact over 18 metres tall provided a draft for a 16-horsepower boiler operating the engines. In the meantime, Small built a large house, to replace his original Bark Hut.”

“His new home was a long low rambling place, built from cedar slabs. The roof was covered with shingles of forest oak. There was always a spare room for a visitor, and the home became known as a convenient stopping place for travellers.”

“During the crushing season of sugar 20 workers were employed, to cut the cane and haul it onto carts to take to the mill where it was crushed between wooden rollers and was heated to reduce the liquid to brown sugar crystals. Some of this brown sugar was used locally, but the bulk of it was sent to the Colonial Sugar Refining Company in Sydney to be refined.”

“Help was engaged to do the cooking for the extra hands in the crushing season. A lady, a Miss Reedy was employed for several years to assist in cooking and general housework, with wages of just seven shillings a

week. For such a large number to cater for it was necessary for them to kill their own beef and the surplus was made available to local farmers at three pence per pound.”

“Bread was also baked and the spare loaves were sold to housewives who preferred it to their own cooking. Small’s place was a convenient place for mail deliveries and collection and for several years it was the unofficial post office where postage stamps were also available.”

“Herman Riech was the first man to grow bananas in Australia and locals gathered much of this district's news at his Korora homestead, where the men gathered to gossip.”

“In 1885 we saw the first tourists arrive. The road to Grafton had been completed along a line about half a mile inland and was called ‘The Old Coast Road’. A large party of people was attracted by the reported beauty of Korora and came to see it for themselves.”

“They first arrived on horseback by sulky and in wagonettes. But before, they could assemble their tents heavy rain began to fall. They were accommodated either in the Small’s house or in the huts built for the plantation workers.”

“The area and the cane growing expanded until Small was growing about 16ha and five other farmers supplied cane from their 1ha to the mill. Reports indicate that the yield of sugar from the stalks was above average and samples of light brown crystals received favourable comment from the Clarence newspapers at Grafton. However, the venture of was not a success.”

“The profits were too low after hauling sugar to the Clarence wharf, in Grafton or south to Raleigh where safe ship loading would be affected. It had been hoped that loading the sugar through the surf on a raft of sea logs or even a lifeboat could have been cheaper.”

“Even in a slight splash from a wave onto the bags would ruin the contents. Due to the poor income from the sugar giants, Small went bankrupt and his fine property was sold at auction in Grafton. Young Henry Small saved enough from his felling of cedar from the Upper Orara to be able to buy the property and save the farm and ensured it remained in the family.”

“The property was soon afterwards sold off to a Polish migrant from South Australia called Alexander Herman, who hoped to make use of the new Jetty being built at Coffs Harbour to ship his sugar.”

“His first shipment of Australia was loaded in a little ship ‘the Byron’. Before the jetty was completed. loading was completed by sliding the bags of sugar, down two planks onto the deck of the little ship.

When loaded the little Byron had a freeboard (the height of a ship's side between the waterline and the deck) of only 60cms tall! The sugar business struggled on until 1898, when the last shipment of 38 bags was sent away.”

“Herman found a ‘much more profitable’ use for his brown sugar and molasses, a by-product of the process. He distilled them into rum, and it seems to have made a success of the venture from the highly illegal distilling of the otherwise waste products of the mill.”

“The tall chimney, which stood out with the boiler and furnace, was fairly wide at the base and by digging a tunnel from the nearby creek bank and taking the ingredients and the still into the base of the chimney, he had an excellent hideaway and then a young Walter Jordan turned out many hundreds of gallons of rum, which found a ready market in the district pubs.”

“Because only one keg rum had been consigned to Coffs Harbour over the period of two years and the customs authorities were on the lookout for an illicit still and sent detectives to investigate.”

“Young Jordan was inside the chimney, attending to the still when the officers called and Herman spoke up loudly to warn him there was trouble outside. He was able to listen to the questions and the search went on a few feet away, but they didn't find anything. Even as the tall chimney dissipated the fumes of the tell-tale rum into the atmosphere.”

“The load was carried to Grafton by bullet team and comprised of 757litres (200) gallons of rum on which excise duty had not been paid. The consignment was delivered to within six kilometres of the town and hotel keepers came out in their carts and took delivery of the spirits.”

“The locally made rum was known as 'LM' (locally made) brand, but much of it was sold from bottles bearing a regular name brand.”

“The Herman's suffered a tragic loss when their two small boys ate some wild passionfruit and ultimately died. There was help on the way, though rather belated - a horseman with a change of horses at Bonville went to seek medical aid over in Bellingen, only to find that the doctor had gone on an early morning call to a farmer some 24kms beyond that centre. The doctor immediately galloped back to his new patients, arriving at dusk. After being in the saddle since daylight and not having had time to even have anything to eat during the day at all, even though he was hungry and exhausted!”

“He looked at the boys who appeared to be sleeping but one was found to be dead. He sat up throughout the night, but by the morning the other boy also died. Their bodies were buried at the foot of a nearby pine tree.”

“While living there, the Herman's had a brush-up with the local Aborigines from farther north. A group of a dozen or so came to the house about dusk and demanded food. The only food being available was cooking over the fire. But the Aborigines could not wait and took over the kitchen, ransacking the pantry, cupboards and shelves. Meanwhile, cursing the Hammonds for having no food ready to steal and eat.”

“Following the Herman's came a German settler from South Australia, named Rotger and another labourer who lived close by was named Tash who had several attractive daughters. One of them caught the eye of August Nelson, a sailor on the 'Jane'. He used to swim ashore after work, and when tea was over to do his courting by moonlight. Later on, at night he used to swim back to the ship.”

“Another local swain also sought the hand of the young lady. And after much competition. August won. But his rival showed no bitterness and even took a photograph of the happy couple. The land was next sold to Alexander Smail who promptly pulled the cedar and beech home down and took the timbers to Upper

Orara where he re-erected a house. In 1913, John B Hill bought the property. He had been storekeeper on the corner shop where the Cox Brothers Store was once located.”

“John Hill played an important part in the growth of the district. He extended credit to travelling struggling farmers and so helped him to become established. His services were much appreciated. In 1913 John Hill sold the business to a William Perry and he bought a farm. He tried dairying but did not seem to have made a success of the venture.”

“His son Norman later sold much of the property on the hills for banana land and the farm was greatly reduced inside to 40 ha of flat land bordering the ocean. The area is now known as Hills Beach. “In fact, he was going to sell that piece of land as well, so I, at the early age of seven, could see its future potential, went to my grandmother and I said to stop him. And she did and that's how the Banana Bowl has remained in my family.”

“Things I recall from my childhood, there was a big steam sawmill operating from one mile west of Korora. A friend of mine Ben Crumpton at the age of six was run over by a bullet dray and had his leg amputated.”

“At the tender age of five, I started my schooling at the little local Korora School which had been moved from Moonee where it was originally established. Our teacher then was Mr. Claude Onley. He became a close family friend to my mother and father and he also married one of the local girls, who was one of the Campbell family who lived where Sapphire Gardens Caravan Park (Owned by Aub and Joane Barker) was once located.”

“The area of land was then known as the Campbells property, and it was one of only four properties north of Macaulay's Headland, the others were: the Banana Bowl, the Hammond property between the Banana Bowl, Coffs Harbour and opposite them the Hammond property was the Butler property.”

“The Korora school was where it is still located now, having been taken away from Moonee. There were about 20 children going to the school at the time.”

“We had a dividing fence on the homestead all the way up to the entrance to the school, which was on the Old Coast Road. The new road was open for traffic many years later. We had a rather a fierce bull called ‘Boney’ who used to come up along the fence and wait for us to come out of school and he'd follow us all the way down inside the fence and wait.”

“There's been many funny incidents at the school and Mr Onley was a really marvellous man. In fact, he lived through a very ripe old age of about 90. He moved to Gosford after he left Coffs Harbour.”

“Being a one teacher school and so few children, you knew everybody, and you would all play together at recess and lunch time. One of the favourite pastimes was building cubby houses in the bush within the school grounds. Also, rounders (a bat and ball game) were popular as well as hopscotch. We also used to try and snare birds. The number of pupils at the school didn't increase much - only slightly to about 30 during Mr Onley's time there.”

“I do not recall having any favourite subjects at school, as I liked them all. But as years went by, I favoured

more English and history rather than mathematics and science. Though I did not complete my primary school education there as my mother had decided that I was getting too bored and I'd get a more 'superior education' at the much bigger Coffs Harbour Primary School."

"My mother bought me an old bike to get to and from school and I used to have to ride the bike into school in old clothes and get changed before I got there. I used to change my clothes in the laundry at the back of the Bank of New South Wales residence and I was always scared that the lady - the-manager's wife would come in and catch me half dressed!"

"As the other children came along, they also went to Kororo School and I followed on into high school and both Max and Yolland also rode their bikes into school."

"All the transport in my early memories was by sulky and there was an enormous, big red patch of red clay at the foot of the hill where the Big Banana now is. And there were countless, countless people who got bogged in it. When it rained, the hill would also get too slippery for the sulky driver to get up the hill. So, all the kids were called out of school, to push the carts up the hill, then we'd all come back covered in red clay."

"When we got home from school covered in this red clay, our mother had to wash the mud out of all the clothes so we could wear them again the next day! We also had a big well that was supposed to catch the runoff from the roof, but it always leaked. I can remember every Sunday one of my jobs was to get down to the creek and take two 15 litre kerosene tins on what they call a yoke (over the shoulders) to carry the water up for mother to do the Monday morning washing. I didn't like that job at all. Still, we had a pretty happy life there. We didn't want for anything. We were happy to go on walks and see the birds nesting."

"I had a school friend Allen Hodge, who was the son of the headmaster at Coffs High School. He used to come out from town and we'd go off somewhere to have some fun. Just the two of us, but soon all the little ones wanted to tag along. And I'd say, 'stay home' and they'd come back again and said, Mum said, 'you must take us', which took away a lot of our fun together."

"Coffs Primary School was a big change from Korora. Much more discipline! Also, there were 50 pupils in sixth class alone. Our teacher was called Mr Morris and he was quite a character. He was also the headmaster. At that site, where the primary school is located, at the time both the high school and the primary school were originally all together on the same site."

"It was a long day indeed, riding a bike all that way into school in all weathers and back again in the afternoon. For the first two years I was going on my own, so I was the 'messenger boy' for the family too! My parents would only go to town perhaps once a fortnight to collect the pension. My father had a full war pension because he'd lost an eye in the war."

"That's mainly what we existed on in those days. Every second Thursday it was a shopping day, and in between times I was given messages like 'bring home some meat or bread or something', and sometimes I'd forget and as there was no corner shop handy, my mother had to make up, curried eggs. That was after giving me a little rapping about forgetting the shopping."

“The old bike oh, it was a real ramshackle! I was always having punctures and trouble with it because it was poorly maintained and we were not wealthy enough to have it repaired!”

“I finished school in 1936 and the new Coffs Harbour High School at the Jetty opened the year after and I never got to attend it. Ironically, I was school captain in the old high school for my last year and my sister was school captain for her last year in the new high school!”

“I wasn't a mischief maker like some of the other students. Some of them used to chew up wads of paper and flick them up to make them stick on the roof. But our teacher Mr Morris knew the ones who were doing it. One of them was a Maloof boy (Bernie Maloof, later Coffs Harbour Mayor Maloof), from the well-known drapery family Maloofs Drapery in Coffs.”

“We had a brilliant headmaster, Russell Hodge, who taught at the school the whole time I was there. But later he was promoted to Maitland High. Their gain and our loss!” Being friends with the headmaster's son didn't give me any advantages over anyone else.

“The Great Depression influenced our lives. My earliest recollections of that were when a family called Boyden and a gentleman called Mr Walker arrived from Sydney with the seat out of their pants, having gone broke and they tried to make a living, growing crops on our Korora land. Though this wasn't very successful.”

“This was also at particular time there was also a big drought inland and it was a very bad drought indeed.”

“A gentleman called McDowell, who was one of the McDowell family who owned McDowell's department store in George Street, Sydney bought a thousand sheep to run on the Banana Bowl and us Hill children were employed as the shepherds.”

“At this stage of the game my father who was a very keen golfer and the local golf club had been looking for land for a golf course. As it wasn't doing much good at farming, he decided to make a nine-hole golf course on the land and the idea was that the sheep would be of good use, keeping all the grass height down, for a good golf game.”

“My brother Max and I used to have to also mow the green. But one of the problems with the sheep is that the greens weren't fenced off, so they had left what we call their ‘dill balls’ (hardened lumps of sheep's droppings) on the green, which was an interference to good putting.”

“So us Hills boys were given a jam tin and sent around to pick up all the ‘dill balls’ before golf on Saturday and Sunday. I became very fond of golf and in any spare time I had I'd get out and play. I'd also play in the rain! I ended up the year before I finished school winning the championship of the course with my father, who'd been the championship's champion for a couple of years before that.”

“My father over the previous three years had also been hand making bricks. These concrete bricks were about 230mm x 110mm and 76mm thick. The idea was to eventually build another house on the Banana Bowl. We kept on making these bricks for about ten years and when we had enough to put a layer of bricks right around this big two storey house.” which still stands there today. “

“A layer of bricks was about 1.2 metres high and the house was two storeys high. The rest of the walls were mahogany weatherboard. After I'd completed my schooling, I helped in the pouring of the concrete making the floors of that house and I was also the offsider to the bricklayer Reece Taylor, who still resides on the old family property now has a banana plantation there.”

“He also brought home free bricks for us to make our two storey chimneys. The total cost of that house at that time was something like \$7000.00 for our house, of at least 420 square metres to contain all of us eight Hills family.”

“We didn't live in the house very long at all because when I moved to Sydney. I missed the family when I was down there and the family missed me too. So, the family moved to Sydney and leased the place out to a gentleman - Les Griffin, who was a very successful farmer”.

“He farmed the property for three or four years and made quite a lot of money growing vegetables and other things. He then let the lease go and another family called the Wards. They took over the lease and they neglected the property very much indeed!”

“When we all moved back after the war, the property was in a bit of a mess. After the Depression, the Boyden family who lived where Pelican Beach Resort was located and my father owned the property that was the northern boundary of the property. We also had a little banana plantation right at beach level.”

“I also used to have to bring milk down to the Boyden family who lived on the site. To do this I had to cross a log bridge to get to their place. I did this before I went to school. Occasionally I would fall into the lagoon, not navigating the pathway all that well and dropped the milk. I also used to go up to babysit their children while they went out too. Father and mother were great ones at going to balls and there were quite a lot of balls in those days.”

“I recall having look after the sheep. Sheep were not really well suited to the coast and they had a lot of trouble with disease and foot rot and it always seemed as though there were a couple of dead sheep to dispose of.”

“My father, who wasn't very fond of unpleasant jobs, would order us boys to go and burn these sheep before we went to school. This was very off putting but this was one of the ‘non-rewards’ for having the sheep on the property. We also used to love watching old Mr Fidal shear the sheep with his old hand shears and then black tar all the cuts he made. And then when the sheep had been shorn, the wool was stored in a big room in the old barn, and all us kids went up into the rafters and dived into the bales of wool. The sheep idea gradually petered out and eventually they were moved back inland.”

“There was a Mr Clark and his wife and two sons who also lived with us. He was employed to build the new road which dissected the property which was more-or-less on the site of the current Motorway (Highway). While the Clarke's were there, their sons who were keen fishermen one particular night they came home to pick up three wash tubs to carry all the jewfish they had caught from the creek located in front of the house.”

“Mrs Clarke was a very keen horse trotter driver and she used to go to all the shows. She also used to train all the horses on the beach, all the way from the Banana Bowl down to Charlesworth Bay, which then were both completely flat at that time. Today, due to the changes in tides the beach has been split up and the ocean is about 80 metres further out than it was in back then.”

“Ken Walker and the eldest son Paul lived in the old barn and whenever they had a wet day, they would take out a pack of cards and play cards all day with my father. I used to wonder how grown men would prosper by sitting down and play cards all day!”

“The Boyden family had an interesting history. Rex, the father was a well-known ‘famous pilot’ and he used to come and land on the beach in a Tiger Moth. In later years he took on flying commercially between Brisbane and Sydney but unfortunately, he was killed in a plane crash in the Lamington Tops National Park, in South-East Queensland.”

“Paul, their son started the boy scouts movement in Coffs Harbour and a lot of their camps at the time were held on Hills Beach and they would frolic in the nearby lake. We all loved swimming and we had this beautiful lake which was a mixture of fresh and salt water. We spent every available hour in the lake. Mum used to ring this cow bell to get us to come home for dinner and quite often we would pretend not to hear it, as we were having so much fun in the water.”

“The lake at the northern end was let run down during the war with a lot of rubbish accumulating in it. Then we came back home there was the job of cleaning up the mess.”

“When my parents decided to build the caravan park in 1960 on this wonderful site we owned. I had already left Coffs Harbour and gone to live in Kempsey and my wife and I ran a mixed business down there.”

“The family had always wanted to build this caravan park on the land we had. Father had wanted to build it out of old tram cars and I said I would not be involved in anything that involved anything second-hand and the land was too beautiful to have anything but the best architectural accommodation. So it came to pass that my wife and I decided to move back from Kempsey and I started the job of cleaning out the old family farm and starting the caravan park.”

“Back in the Depression times we had quite a few people passing through, such as swaggies looking for work. There was a fellow named O’Toole who kept a fishing boat at Charlesworth Bay, where there is now the Charlesworth Bay Fishing Club premises. I am a foundation member and I used to put out to sea and catch snapper, which was easy to catch in those days. O’Toole used to sell his catch door to door for around threepence a pound.”

“The depression did affect us not all that much, as being on the land we were self-sufficient. When the depression was tapering off in 1934-36. In the early part of 1937, I was finishing school with my leaving certificate and I was found a job in Sydney by a friend of the family in a company which was developing the oil shale (shale oil) industry. My board and lodging cost shillings 25 a week (about two dollars 50), all found. My tram fares were four shillings (40 cents) a week and my total wage was 27 and six pence a week (just under \$3.00), so I was not really ‘surviving’!”

“My parents then decided to move down about a year after I came down and remained until the war ended. My father re-joined the Army and two of my brothers joined the navy and my sister joined the air force. I was in the air force myself as a Spitfire pilot and an instructor in bombing and gunning in India where I spent two and a half years.”

“Finally, having gotten all the Hill family back to Coffs Harbour, we then decided to make our fortunes by growing vegetables and allied matter, but due to the weather vagaries and the vagaries of the markets, it was not a profitable pursuit at all! We all then lived in the big house.”

“In the late forties we decided to stick with the crops for a few more years. But after I had been married for three years I said to my father and brothers we should try and buy a banana plantation. We bought 2.5 ha on terms in Gaudrons Road for 600 pounds (about \$1200) and from then on, we also planted bananas at Korora Bay on 14ha on what is now Korora Bay and we later sold it to a Mr Kaiser for \$9000 and we were quite happy to get that amount!”

“The bananas treated us well, providing better resources financially. Growing bananas has certainly changed over the years from when we grew bananas to the present day. In those days you dug the ground up with a mattock, and it would take a month to dig one hectare. Today with bulldozers, it is all done in one action. You push all the forest off and dig the ground in one operation. We had in fact the first 4wd used on a plantation, it was an old Army jeep. But we still had to walk the plantation and physical chop down the bunches of bananas and carry the bunch to the nearest pick-up point. Growing bananas has had many ups and downs, probably more ups than downs.”

“The way that people started growing crops here after the war, was they cleared the land and grew a crop of tomatoes in the spring, which was a very lucrative pastime, then they planted the bananas. In the years after we started the caravan park.”

“Bananas then and now – the question is there a difference in quality or taste? I have grown them, sold them, given them away as a promotion to encourage tourism in the district. I do not think there is a difference in banana quality and taste to those grown naturally and those artificially ripened off the plant. But there is a problem of getting the ones on the plant at the right date, because they only ripen gradually.”

“We had a 3ha plantation at Korora in the Banana Bowl, which we did really well out of. In fact, we did not take that plantation out until some years after we started the caravan park. In 1960 we opened the caravan park in Christmas of that year and at the same time the Star Motel in Coffs on the highway was opened, which was actually the first motel built in Coffs Harbour.”

“We went out of our way to ensure our customers were happy, particularly the children and we provided entertainment for them all day and every day and most evenings there were games or movies. We built a golf course for the guests where the bananas once used to grow and we held golf competitions. We also had 20 horses and every morning the kids were lined up for their free horse rides. We used to have gymkhanas, athletics carnivals, swimming carnivals, sand modelling. You name it, we had it!”

Hills Beach

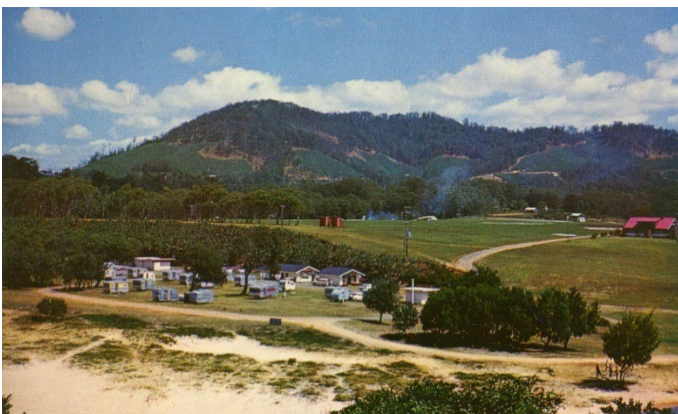


Hills Beach (also known today as Opal Cove Beach, after the resort which is built behind the beach) is a beach on the Korora Bay. It has a steep narrow beach face and is around 600m long. At its southern end, it is bounded by rocks separating it from the neighbouring Korora Beach to the south. Also, near the southern end, there is a small creek crossing the beach and a sandy tombolo (bar of sand) stretching out to rocks in the sea.

At the northern end, the beach is bounded by Pine Brush Creek, which has an intermittently open entrance to the sea, and by steep rocks which separate it from the small (150m long) secluded Hills North Beach. The sea off the beach is part of the Solitary Islands Marine Park and is a Habitat Protection Zone. The Solitary Islands Coastal Walk, which goes from Red Rock to Sawtell (60 km), runs through Hills Beach.

Access to the beach is at the southern end at Hills Beach Reserve, via Norman Hill Drive. There is a park with a children's playground, as well as barbecue, shower and toilet facilities.

The Banana Bowl Caravan Park was located on Hills Beach in the 1960's



The caravan park opened on Thursday December 22, 1960, (as was reported in advance in the Coffs Harbour Advocate newspaper).

It was described as a new, spacious and ultra-modern caravan park and was located on the well-known Hills Estate fronting the highway, about 6.5kms from the town of Coffs Harbour. To be known as the Banana Bowl it was the first stage of a development aimed at making the estate the

premier holiday centre on the North Coast!

The idea was to initially to provide 36 camp sites for caravans requiring electric power connections, together with a large area prepared for occupation by tents and caravans not needing electricity. The site included 'attractive' amenity blocks providing hot and cold water, shower facilities, sewerage, male and female toilets, as well as laundries with washing machines and electric irons.

There was also a shop onsite selling meat, ice, milk and bread, as well as a range of general stores and campers' requisites. Included in the 'outstanding camp holiday attraction' was a 'beautifully sited' swimming pool in Pine Brush Creek, a 'private' surfing beach, canoeing and pony rides. Nearby Capps Rock at the mouth of Pine Brush Creek offered excellent fishing.

An added feature was a banana plantation, which was part of the original Hills Estate.

Prior to the Hills family acquiring the land of approximately 40 hectares it had been a cane farm when sugar production was pioneered in the area, later it was the first gold club in the area, then it produced bananas and grazed cattle. At the time it had been in the Hills family for three generations.

Korora Lagoon



In an interview with Graham Taylor, he recalled the originating of the Korora Lagoon.

“Korora Lagoon, which is located along Links Avenue with access to Norman Hill Drive and Blue Luben Close with access to Norman Hill Drive and Blue Luben Close. It has a sort of dubious past. The lagoon was actually the result of the dams my dad put in during the summer of 1942. In 1958 after heavy rain there was flooding in the area and the overflowing dams blocked the highway. That highway at the time being

James Small Drive, which was the second highway, after the Old Coast Road.”

On 11/08/2011 the Coffs Harbour Advocate reported of the lagoon becoming polluted:

Korora residents began a community campaign over the health of the suburb's lagoon, saying it's become a polluted sediment trap and a public health issue.

They say you wouldn't know it now, but kids use to swim in the waterway, families picnicked, and bridal parties posed for photographs on its banks. A decade on and the lagoon is choked with silt, weeds, pollution and rubbish.

Highlighting the issue, residents in Norman Hill Dr, Links Ave and Blue Luben Close staged a protest calling on the Coffs Harbour City Council to immediately address the situation.

The concerned residents say raw sewage, stormwater added to run-off from a nearby construction site at the Opal Cove Resort, have contaminated their beachside waterway.

Resident Paul Meek said “the polluted water has flooded his family's home on two occasions in recent years. Mr Meek said that happened after a sewage pumping station backed up and overflowed into the

lagoon, swamping the ground floor of his house. That's not the issue now, it's the state of the lagoon, it's just rank, absolutely disgusting," Mr Meek said.

We formed a resident's Landcare group about eight years ago, planted trees and beautified the area, but we just gave up a few years ago, water quality is the biggest issue now. Karen Baff has owned a home next to the lagoon since 1970, she recalls when it was a pristine water hole.

On March 20, 2024 it was announced the Korora Lagoons are set for a gradual, staged remediation. The City of Coffs Harbour Council resolved at its 14 March meeting to start initial works in the 2024/25 year, to be funded through the Environment Levy Program. Remediation works will include: mechanical removal of aquatic weeds, dredging and removal of soft sediments, installation of aerators or fountains, creation of shallow wetlands at stormwater inflow areas, and rehabilitating riparian vegetation.

Riecks Point Beach/Campbells Beach/Mid Sapphire Beach.



Originally named after European settler John Logan Campbell in 1845, it has undergone several name changes, but to many locals it is Mid Sapphire Beach.

At the northern end is Riecks Point at the base of White Bluff (Sapphire Headland). Access a bit further down is by way of a bush track, a lagoon, with a high walking bridge over it. Entry is via Eloura Drive on the Sapphire Headland.

The shallow lagoon exits into the ocean from the beach, when and if it fills. The lagoon also 'wanders' southwards past Aqualuna Resort, which is further back

behind the dunes. To the south of Aqualuna is another headland and Sapphire Crescent which also has a small road access at the back of the houses, which leads onto a narrow beach track to the beach.

Those blocks of land averaging about 800 square metres each were left to dwindle on the market despite asking prices as low as \$650,000, which was deemed too much for a vacant block of land at the time!

It wasn't until 2014 that the first beachfront block on Oceanfront Drive sold, lining the pockets of the developer Sapphire Beach Development with \$1.02 million. Next was a smaller block two years later for \$850,000.

The blocks started to sell in quick succession in the past few years, most recently last August for a Sapphire Beach high of \$1.95 million for a 900-square-metre lot.

Aqualuna Beach Resort

The resort which is built on Mid Sapphire Beach provides short stay and long-term accommodation in villas and apartments. The apartments are privately owned and managed by the resort. While information available on the resort is limited (or what is available is contradictory), what can be ascertained is it has a number of villas and apartments for long term and short-term stays. It was built in 2003.

The resort has its own entry to the beach from a bridge over a small lagoon. The 500m beach sits between White Bluff (Sapphire Headland) and the southern headland which is located off Sapphire Crescent.

Pelican Beach Resort (now the Sapphire Beach Housing Estate) was on the beach from 1986 to 2007.



Located on the eastern side of the highway, opposite Campbell Close, the Australis Pelican Beach Resort was closed on 1 April 2007 for redevelopment as a tourist and residential development with 124 housing sites. The resort originally opened in 1986.

The site is now named the Sapphire Beachfront Estate. The neighbouring Seafood Mamas Restaurant, a popular 'local' restaurant and Pizza take a way which was located right on the highway was also closed down as part of the redevelopment.

In its heyday Pelican Beach Resort was once one of the most popular beachfront resorts in Coffs Harbour thanks in large part to its prime position on pristine Sapphire Beach, but today it remains just a distant memory to long-time locals given it was knocked over more than a decade ago and subdivided into blocks of land.

The Daily Telegraph's – Melissa Martin, on 16/08/2017, reported that - the now Sapphire Beach Estate was a place people used to come from all over the country to holiday, but fast forward ten years and the former site of Pelican Beach Resort at Sapphire Beach was one of the Coffs Coast's hottest addresses.

But it's been a slow burn!

Once the resort was demolished and the site re-worked, Sapphire Beachfront Estate opened in June 2011 - on the tail end of the Global Financial Crisis.

Back then it was hard to imagine anyone paying \$1million for a block of land in Coffs Harbour, even if it was on one of the most beautiful beachfronts on the Mid North Coast.

The Edge Coffs Harbour and LJ Hooker Coffs Harbour were the marketing agents for the estate and have seen a remarkable change in fortune since then.

"It took a bit of time to get there, but it's really taken shape and the quality on show is amazing," The Edge principal and selling agent Jason Burnett said.

"But it was always destined to be a landmark estate, with that position and the building guidelines; it really puts our local tradespeople and architects on show."

The estate is now a mix of well-established homes - each of which makes its own very unique architectural statement.

Sapphire Beach and North Sapphire Beach – ‘north over Sapphire Headland – also known as White Bluff’.



Sapphire Beach is located opposite Split Solitary Island and the South Solitary (Lighthouse) Island.

It is a very popular surfing beach for body and board surfers alike.

The beach is surrounded by several housing estates and there are more new ones being built in the northern sector, North Sapphire Beach Estate, towards the Moonee Beach Shops.

Sapphire was the name of a property owned by the Williamson family who moved to the area in 1958 and painted the roof of their home a sapphire blue colour, they said to match the colour of the sea. (The paint was actually Taubman’s Sapphire Blue). After only two years the property was sub-divided for housing. But much of this part of the ‘string of jewels’ has been kept accessible to the general public.

String of jewels refers to four beaches Diamond (Sandy)— Emerald — Sapphire and Opal. The Coffs Coastline was known as a string of jewels.

Sapphire Beach which continues up to North Sapphire Beach and the North Sapphire Beach Estate towards Green Bluff – Moonee Headland. Access to the headland from the beach is via a hilltop walking track. The main entry points to the beach are – to the southern end at Lakeside Drive, which has a few parking spots, a shower, a picnic table and small reserve, which links to the larger reserve to the north and the Crystal Drive beach entry, but there are no toilets, except up at the North Sapphire Beach Estate end, up the beach steps. There is also a coffee shop there.

White Bluff and the White Bluff Project as explained by Dr Lisa Milner who is an academic and historian. Originally a filmmaker, is a Senior Lecture and Course Co-ordinator of the Bachelor of Digital Media and Communications at Southern Cross University.

Her research interests were interdisciplinary and wide ranging. Her research projects include radical theatre, labour history, local Coffs history, community organisations and management, union movements and film, and community media and its discontents. Here Dr Milner explains White Bluff's post invasion history.

White Bluff (more commonly known to locals as Sapphire Headland) is the rocky headland on the southern end of Sapphire Beach and is surrounded by housing development on its landward edge and yet is protected by the Solitary Islands Marine Reserve. It sits on the border of local indigenous territories and is Crown Land - typical of a string of coastal ecosystems along Australia's increasingly inhabited eastern seaboard. While White Bluff may have no recognised national significance, it is exactly this that makes it such a shared Australian experience despite its specific location.

Dr Milner believes that Clement Hodgkinson, a colonial surveyor of renown, was likely the first white man to visit White Bluff. He had been hired by the New South Wales colonial government to survey and explore the north-eastern areas of New South Wales as far as Moreton Bay. In March 1841 he explored the upper reaches of the Nambucca and Bellinger rivers, becoming the first European to make contact with Aborigines there. He then followed the Macleay, Clarence, Hastings, Richmond and Tweed River valleys. After returning to England, he published an account of his explorations.

He was the first government surveyor of this area. It is from his original explorations of the area that this whole region was brought into the records of white Australia.”

Then 40 years later, following the cedar getters who had quickly infiltrated the area after Hodgkinson’s reports, along came Herman Rieck and his wife Fanny. They came to this area and selected 80 acres for a farm, first of all in the Korora Pine Ridge area, which is now Sapphire. Rieck came from Prussia and from the Prussian wars. He came for a new start, and experimented with sugar cane and tobacco, and then bananas.

“Maps of the time began showing crown land parcelling, the parish of Coffs was declared in 1860 and the first parcels of land were released. You can see Herman Rieck had many different properties in the area. He settled a whole lot of land here,” Dr Milner explained. “You can see the names of owners on the land, many of them Bank names, which shows that mortgages were going out to land in this area. Now in 1886 we’ve got the first mention of White Bluff Headland as the name of it. In the shipping records there are records of shipwrecks in the area and a lot of families moving into the area start to talk about White Bluff Headland, so the name is coming into common usage by non-indigenous peoples.”

“As the region continued to be settled and modern advances reached the once isolated coast, White Bluff began to be affected by the world-wide post-war boom. In the 1950s, increased car ownership meant a burgeoning domestic tourism market. In 1956, Coffs Harbour Shire Council was established and there was an effort to start branding the area - the shire council and the business community recognising the benefits of the income derived from visitors.”

“So, in 1955 we have this amazing ‘Beautizone’ tourist promotion that began. And we actually have the establishment of the Mid North Coast Tourist Authority,” They would put out maps that included

how to get to interesting parts of the coast. You can see also the headlands; we have Bare Bluff and Green Bluff. More and more naming of these areas was going on. The Pacific Beautizone, however, died a terrible death in 1964. It wasn't popular.

“But through the 1950s with this growing population, development meant a lot of land-clearing going on. Aerial photos from the time show the actual land clearing at White Bluff - clearing for sheep and cattle and more clearing of land for residential development. It's a huge thing. And in 1956 the start of sand mining happened on this part of the coast.”

“This is along the whole eastern coast of Australia, mainly in the dune region. We've got companies being set up, mining for rutile, zircon and in the White Bluff area the mining partially eradicated the extensive Aboriginal maddens. Also, in the area behind Moonee Beach and going up to White Bluff Headland was what has been termed as an 'axe factory'. Indigenous people used the area and sandmining devastated and partially eradicated those really important indigenous historical areas.”

“Those of you who have actually been up to White Bluff Headland will be aware of the old Campbell house, still up there. The Campbell's have been part of the area since 1926. In 1958 that house got sold to the Williamson's. And the Williamson's subdivided that area for residential development. They were the ones that named the area Sapphire after the colour of the sea in mid-winter. Cliff Williams had the original homestead roof painted that beautiful colour. It seems there was some sort of artistic connection going on even then.”

“By 1960 big changes began coming to the Coffs Harbour area. The population surged ahead, surfers, both body and board riding arrived. The newest caravan parks opened, and Coffs Harbour homes got connected to the sewerage. There was also a rise in environmental awareness and an ongoing campaign to get a national marine park around the Solitary Islands.”

“There have been some really bitter clashes around this,” explained Dr Milner. “Meanwhile, Sapphire was getting cleared and cleared and cleared and sand mining was increasing and finally Robert Askin, NSW Premier at the time, launched an investigation into sand mining. What happened around the Sapphire, White Bluff area was emblematic of what was happening across the state. The inquiry investigated the conflicts between sand mining, conservation, marine and scientific research. This is where we start to see a change in the human consciousness of what White Bluff Headland means to people.”

“At this time Coffs Harbour Shire was the fastest growing area on the north coast. The beginnings of the conservation movement meant that even local papers reported stories of residents becoming cynical about the kind of development that was going on and they are becoming really interested in the “rape of the beaches” as an environmental issue. This continued into the 1970s. It showed a real change in

human understanding what it means to live in such an amazing place as this. In 1975 the South Solitary Island Lighthouse was automated - and again that was another change to our relationship with this area.”

“However, it was not until 1991 that a marine reserve was declared. This became a Marine Park in 1998 and in 2003 the Coffs Coast Regional Park was established. The Regional Park contains 365 acres (148 hectares) of coastal land that varies from 1km wide in some locations to just 10m in others. It is an incredibly unique regional park - it protects nine threatened plant species, four endangered ecological communities and many important historical sites.

Access to Sapphire Beach is from four main points, as well as a number of small walking tracks from the bushes leading to housing estates.




The main entry is from Lakeside Drive, which has limited parking, a picnic table and a walkway also up to the headland. Access is also to the grass reserve and children’s swings, at the northern end at Crystal Drive, but there are no toilets there!

From the Crystal Drive entry point is across a large tree lined grassed reserve, which also has a small playground with a set of children’s swings and a picnic table. Along the beach north there are also several walking beach tracks.

There’s also an entry from the Sapphire Beach Holiday Park as well as three small walkways from the housing estates onto North Sapphire Beach.

Another entry point from a set of steps which lead down from the North Sapphire Beach Housing Estate also housing the Beachstone Café and a children’s playground, as well as toilets. Though the steps have had a ‘rough time’ in recent years, with parts floating off in high tides and the pylon footings exposed mid-air making it most unsafe. In what is probably its fourth rebuild it seems to now be ‘holding up’ better now and safe! But wait for the next extreme high tides to be really sure, especially the ones after cyclone backwashes from the north. Also, at the top of the steps is a viewing platform and seat.

The history of the steps more recent constructions is in the images below.

		
<p>Version 1 – The Ramp, which did not work!</p>	<p>Version 2 – The Steps mark two, having been pounded by high tides</p>	<p>Version 3 – The Current steps, still intact.</p>

Moonee Beach

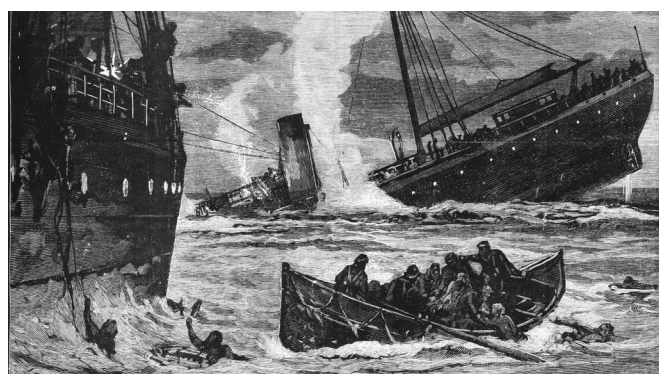


Photo: Moonee Beach Estuary at low tide.

The name Moonee comes from 'Munim-Munim', which is the Gumbaynggirr name for the area. It means 'rocky', reflecting the original importance of this place also the original importance of this place for axe-making. The early settler camping groups in Moonee area were involved in the shaping of stones.

The 1880s were a big decade for newcomers to the area and the history is fascinating. From 1884, South Solitary Island signal station was operated by the Dammerel family. Only a couple of years into what would become a 40-year job, there was a collision at sea between Keilawarra and Helen Nicoll.

As reported in the newspaper article on December 8, 2016, reliving the 1886 tragedy: Captain's ill-fated judgment left 40 people lost at sea after collision of SS Keilawarra and SS Helen Nicoll:



The newspaper reported "One hundred and thirty years ago today, many of the passengers aboard SS Keilawarra were just bedding down for the night as it steamed north on its way from Sydney to Brisbane. The captain, Nathan Gough Buttrey, had been warned by his chief officer that there were signs of smoke up ahead, a sure indication that there was another ship somewhere nearby."

“Scanning the horizon, the captain could see no lights but, worried that the smoke was masking another ship, he gave the order to send his vessel hard to port.”

“Unfortunately, this put the Keilawarra, a 61m steamer, directly on a collision course with SS Helen Nicoll, a steamship on its way to Sydney. The ships collided at about 8.20pm on December 8; the Helen Nicoll punching through the side of Keilawarra. The two ships jammed together. The captain only saw the lights of the other ship at the last moment and had no time to avoid the impact. Buttrey was one of 40 people who lost their lives that night as a result of the incident.”

Gold Fossicking in the olden days at Moonee.

Lone fossicker Frederick Fiddaman spent much of the 1880s searching for gold in the area, and evidence of his toils can still be seen at Diggers Point. A century later, locals protested long and hard, successfully preventing the area becoming a site for sewage ocean outfall. Only in 1995 were Look at Me Now Headland, Diggers Point, Emerald Beach and Bare Bluff added to the reserve.

Moonee was named best beach on the mainland for 2017 (in an extract from the Coffs Harbour Advocate 4/12/2016):

Moonee Beach was listed as number three on list of 101 Best Beaches 2017.

The Top 10 Beaches then were:

1. Cossies Beach, Cocos (Keeling) Islands.
2. Nudey Beach, Fitzroy Island.
- 3. Moonee Beach, Coffs Coast.**
4. Turquoise Bay, Coral Coast WA.
5. Burleigh Heads, Gold Coast.
6. Maslin Beach, Adelaide.
7. Dolly Beach, Christmas Island.
8. Shelly Beach, Nambucca Heads.
9. Boat Harbour Beach, NW Tasmania.
10. Apollo Bay, Great Ocean Rd, Victoria



It further went on to state “Thanks to the release of 101 Best Beaches 2017 by beach expert Brad Farmer, everyone will know how good Moonee Beach is. Farmer named Moonee Beach at number three on his list calling it ‘the perfect destination for relaxing saltwater therapy that doesn't cost the earth’. In fact, the local region boasts two beaches in the top 10 after Shelley's Beach at Nambucca Heads was listed at number eight.”

Number one on the list is the newly named Cossies Beach in the Cocos (Keeling) Islands, which is a four-and-a-half-hour flight from Perth, closer to Jakarta than

the Western Australian coast. Number two is Nudey Beach on Fitzroy Island, a short boat ride from Cairns. Moonee is the easiest to access of the three.

With the above two being on islands, it means Moonee Beach has been rated by Farmer as the best mainland beach in the country. When talking about Moonee Beach, Farmer said it was a given a well-deserved high rating.

“It is a visual feast, relaxed vibe and any number of aquatic activities on and around this natural postcard setting, magic Moonee is simply one of the finest beach regions in the country,” Farmer said.

“From the gently flowing tidal creek of various depths and moods, to the quality surf breaks facing the open ocean and the generous picnicking foreshores along Moonee Creek and in the vicinity of the Green Bluff headland, accessed over a short footbridge.”

Moonee is not just a beach, it is a growing residential area, with a large shopping complex catering for all residents north of the Coffs Harbour Plaza. It also has a popular hotel – The Moonee Beach Hotel and a number of new housing estates under construction. There is now also a fully paved walking/riding track from Sapphire Beach, making access to the adjoining area more accessible.

The Moonee Beach Nature Reserve



This reserve is home for some rare and unique species, including endangered bats which roost in seaside caves. Pockets of coastal rainforest thrive and pandanus trees flourish.

There are also the threatened and uncommon plant communities grow on the exposed headlands of Bare Bluff (the next headland north of Moonee) and the confidently named Look at Me Now headland. This place of magnificent scenic views and glorious coastline is the traditional homeland of the Gumbaynggirr people who value Look at Me Now Headland as an important and powerful Aboriginal

heritage site. Moonee’s Look at Me Now Headland walk It is an easy hike along to Emerald Beach’s Look at Me Now Headland walk, with scenic views all the way and a lookout over Moonee Beach.

The area caters for fishing, swimming, surfboard riding, diving and snorkelling in the ocean and the more sheltered estuary, which is part of Solitary Islands Marine Park and ideal for kids. It is also a great place for picnicking, hiking, canoeing, birdwatching and seasonal whale watching. Binoculars are handy here for spotting white-bellied sea eagles, ospreys and Brahminy Kites (formerly known as the red-backed sea-eagle) as they hunt along the coast.

Little bent-winged bats roost in nursery caves on the headland of Moonee Beach Nature Reserve. Producing only one offspring each year and being particularly vulnerable to disturbance by humans, they are, unsurprisingly, an endangered species. Five threatened plant species survive in the salt spray and

shallow soil on the surface of the headlands. To the untrained eye these plant communities, hidden within the grass, don't look like much. But to a botanist they are EEC (ecologically endangered communities), and their plight probably keeps some of them awake at night.

The reserve also protects a great variety of vegetation communities, including spinifex, eucalyptus woodland, mangrove, blackbutt forest and coastal rainforest. A wetland is located in the northern part of the reserve, to the west of Fiddamans Beach.

The four headlands in the park support the only known wild populations of the endangered plant *Zieria Prostrata* (a shrub known for its ground covering mats and native to the area. Rare plant communities also occur on the headlands, including Dwarf Heath, Bare Twig Rush and headland grasslands. Open swamp *Melaleuca* woodland occurs along the western edges of the reserve. The sandy plain between Moonee Creek and the frontal dune is dominated by wet *Banksia* heathland. Small stands of *Casuarinas* and *Eucalypts* occur next to Moonee Creek

Moonee Creek



This is a tidal creek which is accessed at the estuary in the Moonee Creek Reserve and heads upstream with an incoming tide.

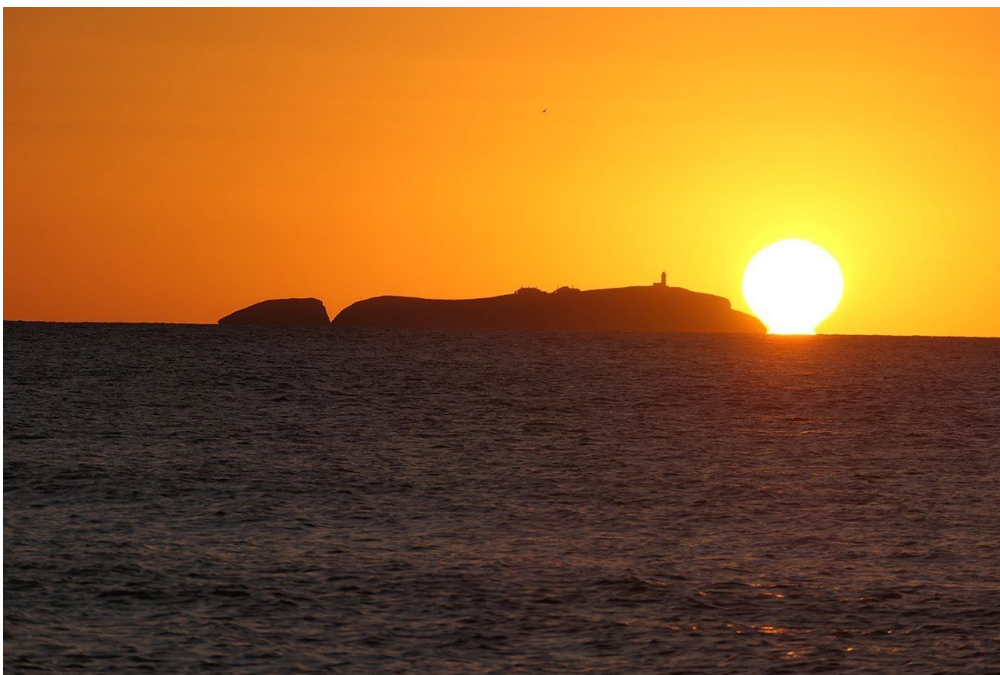
The estuary is strongly tidal and advance planning is recommended to time the paddle to coincide with the appropriate tide conditions.

Entry is at the estuary at Moonee Creek Reserve and heading upstream with an incoming tide and winding north as the creek twists and turns and the landscape slowly changes from mangroves to *melaleuca* and large

eucalypts.

There is also a great picnic spot near the Tiki Walk bridge, which is about an hour upstream. The beach is accessible from the bridge. Also, near the bridge, there is a creek to the left which can be explored almost to the highway. It is about 1.5 hours upstream until the main creek becomes too narrow to navigate. In the upper reaches there is abundant fish and bird life.

The South Solitary Island Lighthouse



These two views tell a story. The top aerial photo shows the lighthouse and cottages, but it has the lighthouse positioned in the north. More correctly is my sunrise photo putting the lighthouse at the southern end of the island. My photo was taken looking east from Sapphire Beach, which I see very day, when walking with my puppies on the beach.

South Solitary Islands Lighthouse.

The lighthouse was first exhibited (lit up) on 15th March 1880. George Dammerel was the first lighthouse keeper, moving down from the Clarence River area in 1882.

George Dammerel was born at Kingsbridge, Devon, England in 1838. He came to Australia in 1857 to farm in the New England area. He married Sarah Prior at Glen Innes in 1868. They moved to Moonee in 1885, built a house and grew sugar cane.

The Signal Station started operating on 1 July 1892. It was established on Dammerel's land by the NSW Marine Board to communicate with the Lighthouse at South Solitary Island. George was made Signal Master, assisted by his wife and family, who all became competent with the signalling methods.

He retired in 1917-8 and several members of his extended family operated the station until 1923-4, when the harbour front at Coffs Harbour took over as the point from which direct communication was maintained with the Island. (Extracted from a Coffs Collections article, accessed from <https://coffs.recollect.net.au/nodes/view/69391>)

It is located approximately 15 kilometres northeast of Coffs Harbour. It is considered the most isolated lighthouse on the New South Wales coast. It was the first in New South Wales to use kerosene over colza oil, and the last to do so before converting to electric power on 22 August 1975, the lighthouse was electrified, using solar power.

The tower is 12m from the ground to the lantern and is made of mass concrete. Three levels of cast-iron stairs lead to the lantern room on top of the tower.

The island is 41.5m above the high-water mark. It contains 5.26ha of land. It's shape is that of a lion, high at one end and tapering down to the other. It is actually cut in two to the south with a 9m deep water passage, which small fishing boats can pass through. There is also a flying fox to enable crossing over landside.

As with all lighthouses today it is unmanned and has been since it was automated in December 1975. It still has the three lighthouse keeper's cottages for the keepers and their families. Way back in the manned lighthouse era, the head lighthouse keeper had the first shift (sunset to 10pm), with the other two lighthouse keepers working alternating shifts from 10pm to 2am and from 2am to sunrise.

Helicopter flights operate to the island by Precision Helicopters during the year between June and September, on the 1st and 3rd Saturday. The trip includes a walking and guided tour. This is done under the control of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

George Dammerel's - of the lighthouse – family background.

George Dammerel was born on April 5, 1837, at Plymouth, in the U.K. George Dammerel said Plymouth people are born web-footed. When they can walk, they make for the water, so he made for the sea.

After a short period at serving at sea George arrived in Australia about 1857. He went bush where he worked for a James Tyson.

He met and married Sarah Prior and they made their home at Wandsworth, near Guyra, where he acquired a sheep and wheat farming property and where the first of his children were born.

In 1884 he applied for and was granted some Crown Land near Moonee, immediately north of Fiddamans Creek. Perhaps the 'webbed feet' were itching. How proudly he would have shown his wife from the inland, the glorious view which opened as they saw Mt Coramba, the sandhills, the islands and the blue sea!

He suffered a sad loss in his family when his son George Jnr., died on the 5th of April 1888. Dammerel believed his son died from eating green cucumbers and from then on, he would not allow them in the house again, by all accounts he probably died of appendicitis.

Tragedy, again came on the 10th of November 1894 when his wife died in childbirth at their home, aged 43 years. Doctor Watson from Grafton was in attendance, but his efforts were fruitless to save either her or the baby, the latter being born dead, his wife was buried beside George Jnr.

After her death, George Dammerel carried on with the operating of the Signal Station and to rear his family. The eldest daughter, Hannah, was then about 22 years of age and upon her fell most of the responsibility of the housekeeping and bringing up the younger children. On the 1st of March 1900, Hannah was married to Leonard Robert Rudder at the Dammerel Homestead and the responsibility was then passed to Matilda for a short time as she then married on the 25th of April 1905 to Charles Fox Julius. By this time the other children were growing up.

Still there was always duty, and so George raised his family until finally he went to live with one of his daughters, whose husband also was a lighthouse keeper. There he was lovingly cared for, still beside his beloved sea, until he passed away at the age of 96 years.

George Dammerel's remains were cremated and the ashes were scattered on the sea, between the North and South Solitary Islands, directly opposite the old Signal Station, half a mile off land, by his old friend Captain Hunter, Master of the S.S. Wollongba.

Matilda's husband, Charles Fox Julius had a small farm plot, at Central Bucca. Tragically, Charles died on the 28th of November 1909, aged 31, in Grafton Hospital after 52 days of suffering from internal injuries received in a farming accident, leaving his wife with two small children, William Warner known as "Warner" aged two, and Doreen Hope, ten months.

Later when the widowed Matilda married Albert Johnson, they had two more children, Albert and Athol. After Matilda's marriage to Charles Julius, another of Mr Dammerel's daughters, Sarah Eliza Maud (known as Maud), was doing most of the signal work which she had become most efficient at. Whilst using Morse Lamp, she began to discover her love for one of the Lightkeepers out at lighthouse.

The late Mrs George Drury, who was formerly Jessie Cowling, remembered that whilst camping at Shelly Beach at Christmas time 1911, she watched the words of love being exchanged by morse light between Maud Dammerel and John Henry (Harry) Fisher,

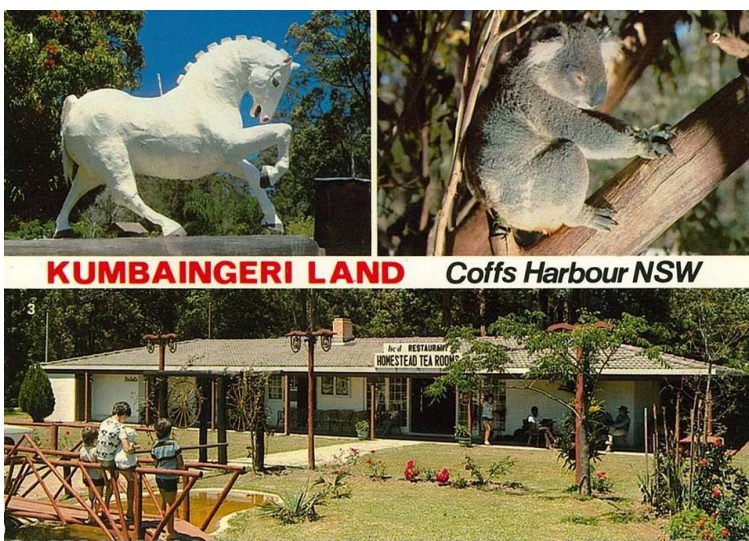
Maud and Harry's conversations by morse light would go on for some time. On occasions Harry came across to Shelly Beach in a rowboat to picnic with Maud at the beach. This most certainly

was quite an accomplishment as later he would have to row back again and go on duty for his 'watch' at the Light. Maud was also quite energetic as she would have to climb the rope ladder up the Signal mast to the Crow's Nest where she had a wide view of the surrounding area. Maud and Harry Fisher were married at Dammerels homestead on 18th September 1912.

After Maud and Harry were married and had left the area Dammerel carried on with the operations of the Signal Station for a few more years until about 1918.

The South Solitary light could be seen twenty-one nautical miles away in clear weather. What a comfort it must have been to ships, wending their way up and down the coast, to see that friendly light.

Kumbaingerie Zoo (The Coffs Harbour Zoo) – closed in 207 and has since been re-developed as a housing estate.



The Coffs Harbour Zoo suddenly closed on Monday, July 5, 2007, which was a shock to staff and volunteers, as well as locals!

(The Coffs Harbour Advocate of 2/2/2007) - Accessed 16/08/22 stated:

“The closure will saw 10 staff lose their jobs and it also affected about 70 volunteers who helped out at the Moonee animal park.”

“Coffs Harbour Zoo project manager Troy Saville said he was not advised of the closure until late yesterday. The news was a shock to

local zoo staff, who were expecting a major renovation of the animal park to begin the following week.”

“There is a whole heap of people this will affect and I haven't digested it yet,” Mr Saville said.

“There have been persistent rumours that the zoo had been sold, but Mr Saville said he had received no information on any sale.” He said the Japanese owners, Mr Shinichi Otani and Mr Taketo Kurosawa, would make a public announcement later that day through their Australian solicitors.

Mr Saville said many of the Zoo's animals were registered to participate in species management programs, so would be moved to other zoos in the program. Troy Saville, who has been the zoo projects manager, says the closure will be a significant blow to local tourism, and could indirectly cost up to \$2.5 million annually. He says arrangements have been made for the few remaining animals. The zoo's echidnas were donated to the Currumbin wildlife sanctuary last year and Mr Saville said it was likely the koalas would also move to Currumbin.

Coffs Harbour Zoo Sold Again – Accessed from: The Australian Financial Review – August 3, 2009.

The Kazal Bros has sold the former Coffs Harbour Zoo for \$3.5 million to an undisclosed Sydney family. Director Karl Kazal bought the 125-hectare property for \$2.4 million in late 2006. The site is not residential but has 1.2 km of beachfront reserve over five individual titles.

The appreciation in price shows a 45.8 per cent increase in value at a time when most values have been static or falling. Jones Lang La Salle agents Anthony Bray and Leslie Cheng negotiated the deal. The new owners say they intend to keep the land as a holding for nature conservation. (The previous owners had only purchased the zoo on Monday July 5, 2007).

Look At Me Now Headland - part of the Moonee Beach Reserve Area.



This is an important Aboriginal site of deep significance to local Gumbaynggirr people. Preservation of this natural environment is also important to the broader community, and in 1989, over 5,000 people marched in a rally in Coffs Harbour to prevent destruction of the headland and adjacent beaches.

It is an easy walk and wheelchair accessible with scenic views all the way and a spectacular outlook of Moonee Beach. Look At Me Now Headland is an awesome place for whale watching in winter and bird watching in spring. Eastern Grey

kangaroos are abundant but don't get too close as they are powerful creatures that may attack if they feel threatened.

National Parks & Wildlife Service provides information panels giving details about the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the area, as well as flora and fauna that you may come across. The walk is short and tranquil, offering fabulous scenic views far out to sea. From the lookout, you will have a clear view of the Moonee Beach Reserve, and Mt Coramba to the West. It is a perfect spot for whale watching and there is access to the beach.

All year Eastern Grey kangaroos can be sighted these nibbling on the grass, and White-bellied Sea Eagles, Ospreys, and Brahminy Kites soaring above the coastline in search of prey. There are also a few threatened Zieria, a rare plant with glossy, tough leaves and pink and white blossoms in spring.

The name of Look at Me Know Headland is believed to involve a picnic at Shelly Beach where an Englishman, showing off to the girls of the local Skinner family, took off on horseback with the Skinner boys through some low wetlands and upon his return to the picnic, covered in mud, said "look at me now!" (LAMN Arts Project Committee 2000)



Emerald Beach

Is located next along the coast, just north of Look at Me Now Headland, at the end of Fiddaman Road, with a reserve at the entry. It is a quiet beach and a safe swimming beach.

There is also a beach walk around to Look at Me Now Headland or head to the playground in the park behind the beach. Emerald Beach also has a good-sized residential population and this extends over to Emerald Heights on the western side of the highway.

Shelly Beach

Is a small beach located on the northern side of Look at Me Now Headland, accessed from the Look at Me Now Headland track. A moderately protected beach located between Dammerels Head and Look at Me Now Headland. The walk to Look at Me Now headland is a favourite activity. If you're lucky you might catch a glimpse of the local kangaroos.

Fiddamans Beach

Is located between Emerald Beach and Sandy Beach. It is separated by Bare Bluff to the north at Sandy Beach and Diggers Point to the south towards Emerald Beach. It's best road access is from Ironbark Road at the southern end of Sandy Beach. Fiddamans Beach extends for 1km between the bluff and the smaller Diggers Point.

It faces southeast resulting in a higher energy, double bar rip-dominated beach. The inner bar is usually cut by five rips with permanent rips against each headland, and more widely spaced rips on the outer bar.

The beach is backed by vegetated dunes extending a few hundred metre behind the northern end. Access to the beach is limited to the walk from Sandys Beach in the north and a track via Digger Point in the south. Consequently, this energetic and potentially hazardous beach receives few users other than occasional surfers and fishers.

Sandy Beach



Sandy Beach is located just south of Woolgoolga and the next beach north from Emerald Beach and is accessed from Sandy Beach Drive. At the southern headland of Sandy Beach is Bare Bluff.

It is a long beach with a reserve running its entire length. At the southern end of the beach there is some protection from Bare Bluff, and Groper Island located 3km offshore, resulting in a continuous bar and waves less than a metre. However, there are a few rocks in the surf.

There is a boat launching access located towards the southern end of the beach. A 'sand blow' (a

gap between the dunes) from the adjacent to the south, Fiddamans Beach which spills onto the southern corner and provides a sandy access to the neighbouring beach.

In his book 'A Place Called Sandy - A short history of Sandy Beach, by Dr Alan J. Scott, in 2021, the author wrote in an extract from chapter two of his book:

At 'Sandy'

The place that is called 'Sandy' by locals has been identified as such for around 160 years. However, for most of that time it was neither called Sandy Beach, nor Sandy's Beach. For 103 years the official name was Sandy Headland. Sandy Headland was an area of 115ha extending from the inland side of the beach between the two headlands to what is now part of Solitary Islands Way (previously Graham Drive).

It was gazetted as Village Reserve no.17, being one of a series of Village Reserves made by the states in 1861. This was changed in 1886 by the NSW Government when it was identified as a village and a water reserve. Quite how it could become a water reserve is not clear to us today.

However, some of the older documents identify Hearn's Lake (located approximately midway between Sandy Beach and Woolgoolga which could account for water storage. John Szabo, a local first Australian, has indicated that bullock drivers (when carting timber to the mills) usually watered their animals at Sandy Headland, probably at what is now Hearn's Lake.

This conjecture is supported by an event that occurred when the bullock drivers discovered a Gumbayngirr women's place called, 'Mary's Waterhole' near Hearn's Lake. The bullock drivers decided to dynamite it in order to make the waterhole bigger for their oxen to drink from. They only succeeded in cracking the underlying rock which caused the water to disappear.

Sandy Headland was surrounded by the Weelgoolga cattle run which gave it a connection to Woolgoolga and from there to Grafton. It was eventually sold for a homestead and farm. The first people to farm there were V. and W. Redpath, who were recorded in 1887 as occupiers of the land which was described as being in Moonee Parish.

Sandy Beach today has grown considerably and residents also now enjoy a new beachfront parkland and reserve with a fantastic - new children's playground. It has a shared population with Emerald Beach (2022) of 5603 and is growing fast! It's public school opened in 1985 and is one of the 'younger' public schools on the northern beaches just behind Mullaway Public School which opened in 1994. It has a student population of 382.

Woolgoolga

How it was named is best described in this article – extracted and edited article from: website <http://www.nsw.com.au/woolgoolga/history.html> (accessed on 24/11/22).

There is some evidence that the town's name came from an original run owned by Thomas Small which was called 'Weelgoolga'. No one knows exactly what this word means but it is believed it was used by the local Aborigines as a term to describe both the entire area and the lilly-pilly trees which grew in the area.

By the 1830s cedar cutters were in the area but it wasn't until the 1870s that any permanent European settlement occurred. The village, originally known as 'Woogoolga' was officially gazetted in 1888. The name was changed to Woolgoolga in 1966.

By the end of the 19th century timber milling and the cutting of cedar were important in the area although Woolgoolga was never a major timber milling centre. Apart from the timber activity there were a number of attempts to farm a variety of crops.

By the 1890s there was a jetty near the town centre, which was being used by the sawmills and there was some sugar farming in area. Though the area proved unsatisfactory for sugar cane. By the turn of the century bananas were being grown but it was not until around the 1930s that they were grown with any success.

Around the turn of the century a substantial number of Indian migrants, probably attracted to the area by banana farming, moved south from Queensland and settled. They are the ancestors of the modern town's substantial Sikh community. They were the descendants of Punjabi migrants who had originally come to Australia to work on the Queensland cane fields.

Today the Sikhs represent about 25 per cent of the total population of Woolgoolga. They are a mixture of the descendants of the original settlers and immigrants who, over the past century, have come to join relatives and to marry within the community. Today Woolgoolga is an interesting and peaceful seaside holiday destination. It has the usual attractions of swimming, surfing and fishing. This is distinctively modified by its unique Indian and Sikh connections.



The Guru Nanak (**Gurdwara**) Sikh Temple. Gurdwara meaning temple. This is the site where a small Sikh temple was built in 1969. The need for this temple came about as the population of Sikh residents started to grow after World War Two. The temple was

Sikhism was founded in 1469 by Guru Nanak Dev ji (the name of this temple is in remembrance of the first Sikh Guru). He was the first of ten human gurus. The term Guru means teacher and the word Sikh means to learn or disciple.

In 1999, with a growing community, it was decided the temple would be upgraded. Worth more than \$4 million, the new temple was built using funds that were sourced only through donations from Sikh residents across Australia, with Dr More saying committee members travelled from Cairns in the north all the way down to Melbourne to rally for funds. The original building, which was heritage-listed last year, remains on site.

Woolgoolga has three beaches. Back Beach, Main Beach and Safety Beach.

Woolgoolga's Back Beach



On the south side of the Woolgoolga headland, Back Beach is the good place to ride the board, fish or walk the dog, also to watch the kite surfers. Though surfers must be aware of the dangerous rips that appear on a regular basis.

A short walk to the north is the headland. Trending to the south for 1.8 km is a sandy foreland formed in lee of Flat Top Point, which is a reef extending 500m offshore.

Vehicles are also allowed on the beach, particularly of the four-wheel drive variety, with good off-road access. Walking access is provided from the headland and via the rubbish tip in the centre. Vegetated dunes back the entire beach, with a low swampy area, including the sewerage treatment behind in the centre. A small creek also breaks out across the southern end of the beach.

The beach faces east and receives waves averaging 1.5 m, which form a double bar in the north, merging to a single bar in the lee of Flat Top Point. You can also walk up a path to the lookout to get a great view to the south towards Emerald and Moonee, as well as a good view of the Solitary Islands.

Woolgoolga's Main Beach



Is located off Beach Street and popular for surfing, fishing, diving and snorkelling, Woolgoolga Beach is home to the Woolgoolga Surf Life Saving Club and is patrolled daily during most of the summer between 9am and 3pm.

The beach has tidal rock platforms which are popular with the children, a boat ramp at the southern end, beach showers, toilets, and change rooms.

The beach is also within close proximity to cafes, boutique clothes shops, accommodation, children's playground facilities, electric barbecues, and

sheltered picnic areas.

The town population is near 6000, of which 1300 are Sikhs. The main entry to the beach is through the town centre and the Solitary Islands Way from the north and south. The south entry takes you through River Street and the famous Guru Nanak Sikh Temple.

Safety Beach



Is located just north of Woolgoolga's Main Beach and adjoins Woolgoolga Main Beach at Woolgoolga Lake.

To the north is Darkum Beach in Mullaway. Access to the beach is from Woolgoolga Main Beach northern end across the tidal Woolgoolga Lake outlet, or by road at Safety Beach Drive.

It has a new housing estate, a golf course and is nearby to the Woolgoolga High School and Woolgoolga Cemetery.

Beaches and suburbs north of Woolgoolga include Mullaway, Arrawarra, Corindi, Red Rock and Wooli, as well as a number of smaller beaches.

North of Woolgoolga are a number of beaches.

There are also several smaller beaches. Some more difficult to access. They are Darkum and Cabins beaches.

Darkum Beach Mullaway



Is a small beach located between Safety Beach and Mullaway. It's access is via Darkum Beach Road. It is a long sandy beach running adjacent to Darkum Creek.

Cabins Beach, Mullaway



It is a neat little beach just south of Mullaway Headland. Accessible via the Mullaway Headland Track. This beach gets its name from the Mullaway Beach Holiday Cabins that are located nearby.

Mullaway Beach



Mullaway Beach and Headland is 7kms north of Woolgoolga. The beach and headland sit in a sleepy hamlet that's highly regarded among fishermen and surfers alike.

It has a good beach to spend time fishing, swimming or bodyboarding as well it has great fishing and waves, there's a small picnic area, with BBQ facilities and children's playground complete with swings.

Mullaway Beach (NSW 86) extends due south from Ocean View Headland for 700 m to 15 m high Mullaway Head (Fig. 4.46).

A few houses back each headland, with a vegetated dune behind the beach and a small creek crossing the southern end. The road runs around the rear of the dunes, with parking and access is provided on each low headland. The beach consists of a single bar, usually cut by 2-3 beach rips, with permanent rips against each headland. The beach breaks are popular with surfers when the banks and conditions are right, with a right point break off the southern rocks.

Arrawarra Beach



Arrawarra is a holiday coastal village just 6Km north of Woolgoolga and lying between the coast and the Pacific Highway.

Surrounded by beautiful bushland, Arrawarra offers an ideal holiday spot to those wanting the sun sand and surf without the hectic pace of the larger communities. It is home to the well-known Arrawarra Headland point break. It is also home to Darlington/Lorikeet Park and is patrolled during the peak in summer.

The rocks that border Corindi Beach interrupt an otherwise long curving strip of sand that extends for 10 km between Red Rock and Arrawarra Headland. The 350 m long beach lies behind two shallow reefs linked to irregular shore platforms, together with rocks in the centre.

As a result, waves breaking over the reefs reducing waves to less than 0.5 m at the beach, which combines with the medium to coarse sand, plus some gravel and cobbles to form a steep, reflective beach. However, rips form against the rocks. The beach is backed by a reserve and caravan park, then the growing town of Corindi which has a population of 600.

The beach is patrolled by lifeguards during the summer holidays. South of the rocks the beach continues south for 3.2 km as Corindi-Arrawarra beach (NSW 83), terminating when the small Arrawarra creek drains across the beach. This beach is backed by the expanding township of Corindi in the north then as series of large beachfront caravan parks, including the Darlington/Lorikeet Park and one by the creek mouth.

The beach sand becomes finer to the south as the beach becomes increasingly protected by Arrawarra Headland. As a result, the beach has a double bar system in the centre and north, with rips cutting the inner bar, a deep trough and rhythmic outer bar, while in the south is a wide, low gradient attached bar, cut by occasional rips. The creek mouth is usually shallow, with low flows and not a major hazard.

This beach has increased in popularity since the opening up of beachfront caravan parks, each with their own access track across the low foredune to the beach. Between Arrawarra Creek mouth and the Headland is a low gradient, 750m long beach composed of fine sand, and facing the northeast.

The road runs to the back of the beach with an open picnic area and boat launching across the beach. Waves refracting round the headland produce the point break for which the spot is well known.

By the time the waves reach the beach however they are only a few decimetres high. Consequently, the beach is wide with a shallow attached bar, with no rips, but a current running down the beach when the waves are breaking. The University of New England has a zoology field

station on the low grassy headland. The headland itself is composed of 250-million-year-old marine shales and slates, which outcrop all the way down to Macauleys Head in Coffs Harbour.

Ocean View Beach, Arrawarra



Extending for 3km south of Arrawarra Headland is a series of three headland all composed of fine-grained metasedimentary rocks, with a total of four exposed east-facing beaches (NSW 85-88) bounded by the rocky promontories.

The first is Ocean View Beach (NSW 85) which curves for 900 m between the prominent Arrawarra Head and 30 m high Ocean View Headland. The road to Arrawarra Headland runs along the rear of the beach, providing access to a southern and central parking area and houses backing the northern and southern sections, including some of Ocean View headland.

The beach faces due east but receives slight protection from the southern headland. It is composed of medium sand resulting in a single bar, with rocks also occupying the northern 300 m of surf. Usually, 3-4 rips cut across the bar, with a strong permanent rip against the northern rocks and a lesser one against the southern headland.

Corindi



Corindi means 'grey' in local indigenous language which refers to the pipeclay on the beach. It is surrounded by the Tasman Sea to the east and the Pacific Highway to the west. The 30° south latitude line runs just north Corindi Beach.

It was originally known as Pipeclay Beach until a name change in 1954, to 'Corinda', until a forced change to be provided postal service to avoid confusion or by Red Bank as Corindi River was formerly known, is a beach and small seaside farming town located on the Mid North Coast, north of Arrawarra.

The 'village' is situated 33 kilometres north of Coffs Harbour and 50 kilometres south of Grafton. The original village of Corindi was slightly north along the Pacific Highway at Post Office Lane and Casson Close.

It is the site of the Yarrawarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre which provides information on the Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal people's history and customs. Presently and traditionally Gumbaynggirr land for at least 6000 years, possibly 20000 years, based on recent research.

A history Timeline of Corindi is shown here:

1840 An out-station of Captain John Pike's (a captain in the 73rd Regiment and multiple station owner from the Hunter Region) Glenugie Station.

1863 Corindi Station came to James Devlin after Pike's death.

1879 Corindi Station sold to Samuel Cohen (the first Mayor of Ulmarra).

1880 Land selections by settlers (including first by Casson on 22 July 1880)

1883 Cohen's general store.

1884 School opened.

1886 Casson's mail and passenger coach.

pre-1888 Casson's Accommodation house.

1901 School moved to Upper Corindi location.

1909 Corindi Co-op Cheese Co cheese factory opened.

1909 Recreation and Racecourse Reserve gazetted.

1911 Corindi Public Hall opened.

1913 Corindi Cemetery gazetted.

1915 Corindi Public School moved to current location at Corindi Beach.

1915 Richards' 'Corindi Crossing' Subdivision south of school.

1941 Simmons' 'Pipeclay' Subdivision of Pacific Street

1962 Electricity connected

1980 Highway deviation west of town making Coral St a local road.

1980s Corindi Dam created.

1980s Yarrawarra Aboriginal Corporation established.

1986 Amble Inn opened

1980s Subdivision of inside of Pacific Street.

2002 Corindi Park estate subdivision

2007 Corindi Beach estate subdivision.

2015 Pacific Highway upgrade re-alignment further west starts.

Corindi Beach



At the northern end of the Coffs Coast, Corindi Beach offers a decent backdrop for surfing, swimming, and snorkelling enthusiasts. At the 2016 census, Corindi Beach had a population of only 1686.

Corindi Beach, was historically also known as Pipeclay Beach until a name change in 1954. (Pipeclay is a highly plastic greyish-white clay used especially in making tobacco pipes and for whitening leather).

The village is situated 33 kilometres north of Coffs Harbour and 50 kilometres south of Grafton. The original village of Corindi is slightly north along the

Pacific Highway at Post Office Lane and Casson Close.

Corindi is surrounded by the Tasman Sea to the east and the Pacific Highway (A1) to the west. The 30° south latitude line runs just north of Corindi Beach.

Corindi Beach Reserve stretches from MacDougall St, Corindi Beach in the south along the Corindi Beach and Red Rock Beach to Pipeclay Lake and the surrounding wetland forest. The reserve boasts multiple easy walking trails, picnic areas by Pipeclay Lake and on Corindi Beach Headland.

The Corindi Beach Holiday Park is right on the beach and has family-friendly amenities perfect for the beachside holiday. There's a brunch and coffee stop at Rafa's Cafe and there is a general store nearby.

Corindi has the largest blueberry farm in Australia. Corindi has a long farming history since being settled by Europeans mainly for cattle and dairy but more recently blueberries. Corindi has a strong Aboriginal culture, celebrated through the Aboriginal local community and the Aboriginal cultural centre.

A short drive from the beach is the Yarrawarra Aboriginal Centre, celebrating the culture of the Gumbaynggirr people. The Centre is home to an art gallery and museum and the Pipeclay Café offering gourmet bush tucker treats.

The reserve boasts multiple easy walking trails, picnic area by Pipeclay Lake and on Corindi Beach Headland. The historic racecourse dates back to early 1900s and has sporting fields and equestrian facilities within its boundary. The Corindi Beach Community Hall is available for hire for events.

The inaugural 'Bush2Beach' Festival, held on December 11, 2022, by the City of Coffs Harbour and the Corindi locals featured a whole lot of family community events to showcase Corindi and its beauty to the whole community.

The event featured a whole range of activities and events to entertain all the visitors including live bands, food stalls, Gumbaynggirr culture, local history photos, a photo comp, toy swap, skate and baseball jams

and prizes, as well as stories and a youth zone. Attendees were encouraged to bring their children along, as well as to bring out their “inner child” for all-ages play and enjoy their heaps of activities.

Within the reserve Black cockatoos, Brahminy Kites and many other birdlife and kangaroos and much more can be found within the reserve and dolphins and whales are spotted seasonally from the headland.

The Solitary Islands Coastal Walk skirts the reserve following the beach but a short detour is possible through the connected trails from Pipeclay Lake to Corindi Beach Headland via the local Racecourse.

It has been Gumbaynggir land for at least 30,000 years, possibly 120,000 years, based on recent research.

Pipeclay Beach

Pipeclay Beach is located adjacent to the growing town of Corindi. It extends to the south towards Arrawarra where it becomes Arrawarra Beach.

The Yarrawarra Cultural Centre, Corindi



Yarrowarra meaning 'happy meeting place' is the homeland of the Garby Elders in the Northern lowlands of Gumbaynggirr Nation.

The centre provides a venue for sharing the history and cultural values of the Elders and Ancestors. It includes the Wadjar Regional Indigenous Gallery, which exhibits traditional and contemporary art from regional First Nation artists from all over NSW.

The centre also includes the Jalumbo Cultural Heritage Keeping Place, displaying cultural artifacts from over 6000+ years of Gumbaynggirr life on the Mid North Coast.

The centre also includes the Nuralamee Conference and Accommodation Centre, sleeping up to 70 people and seating 150 in its hall and provides quality catering for business events, including a training venue, a place to hold weddings, birthdays, retreats and school cultural excursions.

The Gumbaynggirr people have lived on this land for thousands of years. The lands extend from the Nambucca River in the south to the Clarence River in the north.

The Yarrowarra Corporation was established in the 1980s. The corporation created the Aboriginal art gallery and museum on Red Rock Road to share the local traditional history and culture. The Yarrowarra Aboriginal Cultural Centre is the place to find out more and has an art gallery and a bush tucker food café.

Muurrbay Aboriginal Language and Culture Co-operative has recorded the local language to enable it to be taught. Locally significant areas include Red Rock Headland, No Man's Land - an area called by local Aboriginal people 'No man's land' is located beside the racecourse., behind the dunes. It has been home to the Gumbaynggirr Aboriginal community since the beginning of the last century.

'No man's land' is the term used by Tony Perkins, a local Elder, to describe this area of Crown land where Aboriginal people were able to live and gather food. This is land 'left' after white occupation had parcelled out the remaining territory into private ownership and control.

The term has come to mean the physical space which Aboriginal people reclaimed by squatting and gaining permissive occupancy. Other significant areas are The Old Farm, Arrawarra Fish Traps, Old Camp (Pipeclay Lake). The Yarrowarra Cultural Centre also manages the nearby bush tucker and medicine trail.

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Local Culture

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Red Rock



Is located at the most northern point of the Coffs Harbour Northern Beaches Area, being about 40kms north of Coffs Harbour and about 50kms south of Grafton.

Red Rock is a small quiet holiday/recreation village with a population of about 300 permanent residents. Its history is a little vague, but it is known to have been used as a fishing village. The area was otherwise settled by farmers during the early 1900s.

The name Red Rock comes from the many red rock formations that can be seen throughout the area, most notably at the Red Rock Headland and the neighbouring Little Beach. The rocks that make up the headland at Red Rock are named the Redbank Riverbeds.

The Red Rock itself is a twenty-metre-high headland composed of 300-million-year-old jasper, a form of red quartz. It is fun to wander around this ancient rock formation, especially the rockpools on the headland which are great to explore. It's infamous headland earned its status due to its history of being the final destination of a major massacre of the Gumbaynggir Indigenous people during the 1880s.

The area's 'Garby' Elders refer to Red Rock as 'Blood Rock' and speak of the brutality that occurred among the banks of the Red Rock River as the indigenous people fled from mounted and armed European/British Police. The headland was unfortunately the site where many Aboriginal people were driven off the cliff in the past. They lost their lives when they tried to swim across the river, which had turned red from all the blood. A memorial can be found on the Red Rock Headland to commemorate the events that took place in the area.

Red Rock Headland is part of the solitary islands coastal walk and is a significant place to the local Gumbaynggir people. Red Rock has Yuraygir National Park stretches sixty kilometres to the north and the Solitary Islands Marine Park stretches away to the south, Red Rock is tucked between the two in its own pristine little world.

Red Rock consists of a large recreation reserve and local riverside picnic area with playground equipment, a large caravan park and camping area. There is a Surf Club, which is active in the season, a convenience/take away shop near the entry and they also hire out small watercraft, for river experiences and fun. There is also a boat ramp for launching, from the park to the river. There is also the Red Rock Bowling Club and Restaurant, which is the 'central hub' of the village.

There are two two beaches - Main Beach south of the headland and Little Beach, to the They are separated by the Red Rock Headland. Main Beach is a long (5.2km) patrolled beach that extends south to Corindi Headland. Little Beach is unpatrolled but is known for having smaller surf and rock pools (at low tide) which is a good option for the little ones.

It has also hosted Junior Surf Life Saving Carnivals. Though Little Beach is also known for having a strong tidal channel at the northern end of the beach at the river entrance. Children must be supervised if swimming close to the river mouth. Both beaches are accessed via the Caravan Park/Surf Club entrance.

It is primarily a holiday village and most of the houses remain empty throughout the year except in the school holidays. where it is necessary to book though the camping ground can be booked years in advance. There is a surf lifesaving club, community centre, bowling club, a general store and caravan park. Red Rock is part of the South Solitary Islands reserve.

The area has lovely beach Main Beach can be dangerous and isn't recommended for children, but it provides excellent fishing and great shore break barrels which have been mastered by the local bodyboard surfers. It is easy to cross the estuary and explore the National Park to the north.

The Red Rock/Corindi River is a tidal creek that meets Little Beach at its northern end. The tidal currents can be very strong. During outgoing tides, it is recommended that people not swim, use surf craft or flotation devices and take extreme care if wading across the creek mouth. It has a row of shady Pandanus palms to shelter beneath.

Woolgoolga is the nearest major town centre for Red Rock and is located 18kms (15 minutes) south.

Northern Beaches Photo Galleries

There are 16 main beaches heading north and these are my photos of each of them, shot in winter 2023.

Diggers Beach

Charlesworth Bay

Smugglers at Korora Bay

Hills Beach

Riecks/Campbells/ Mid Sapphire Beach

Sapphire Beach

Moonee Beach

Emerald Beach

Sandy Beach

Woolgoolga Back Beach

Woolgoolga Main Beach

Safety Beach

Mullaway Beach

Arrawarra Beach

Corindi Beach

Red Rock Beach

Let the beach galleries begin!

Diggers Beach



The beach looking north



Houses overlooking the northern end



The main beach looking north



The southern end



In the low swell surf



The main entrance and a viewing platform



Reserve with covered areas and parking



The modern facilities and covered areas

Charlesworth Bay



The pathway to the beach



The south end with the boatshed



North end to the headland



The main beach



The main beach - wide angle view



One of the entries



The car parking area



The beach reserve

Korora Beach - Smugglers



The beach looking south to Diggers Headland



Out east from the beach



The northern end with rocks



Birds nesting on the rocks



The north end to the headland



The main beach entry



Smugglers resort on the beach



Welcome to Smugglers signage

Hills Beach



The headland end in the south



The northern end



Looking north



The rocks to the southern end



The lagoon



A picnic area near the sand



The playground and the reserve



Rocks near the reserve

Riecks Beach- also known locally as - Campbells Beach and Mid Sapphire Beach



The beach entry off Eloura Drive



Walk through the bushes to the beach



The bridge over the lagoon



The islands close to the beach



The middle of the beach at the back of Aqualuna



The lagoon outlet on the beach



Houses overlooking the beach



Aqualuna Resort on the beach

Sapphire Beach and North Sapphire Beach



The island at sunrise (Lighthouse Island)



Split Solitary Island peeping through the bushes



The southern end - sunrise peeping over the rocks



The beach entry through the reserve track



inside the southern end rocks at low tide



A board rider leaving the surf



Looking south towards the headland



Stand up paddle boarding the waves

Moonee Beach



The lagoon at the headland end with a bridge



The river at low tide



Looking eastwards



A long walk or swim out to the main beach



Playing on the mud flats



The reserve



The reserve towards the lakeside



The lagoon towards the holiday park

Emerald Beach



The headland end in the south



The northern end



The northern headland



A long walk/swim out to the main beach



Playing on the mudflats



The reserve onto the beach



The reserve towards the lakeside



East towards the holiday park

Sandy Beach



The entry to the narrow beach



Towards the northern end



Looking east



A clear horizon



The viewing platform



Out on a motorised wakeboard having fun



The reserve at the entry



The large open reserve

Woolgoolga Back Beach



Back Beach from the headland



Back Beach closer view



A closer look south along Back Beach



Looking south



The main beach



Flat Top Island



NW Solitary Island



Lighthouse Island from Back Beach

Woolgoolga Main Beach



Looking north along the beach



The southern end near the boat ramp



Looking at the main beach



Seagulls on the southern end



The main beach



The beach in action



The flags are up and swimmers in the water



The new surf club

Safety Beach



The beach looking south



**The watery entry to the beach
down the steps**



The lagoon at the entry



More of the lagoon



The rocks eastwards



Looking south



Looking south towards Woolgoolga



The parkland towards the beach entry

Mullaway Beach



The beach north of the steep entry steps



The southern end on the rocks



Looking towards Arrawarra Headland



Looking east towards the islands



Taking the board out to catch a small wave



Riding on a wave



The bottlebrushes and above the walkway



The bottlebrush awaiting the birds to feed

Arrawarra Beach



The beach steps down



Tracks from the boat trailers



At really low tide



Taking the board out to find a wave



Surfing the waves



Walking the beach to the north



The northern end



The south to the reserve and amenities

Corindi Beach



The beach looking south



Looking north



Looking eastwards



The beach with Lighthouse Island in the distance



The beach from the reserve



The beach entry



The reserve and amenities block



The parkland towards the beach entry

Red Rock - The river and the river reserve.



The river on the reserve



The riverbank



Looking out to the ocean



Marine life



The large reserve



The reserve with scattered picnic tables



Fishing on the riverbank



The riverbank off the reserve eastern end

The river and river reserve.



Canoe on the river



The riverbank park



Playing on the river flats



A family of seagulls sharing the space



Beach houses opposite the reserve



Houses opposite the reserve



**The Headland between the river
and the beach**



**A rock formation off the headland
on the beach**



Below the headland



The bushland towards the northern end



Onto the beach



The beach northern end to the headland



Looking down the coast



Lighthouse Island so far away



The beach



The beach entry