



The Hummock Lookout. Image copyright Picture Bundaberg Collection: bun01018.

Atop Bundaberg's highest point, with views of a brown and green patchwork of canefields, an azure sea, and the district of Bundaberg, sits The Hummock Lookout. It is probably now taken for granted that the public has access to this land and this view, but it wasn't always the case. Prior to the nineteen twenties the land was part of sugar plantations. But then the Bundaberg branch of the RACQ (Royal Automobile Club of Queensland) decided to take on the project of turning the top of the Hummock into a public lookout.

History of The Hummock

On his journey past the coast in 1799 Lieutenant Matthew Flinders named the hill he could see five kilometres south of Mon Repos beach The Sloping Hummock. Today it is more commonly called The Hummock. According to the online Oxford Dictionary the term 'hummock' means "a hillock or mound". Although a definitive measurement of the Hummock's Height could not be located (no two sources agree), J.Y. Walker, in his 1890 (reprinted 1977) publication *History of Bundaberg...*, states The Hummock is 260 feet (79 metres).

RACQ Bundaberg Branch

The Bundaberg branch formed in November 1924. There had previously been a motor club in Bundaberg for a few years from approximately 1913. However, the small number of cars around at the time contributed to a declining interest and the club disbanded. By 1924, and with an estimated 500 cars in the district, a new motoring club once again became desirable.

In the Council chambers on Monday 10 November 1924, with RACQ State President Mr W. Johnson present, the new club was formed and the office bearers elected. At the annual meeting of the branch in February 1927 President Finemore declared that the club wished to establish a scenic lookout on top of the Hummock.

The Hummock Lookout

For some time the Club had their eyes on this property, realising what a wonderful asset it would be to the district if this hill could be purchased and access to the summit secured.¹ - RACQ Bundaberg branch President D.S.M. Finemore at the official opening ceremony of the Hummock Lookout.

The commemorative plaque on the Hummock states that the land was purchased by the RACQ Bundaberg branch on 8 October 1930. On 16 July 1930 the Club expressed interest in acquiring the property from a Mr H. Turner, and on 30 July 1930 the committee had decided to purchase the property as soon as the land survey had been completed. In the weekly RACQ Notes section of *The Bundaberg Daily Times* on 6 August 1930, it was stated that the Club had purchased the land.



Hummock Lookout commemorative plaque (P. Browne)



Hummock road ca1960s. Image copyright Picture Bundaberg Collection: bun01332.

Much hard work went into the making of the lookout. The first task was to have the road to the top constructed. Mr F.E. Franke was contracted to build the road and started work on Monday 27 October 1930 with the expectation that, weather permitting, the road would be finished before Christmas. On 12 November it was reported that the completion of the road was not far away, and on 7 January 1931 after everyone had returned from the Christmas break, the RACQ

Bundaberg branch reported that the road had been finished.

Numerous working bees were held by members of the club to clear the land, erect fences, plant palm trees, and cart water to the site. There was also regular maintenance to be done. Many local Bundaberg businesses and people donated materials and cash to help establish the lookout.

The Bundaberg branch of the RACQ had made an appeal for the public to donate funds for the construction of the lookout. Initially the response was pleasing, but by a couple of months later donations had slowed down considerably. As of December 1930 £35 had been donated, and by February 1931 only £44 had been received. The depressed economic situation at the time did not help matters.

The Club purchased the property using club funds, as they had always intended, but expected that the public would help to cover the costs of building the road and beautifying the lookout. They went ahead with developing the lookout, trusting that the public would get behind the project and provide support once the site was easily accessible by vehicle and they could see the progress that had been made.

The amount spent by the Club up to the opening ceremony was £240. In order to raise much needed funds the club organised community singing events every second Sunday evening from 30 August 1931. The funds raised from these events would go towards the beautification of the Hummock site.

The Opening Ceremony

Although it had been accessible to the public, and a popular spot, for some time beforehand, the RACQ Hummock Lookout was officially opened on Saturday 17 October 1931. The opening ceremony was attended by over 1000 people, including special guest Mr B.F. Lloyd, State President of the RACQ. One hundred cars were parked on top of the Hummock and buses left the Post Office in Bundaberg at 2pm in order to convey their passengers to the site for the 3pm ceremony.



View from The Hummock to Bargara. Image copyright Picture Bundaberg Collection: bun01523.

The Caledonian Pipe Band provided the music for the escort of the official party, and also throughout the afternoon. Ladies had organised stalls and afternoon tea, and many competitions and entertainments were on offer. The money raised from these stalls and competitions would be used to



further improve the lookout site. The Club had plans to bitumen or asphalt the road and establish a kiosk and other public conveniences. Their aim was to make the Hummock into a top scenic lookout for motorists and the general public.

The Hummock looking south. Image copyright Picture Bundaberg Collection: bun01010.

Transfer to Woongarra Shire Council

On 19 September 1964 the Hummock Lookout was transferred from the RACQ Bundaberg branch to the Woongarra Shire Council. In an official ceremony RACQ State President Mr J. Devitt passed the land deeds to the Woongarra Shire Chairman Cr H. Muller. The decision was made to transfer ownership due to the challenges faced by RACQ Bundaberg in raising funds for maintenance of the site. The Council would be better able to maintain the park and add to its attraction. Cr Muller promised that the Council would keep the Hummock Lookout a public space into the future.

Recognition

The Hummock is one of Bundaberg's most well-known and loved natural features. It is thanks to the men of the early RACQ Bundaberg branch that locals and tourists alike are able to enjoy the magnificent views from atop this hill. Their hard work and dedication in securing this site for the public should be known and commended.

References

<http://www.askoxford.com>

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Walker, J.Y. *History of Bundaberg...*, Dryden Press, Sydney, 1977 (1890).

Peta Browne

Bundaberg Regional Library



View from The Hummock towards Bundaberg [date unknown]. Image copyright Picture Bundaberg Collection: bun01331.



View from The Hummock towards Bundaberg [Oct 2009]. (P. Browne)