

# Pine Mountain Then & Now



**Farmhouses:** Pine Mountain is dotted with attractive historic farmhouses in attractive settings. Take time for a leisurely drive around the area.

- 1 Pine Mt Community Hall, Cnr Pine Mountain Road and Quarry Road:** Local farmers held a meeting in 1932 to discuss obtaining a local hall. It took several years to raise enough money, but the hall was finally opened on 5 May 1936. The opening function was a dance with music by Dawson's orchestra. The builder was R. McGovern.

The hall was popular for dances, debutante balls and meetings but use eventually lapsed and the building was vandalised. In 1975, a group of local people formed a social committee to revitalise the hall. It is now in use again, forming an important focus for the local community.

- 2 St Michael's Catholic Church, Pine Mountain Road:** The land was donated by local resident John Barnes and the first church was erected in 1878 by the local community at its own expense. It was repaired after a cyclone in 1900 and replaced with a new church in 1934.

When built, it was part of the Ipswich Parish and young priest Fr James Duhig conducted many of the services. As Archbishop Duhig, he returned in 1951 to celebrate the golden wedding anniversary of a couple he had married in 1901.

The graveyard behind the church appears to have been in use before the church building was erected. The oldest headstone is that of James Smith, buried in December 1869. There are about 140 burials. Of particular interest is a war memorial erected by "the residents of Pine Mountain District in memory of Private John Murtagh who served his country for two years in Gallipoli and France. RIP" The sandstone and marble monument is topped by a shell casing.

- 3 **World's End Pocket:** One of the only surviving pockets of moist forest remaining in south-east Queensland. A large percentage of this forest community is privately owned. Ipswich City Council is working with landholders to preserve this unique and endangered forest type.
- 4 **Cameron's Scrub:** A significant area of softwood scrub and riverine rainforest which appears to be the most pristine example of its type in south-east Queensland. The scrub contains locally-endangered species such as hoop pine, giant ironwood (*Choricarpia subargentea*) and grease nut (*Hernandia bivalvis*).
- 5 **Saplings Pocket:** Purchased by the Department of Environment, it is now a 'nature refuge' which will be managed to conserve its biodiversity and in the long term, to provide minimal nature-based recreation.
- 6 **Melon Hut:** A well-known rafting ground in the early days. It was approximately 800 metres downstream of Mt Crosby Weir.

- 7 **Blyth Villa, Riverside Drive:** Designed by architect Henry Bond and built in 1897 for Henry Bishop, carriage foreman at Ipswich Railway Workshops. Sold in the early 1900s to the Curry family, timbergetters who hauled logs to Hancock sawmill at North Ipswich.



- 8 **Kholo Waterworks:** The waterworks were established in 1878 to provide a reliable water supply for Ipswich. The site was chosen after William Highfields reported that the water there flowed over gravel and was clear and of excellent taste. The waterworks consisted of a pumping station which pumped water up into a large concrete reservoir on a nearby hilltop. From the reservoir, water flowed to Ipswich along a main water supply pipeline. In 1922, Ipswich City Council began to purchase water from the Mt Crosby supply and the old Ipswich waterworks became obsolete. The cast-iron standpipe & the attendant's house still remain near the reservoir site.



- 9 **Kholo Gardens, Riverside Drive:** The botanic gardens were established in 1988 as a Bicentennial project. Facilities include picnic areas and riverside walks. In 1825, Lockyer explored the Brisbane River and reported seeing coal in the riverbank in this vicinity.
- 10 **Historic Fig Tree, Pine Mt Road:** John and Anne Sherlock, along with the Mahons, Doolans, Carews, Murtaghs and Byrnes, left Ireland and arrived in Moreton Bay in 1862. They walked to Pine Mt where they had obtained Land Orders; all families settled in the district where some descendants still live. The Sherlock family say that the fig tree was planted by John Sherlock shortly after his arrival. As the tree grew, it became a focal point in the district and was a common resting place for travellers on their way to and from Ipswich. The first to rest under the tree would boil a billy and be ready to share with anyone coming along the track, now Pine Mt Road. Picnics and other gatherings were also held here.
- 11 **The Boghole, Cnr Boyles and Russels Roads:** This area had a natural spring which was dammed with a simple rock wall; it was a local water supply and in the very early years, was a place where people came to wash clothes.

## History of Pine Mountain

The original occupants of the Pine Mountain area were the Ugarapul Aboriginal people.

In 1824, the explorers Oxley and Cunningham mentioned meeting an elderly Aboriginal man who had been fishing with a spear near Upper Blackwall. Cunningham described his friendliness and his 'open frankness of Countenance' as he showed them convenient places to cross the river and accompanied them to the foot of Pine Mountain. The bush here was extremely dense and, as the Aboriginal man was hampered by his long spears, he left the explorers.

Cunningham then climbed the mountain and examined the pine trees which he had previously seen only from a distance. One specimen was 40 metres tall and he commented, 'It was totally impossible not to halt a few moments to admire this noble tree...the Monarch of these woods.' Today the pine which grows on Pine Mountain is named *Araucaria cunninghamii* in his honour and is commonly known as the hoop pine.

## Timber Industry

By the 1850s or possibly earlier, sawyers had moved to 'The Mountain' to cut timber. Some logs were hauled into Ipswich by bullock dray. Others were taken to a central place on the riverbank and formed into rafts by driving spikes into each log and linking the spikes with a chain. According to local legend, some of the freshly-cut hoop pines did not float, so they first had to be stored on the riverbank and allowed to dry.



*Curry's bullock wagon at North Ipswich*

Some rafts were floated down the Brisbane River to Brisbane; others were taken as far as the Junction and then back up the Bremer River to sawmills in Ipswich. The work had its hazards - when the river flooded, the rafts were often scattered and in dry times, it was difficult to negotiate the shallow and twisting upper reaches of the river.

The sawyers sometimes worked on site using sawpits dug into the ground, making planks for building, shingles and staves for wooden barrels. One of these Pine Mountain sawyers, Thomas Foreman, provided the pine for 'Claremont' and for the first Ipswich Hospital.

## Later History

As the timber was cut out and land was made available for settlement, farming commenced. The early settlers grew lucerne, maize and cotton and started orchards. Later, dairying became important. A small butter factory was established by Patrick Sherlock in Sherlocks Road; he exported some of his butter to London in 1905.

A school and several churches were established; of these, only the Catholic Church is still standing.

The Brisbane Valley Railway line opened in 1884, beginning at Wulkuraka and passing through Pine Mountain, Borallon, Wanora, Fernvale and Lowood. The line is now closed but the route can still be seen.

The Pine Mountain School was the location of a significant meeting called by its headmaster Joseph Mayfield in April 1886; at this meeting, the West Moreton Teachers Association was formed with Ipswich teacher John Scott as its president and Mayfield as secretary. The WMTA's first annual picnic was also held at Pine Mountain. This association was a model for similar district groups and led to the formation of the Queensland Teachers Union. The school no longer stands but its site is marked with a grove of Hoop Pines.

Today, Pine Mountain is a popular and scenic residential area.