

Item name: Pilgrim Memorial Park and Boulevard**Location:** 30 Tweed Street Brunswick Heads 2483

Byron

Address: 30 Tweed Street**Planning:** Northern**Suburb/nearest town:** Brunswick Heads 2483**Local govt area:** Byron**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Address:** Old Pacific Highway**Planning:** Northern**Suburb/nearest town:** Brunswick Heads**Local govt area:** Byron**Parish:****State:** NSW**County:****Other/former names:****Area/group/complex:****Group ID:****Aboriginal area:****Curtilage/boundary:** The reserve area containing the Pioneer Cemetery and road reserve town entry.**Item type:** Landscape**Group:** Cemeteries and Burial Sites**Category:** Cemetery Gates/Fences**Owner:** Local Government**Admin codes:****Code 2:****Code 3:****Current use:** Memorial park and Rest Area**Former uses:** Cemetery**Assessed significance:** Local**Endorsed significance:** Local

Statement of significance: The Pioneer Memorial Park and Boulevard Avenue plantings demonstrate historical, associative, aesthetic and social significance to Brunswick Heads. Mature Cypress Pine and other natural species frame the entry to the township and hold aesthetic values as remnants or regrowth of the historic double Oak avenue. Despite being relocated, the headstones provide a physical record which relates to early settlers and residents from the mid 19th to the mid 20th centuries, and are a historic, social and genealogical resource.

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Historical notes Local Background

of provenance: Brunswick Heads is a significant Aboriginal place and part of lands of the Bundjalung people and the place of the earliest European settlement in Byron Shire. The precinct is historically significant for its evolution as a settlement in response to historical, social, economic and transportation factors, having connection to early cedar getting, the fishing industry and a historical use for recreation and holiday destination.

Prior to European settlement, Brunswick Heads was part of the territory of the original inhabitants of the area, the Bundjalung people. As Europeans moved to the district, Brunswick Heads became one of the earliest ports in what is now Byron Shire, and by the 1850's, some raw materials (timber, tallow, whale oil) were being shipped to state (Sydney), national and international markets, and many new settlers, foodstuffs and necessities found their way into the district via Brunswick Heads. Dairying provided the greatest impetus to the settlement by Europeans of the region, and in the 1890's, when Brunswick Heads was bypassed by the Casino to Murwillumbah railway line, the town as a major port was eclipsed by the port of Byron Bay. By the 1920's, the major industries were fishing (with a well established local fishing fleet) and tourism, with a local river transport system (drogher lighters) supporting the upriver dairy industry.

The expansion of Brunswick Heads was affected by flooding, low lying land to the west and the course of the river itself. The Pacific Highway was routed through the town for more than 50 years, but now bypasses the town which has left a township with a substantially intact architectural heritage, and with an atmosphere and charm unique in the Shire.

This Item - Acknowledgment to Brunswick Valley Historical Society for research and for historical information in relation to this site. Date January 2022.

A 'General Cemetery at Brunswick' was first delineated on various maps of the Parish of Billinudgel and deemed to have been created by proclamation of the 5 1/4 sq miles Brunswick Reserve, stretching 1 1/2 miles each side of the river entrance, in the NSW Govt Gazette of 24Dec1861, page 2756. And there it sat, out of sight, out of mind, until the Gazette of 25Oct1892 got more specific and mysteriously and formally dedicated an area of 11 acres 0 roods 18 perches as a cemetery near the ferry terminal on the northern bank of the Brunswick, of which site, all editions of the Billinudgel parish maps through to the 1920s continued to refer to as the 'General Cemetery at Brunswick'.

As dedication of a Brunswick village cemetery predates this 'ferry cemetery', it's a fair assumption that the latter was meant to service the Billinudgel district however it appears that it was not a convenient location and no Trustees were ever appointed for the place. At a meeting of the Byron Shire Council on 20Feb1912 to consider taking over the trusteeship of both the Brunswick and Billinudgel cemeteries, Cr Banner said of the latter, that the present place marked out was not suitable, and he was of the opinion that a better position could be obtained nearer the township. He would move that, while the Council was willing to act as trustees to the two cemeteries..., the Department could select a more suitable site for the Billinudgel Cemetery, than the present one....

In Jul1912 the Minister for Lands withdrew his request for the shire to take over the trusteeship, at which time the Billinudgel Progress Association showed a cemeterial affiliation with Mullumbimby in requesting the Municipal Council to appoint a caretaker for the Mullumbimby cemetery.... And in Sep1912 the Lands Department followed-up with a decision that a cemetery at Billinudgel was not warranted, and that the one at Mullumbimby, 6 1/2 miles distant, was considered sufficient for present requirements....

Gazettes of 14Sep1923 and 6Aug1926 eventually declared the place a reserve for the 'Preservation of Native Flora', of which Byron Shire Council was appointed trustee.

In the meantime the Gazette of 18Sep1882 had 'Reserved From Sale For cemetery... in the village of Brunswick, an area about 12 acres..., bounded by Tweed, Minyon, Byron and Targarah streets, the site formally 'Dedicated as a Cemetery' on 11Jul1884. The 'Wesleyan Burial Ground' was the first to have trustees appointed, viz Reverends George Hurst, William Clarke, William Kelynack, George Woolnought, George Lane. (At the same time the same ministers were appointed trustees of cemeteries at Ballina, Bolivia and Bokbara). Locals made it to the Wesleyan trusteeship on 2Aug1893 when The Rev Alfred Palmer (the Wesleyan Home Missionary of Murwillumbah), Messrs Frederick Spann (Brunswick), William John Brag Ball (Myocum), Peter Olson (Presbyterian of Main Arm),

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Frank Grape (Mullumbimby) were appointed. On 6Mar1885 The Right Rev Elzear Torreggiani, D.D. (Catholic Bishop of Armidale), the Very Rev Jeremiah Joseph Doyle (Dean of Lismore), Messrs Joseph Bede Kelly (Tyagarah), Edward Boyle (St Helena), Robert Campbell (Bangalow) were appointed trustees of the Catholic Burial Ground. On 30Dec1892 Bishop Doyle of Lismore became chairman of the Catholic trustee board, supported by The Rev John Donegan Walsh (Lismore), Messrs Joseph Bede Kelly, Edward Boyle and James McGettigan (St Helena). (Surveyor J.B. Kelly of Tyagarah had completed his detailed marking-out of the cemetery 15Dec1882 and forwarded his map to the Surveyor-General 6Mar1883).

On 3Jun1892 the Gazette appointed The Right Rev James Francis Turner (Anglican Bishop of Grafton and Armidale), Messrs Henry French (Brunswick), Frederick Dougan Nixon (Brunswick), William Grant Law (Mullumbimby Creek) and Charles Hough (Billinudgel) to the trusteeship of the Church of England portion. And on 21Jun1895 Messrs Frederick Dougan Nixon, Robert Marshall (Brunswick) and Peter Nelson (Brunswick) were appointed trustees of the General Burial Ground. Apparently the Wesleyan Methodists were defacto trustees of the (shared) Presbyterian burial ground. Cemeteries at Byron Bay (Cavvanba, 14a Or 3p), Mullumbimby and Bangalow were dedicated on 8Aug1890, 15Jan1892 and 1905 respectively.

The list of people interred in the Brunswick Cemetery at Known Brunswick Heads Burials pre 1900 (mullumbimbymuseum.org.au) was compiled from best available evidence. But it remains a mystery where those who died prior to proclamation of the cemetery were buried. The death certificate for Captain Brown, Master of the Schooner 'Star of the Sea', simply says he was buried 'at Brunswick River Heads' on 24Apr1877, perhaps referring to the North Head. At this time the current cemetery site was still thick virgin scrub with no road access, although there was probably a track along Brunswick Terrace. William Jenkins, who drowned 12Mar1870, had an obituary published in a number of Sydney newspapers in Jun1870, but no death certificate was ever issued and no record of whether the body was actually recovered. Ditto seamen William Bassage, William Leverington, Peter Coleman and Samuel Kennedy who drowned in a lifeboat capsized at the Brunswick entrance 14May1849.

While the local cemetery continued to be used for burials of deceased Bruns residents through to 1942, numbers had begun to taper off in favour of a Mullum internment from about the end of WW1 (eg the prominent Henry Chisholm, President of the Brunswick Heads Improvement Committee, died 26Nov1926 and was buried in the Methodist portion of Mullumbimby cemetery). It's understood the Brunswick Cemetery started to suffer a little neglect after the various trustees faded into the woodwork.

In Mar1951 the Brunswick Heads Progress Association started agitating to have the cemetery closed, while there was a huge demand for building blocks. In May1952 the Lands Department joined the chorus during attempts to open up more Crown Land along the recently surveyed Minyon Street, where three graves had been found. But in Sep1952, in advising that it was not proposed at present to open Crown land west of Byron Street..., the Department complained that the cemetery had encroached onto Minyon Street. Nevertheless, the Progress Association argued that the expansion of Brunswick Heads was being retarded... and wrote to the Minister in Oct1952 urging that steps be taken to make the closed cemetery available for home building blocks..., that the old Police Paddock be turned into a camping ground and That Minyon Street be declared a public road.... Presumably the cemetery question was all too hard, as there was a deafening silence on the matter for the next 10yrs or so.

Control and management of the cemetery became the responsibility of Byron Shire with promulgation of The Local Government (Control of Cemeteries) Amendment Act of 1966. The Lands Department remained silent until Apr1967 when it submitted plans to the Shire Council for the creation of a new residential subdivision of 53 blocks as an extension to the southern end of Brunswick Heads. The subdivision area embraces the old Brunswick Heads Cemetery containing 11 graves and extends southward along the Pacific Highway to a point almost opposite the Bowling Club. The plan provides for headstones from the cemetery to be built into a wall fronted by a rockery at the rear of a park area at the north-eastern corner of the subdivision. Two other strip park areas will also be provided. To reduce traffic hazards at highway intersections the subdivision will have only one approach street of access. This will be Minyon Street along the northern side, which will give access to a central square.... Council approved the plan and the Shire clerk Mr R.T. Brownell said an area of land fronting the Pacific Highway opposite the "Salad Bowl", about three miles north of Brunswick Heads was to be set aside for a cemetery..., which had been proposed by the Lands Department back in May1964.

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In Mar1968 Advice from the Minister for Housing and Co-operative Societies, Mr S.T. Stephens, indicated that the Department of Lands had abandoned a proposal to develop the old Brunswick Heads cemetery for housing.... And in May1968 the Department of Lands has suggested that the area be converted to a reserve for passive recreation by Byron Shire Council... and suggests the removal of all headstones to one part of the land, possibly to be incorporated in a memorial garden, or installed around the perimeter of the area.... Cr R.D. Mules, who is a member of Brunswick Heads Reserves Committee, said that committee did not want any more recreation areas. Shire Engineer Mr H. Cook suggested that all names of people known to have been buried there be incorporated on a plaque and the area cleaned up and kept mown. He said two of the headstones were actually across Minyon Street from the cemetery area.... With its letter, the department forwarded a list of 68 names of persons registered as having been buried in the cemetery. Of these, it was stated, only 11 graves had been located, but four other graves, of which there was no record had been found. This left a record of 57 burials of which no trace could be found. The earliest recorded burial in the cemetery was that of E. Torrens (June 15, 1883) and the most recent that of William Parks (August 20, 1942). Of the 68 burials registered, 44 were made prior to 1900.

The NSW Government Gazette of 1Apr1977 declared the 4.6 hectare site a 'Public Park' in accordance with the provisions of section 10 (1) of the Conversion of Cemeteries Act, 1974. And while the Brunswick Heads Progress Association continued to press for the release of more land for residential housing, the Lands Department wouldn't budge on the cemetery site and reiterated to an Association meeting in Jul1971 that the area would not be made available for home sites in the future and its only possible use would be for a rest park. The chairman, Cr R.F. Mules told the meeting Byron Shire Council was currently considering a proposal to convert the cemetery into a memorial park.... And due to difficulties being experienced through the low-lying nature of areas suitable for subdivision, early release of blocks could not be expected....

While the subdivision of Crown Land went ahead in the surrounding low-lying areas, on 23Dec1971 the Lands Department was advised that Council's Health Surveyor has established beyond any reasonable doubt that all burials are located in two rows fronting Tweed Street. Council therefore requests that an area one chain deep along the Pacific Highway frontage be declared a public recreation area and that the rest of the area be subdivided into building blocks and made available to the public. Whatever the subsequent Council machinations, in May1973 Council adopted a recommendation for an exercise to establish the location of all graves in the old Brunswick heads cemetery.... The engineer, Mr A. Brandon, said it seemed unlikely that the area could be declared as anything other than a rest park or sacred park unless council could prove the location of all 68 graves. He said Mullumbimby Rotary Club was anxious to re-erect the existing gravestones in some form of memorial wall....

By Jun1973 All headstones have been removed from the now disused Brunswick Heads Cemetery. Mr R.D. Mules told the Brunswick Heads Progress Association that the headstones had been stored at Brunswick Heads treatment works pending their placement as a memorial on portion of the old cemetery area.... Mr Mules said it was possible portion of the old cemetery could be developed for residential purposes.... In Nov1974 the Shire Council finally went ahead with transformation of the cemetery site into a form of park.

At Mullumbimby's Annual Rotary Changeover Night in Jul1977, in the presence of 90yr old Foundation President Bob Pilgrim, outgoing president Jim Fanning said Service activities... included the development of Rotary Park on the site of the old cemetery at Brunswick Heads.... Mr Pilgrim died Dec1977 and The day after his death, the family was informed that the application of the Mullumbimby Rotary Club to have the newly formed Rotary Park at Brunswick Heads named the Bob Pilgrim Park had been approved by Byron Shire Council....

Celebration of its 30th anniversary with a dinner in the Mullumbimby Ex-servicemen's Club was a highlight of the year for Mullumbimby Rotary Club... in Jul1979. At the annual changeover night Retiring president Bernie Talbot said major projects completed during the year included the construction of the toilet block in the Bob Pilgrim Memorial Park at Brunswick Heads.... (But the Echo of 24Feb2015 reported that The Pilgrim Park toilets usage has significantly dropped since the Pacific Highway bypass of Brunswick Heads. Given the very poor state of these facilities and the absence of funds to upgrade them a decision was made to close the toilets pending a broader

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review..., which resulted in their demolition. Another victim of the highway bypass was the 'Driver Reviver' caravan operated by Lions. And in 1983 the site almost became home to a historic museum and information centre.)

On 26Jun1980 About 70 people, including many members of the Pilgrim family, were present at Brunswick Heads when the Minister for Lands, Mr Gordon, dedicated the Bob Pilgrim Memorial Park. The late Mr Pilgrim was described as a true Australian pioneer by Mr Gordon.... Speakers also thanked the Lands Department for providing \$1000 towards the cost of amenities at the park. The balance of the cost was shared by the shire and the Rotary Club. At the conclusion of the ceremony Mr Gordon handed over a further \$500 for additional amenities.

Themes: **National theme**
9. Phases of Life

State theme
Birth and Death

Local theme

Designer:

Builder:

Year started: 1880

Year completed:

Circa: No

Physical description: The site contains 7 early headstones which have been placed on a memorial wall in 1980. It is located on the western side of Tweed Street (former Pacific Hwy) about 130 m south of Minyon St with a pull in bay for parking and small park rest area.

The park has BBQ's, picnic facilities and amenities. The park commemorates the pioneer settlers of Brunswick Heads and was a Rotary Project. The headstones comprise;

James Reddacliffe 20.3.1915

Ada Gertrude Smith 23.02.1886

Alice Cameron d 14.02.1898

Julia Seal/William Seal December

Minnie Mills 30.4.1886

James Hanna d 28.5.1893

Forbes Family headstone includes

John Dawson Forbes d 21.05.1920 aged 79

Katherine Gardiner Forbes d 1.4.1919 aged 66

James Forbes d 01.07.1905 Brother Aged 18

Ada Forbes d 13.07.1906 Sister Aged 17

The road reserves contain Cypress Pine plantings which are remnants and regrowth of original vegetation which is endemic to the area and lined the Avenue road that lead to the beach suburb.

Physical condition level: Fair

Physical condition: The engravings have various degrees of legibility and many lead letters are missing.

Archaeological potential level:

Archaeological potential Detail:

Modification dates: Modified by relocation from original locations.

Recommended management: Document the headstones contained in the memorial wall and conserve in accordance with the National Trust of Australia (NSW) cemeteries guidelines with specific reference correct cleaning process and materials.

Provide interpretive information onsite and in an educational and tourist brochure/online resource prepared in conjunction with local historical society members and family descendants.

A similar example exists at Willsons Downfall Liston where there are many unmarked graves in a former mining area.

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Management: **Management category** **Management name**

Further comments: See management. Cleaning of headstones should only occur with correct conservation best practice in accordance with National Trust cemetery guidelines.

The park memorial wall is maintained by Council as part of the rest area and it is an important site on the town entry. Interpretation of the history of this cemetery site and the lives of the people who were buried here both with the remaining headstone and in unmarked graves should be carried out.

Criteria a): The headstones and park site which form a part of the original Brunswick Cemetery dedication, demonstrate
[Historical significance] historical significance as physical evidence of the early settlers in the local area. The Cypress trees are also historically significant to the original road and entry to Brunswick Heads.

Criteria b): The memorial holds local historic associations with the people on the headstones and their families and to those in the unmarked graves in this cemetery area. 68 persons were registered as having been buried in this cemetery, 44 of which were prior to 1900 of which only 11 graves were located.
[Historical association significance]

Criteria c): The headstones have aesthetic significance for craftsmanship of the monuments, and for the setting and landscape of the place. The tree plantings are aesthetically significant to the entry to the township and provide a peaceful setting to the memorial.
[Aesthetic/ Technical significance]

Criteria d): The memorial park holds social values to local community and descendants of pioneers.
[Social/Cultural significance]

Criteria e): The headstones provide important local information about 19th century funeral customs and genealogical data.
[Research significance]

Criteria f): Has historical and associative significance and rarity at a local level.
[Rarity]

Criteria g): Representative of 19th century and early 20th century headstones.
[Representative]

Intactness/Integrity: Low to moderate in various states of intactness and removed from original locations.

References:	Author	Title	Year
	Jim Brokenshire	The Brunswick- Another River and its People. 1988. ISBN 0 71	1988
		Monument Australia	2018
	Brunswick Heads Historical Society-P	The Brunswick Cemetery- Newsletter	2022

Studies:	Author	Title	Number	Year
	Donald Ellsmore and Ian I	Byron Shire Community Based Heritage Study		2005
	Clarence Heritage	Historic Heritage Assessment Brunswick Heads		2021

Parcels:	Parcel code	Lot number	Section number	Plan code	Plan number
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Latitude: -28.547909

Longitude: 153.546638

Location validity:

Spatial accuracy:

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Map name:

Map scale:

AMG zone:

Easting:

Northing:

Listing: Name

Title

Number

ListingDate

Potential Heritage Item

Data entry: Data first entered: 21/01/2022

Data updated: 12/02/2022

Status: Basic

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Image:



Caption: Pioneer Memorial Brunswick Heads

Copy right:

Image by: D. Wray

Image date: 26/07/2021

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/3452242ecbad02944298188e7818a4b68d0.JPG>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Tumb_test3452242ecbad02944298188e7818a4b68d0.JPG

Image:

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Caption: Ada Gertrude 1886 age 2 years

Copy right:

Image by: D. Wray

Image date: 26/07/2021

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/3455a1bc297b4e149018d261c9a1a05f38d.JPG>

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Image:

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Caption: Pioneer Memorial Brunswick Heads plantings

Copy right:

Image by: D. Wray

Image date: 26/07/2021

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/3457898618165a3407e8228990dd92bec08.JPG>

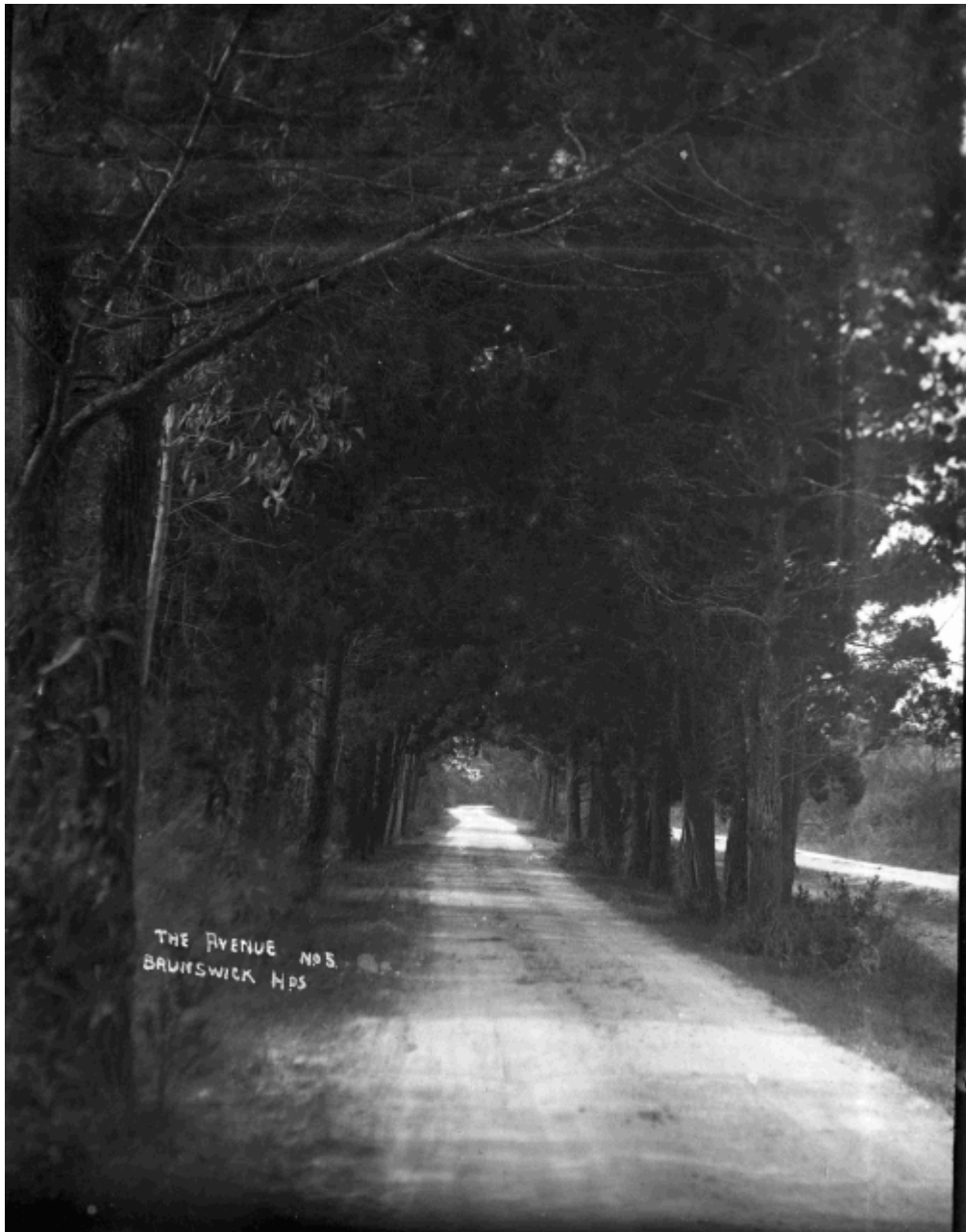
Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/T_humb_test3457898618165a3407e8228990dd92bec08.JPG

Image:

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Caption: Historic Avenue entry

Copy right:

Image by: BVHS

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/345fe5685ad61df45d58596ae82454f0a5f.jpg>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Tumb_test345fe5685ad61df45d58596ae82454f0a5f.jpg

Image:

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Caption: Historic photo of the Avenue

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Image by:

Image date:

Image number:

Image url: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/345a025018435fe4e9ba34e84821f8a66f2.jpg>

Thumbnail url: http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/maritimeheritageapp/resources/Heritage/shi/WebAPP/Thumb_test345a025018435fe4e9ba34e84821f8a66f2.jpg