



THE PIONEER

THE BUDERIM HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

June/July 2026

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Re-Opening of Pioneer Cottage Museum

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2026 - Pioneer Cottage re-opened in April and an event for members is planned for 2 August 2026, to thank the Sunshine Coast Council and others who contributed to the new and refreshed displays in Pioneer Cottage. The mayor of the Sunshine Coast Council, Cr Rosanna Natoli, has kindly accepted our invitation to attend.

BWMCA representatives will also join us to acknowledge and thank all those who contributed to the re-roofing and dormer window repairs.

The new museum displays are based on an Interpretation Plan developed with Council support in 2024. The Council also provided a first round of funding in 2025 to develop the interpretative material on display throughout the cottage and in 2026, a second round of Council

funding contributed to the cost of re-painting the interior of Pioneer Cottage, before installation of the new displays.

The museum displays are based on the following themes: -

- Telling the story of John Kerle and Ann Burnett and their descendants who lived in the house, from their arrival in Buderim to the purchase of the land, the construction of the house and its later renovation, and finally its sale to Sybil Vise and her donation of the building to the community;
- The design and building features of the house as a State – heritage listed structure; and
- The illustration of key rooms showing domestic life in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, focused on the dining room, parlour, bedroom and attic.

A major change has been to reinstate the main bedroom to its original position at the front of the house and to create a new space that will be used for temporary exhibitions and displays in the former bedroom. The first exhibition that opened in April is 'Treasures of the Collection' that gives members and visitors a chance to view objects not usually on display. This includes a copy of an 1899 diploma for a gold medal for coffee won by Ernest Burnett in 1899. See the full story below. Also in this space is a new 'Cabinet of Curiosities'. When you have given up guessing, there is a list to give you the answers.

The rear enclosed verandah has also undergone some changes and now includes a reading space as well as displays about Buderim's agricultural past and how residents have spent their leisure time. The front hall tells the story of the house and its generous donation by Sybil Vise.

The process

The timing of the museum display roll-out was built around the decision of the BWMCA to proceed with re-roofing of Pioneer Cottage, beginning in late October 2025. Following the highly successful participation in the Buderim Garden Club's annual festival and participation in the Sunshine Coast Open House held on the same weekend, Pioneer Cottage was closed to enable work to begin.

The internal re-painting was scheduled for January 2026, on the expectation that the re-roofing would be completed by then, but in late November 2025 the roofing contractors discovered there was damage to the roof timber framework around the dormer windows and work ground to a halt while the BWMCA looked for a carpenter to tackle the timber replacement.

Christmas came and went and BHS made the decision to proceed with the internal re-painting in January 2026, rather than wait for completion of the new roof. A State Heritage Exemption Certificate was obtained in order to undertake the internal painting and the BWMCA agreed to manage the painting contract on behalf of BHS, using the painting firm which the BWMCA used to paint the Memorial Hall and the Old Post Office.

The management committee also decided to take the opportunity to replace the dilapidated wallpaper in the parlour room and this work was successfully completed in February 2026.

Bit by bit, volunteers began the task of rolling out the new museum display, working around the contractors trying to complete the roof. This included re-locating the main bedroom to its original location in the front of the house, where the museum room was located. The old bedroom space has been freed up as a new space for temporary displays and exhibitions and the next steps for this space are to funding to install an art hanging system and lighting that highlights the displays. Introducing some audio and visual displays in key areas and updates to interpretation in the slab hut are also under current consideration to meet our ongoing aim of continuing to improve visitors' experience.

The roofing contractors were finally finished in April 2026 and the museum re-opened to the public on 20 April. Visitors since the re-opening have been positive about the refreshed and new displays and the current garden display which a dedicated team of volunteers continued to maintain throughout.

Unfortunately, during the heavy rain in May, roof leaks were again detected. The BWMCA has worked with the contractor to resolve the issues and recent rain has not resulted in any further leakage. BHS volunteers will keep an eye on things during rain events, so that the BWMCA can be informed if any further leaks occur.

The event for members on 2 August will provide the opportunity to experience the new museum display first-hand, as well as enjoying the gardens after all the hard work of the gardening team.

Conservation of Ernest Burnett's Gold Medal Diploma for Coffee

In 2025 BHS received a Sunshine Coast Council grant of \$1,145 for the professional conservation of the 1899 gold medal diploma awarded to Ernest Burnett at the Greater Britain Exhibition in London for coffee produced at his Buderim Mountain farm. Paper conservator Lydia Egunnike was engaged to undertake the work and it has now been completed. Lydia also produced a high-quality copy of the original which is currently on display in the new temporary exhibition space. The copy supplied by Lydia really brings the award to life. BHS is very grateful to the Sunshine Coast Council for the grant and our thanks to Lydia for undertaking this work so that all can enjoy the vibrant colours in the diploma.

New Sunday Opening for Pioneer Cottage

A three-month trial of Sunday opening for Pioneer Cottage (10am to 1pm) has begun, following an offer from Pam Wood to volunteer on the door. If there is a strong response from local residents and visitors during the trial, it could be made permanent.

Group Visits in 2026

Since the re-opening of Pioneer Cottage on 20 April 2026, there have been three group visits – the Sunshine Coast Friendship Group on 7 May, a Probus group from North Brisbane on 25 May and a group from Estia Health Maroochydore Aged Care on 8 June.

The Sunshine Coast Friendship Group included visitors from Germany, who used Google Translate to read the Interpretation material. The Group has indicated that their next lot of overseas visitors will be Americans in August-September and they are interested in also bringing them for a visit.

Buderim Mountain State School Annual Visit

We are delighted that a booking has been made for the Year 2 students at Buderim Mountain State School to visit Pioneer Cottage. The booking is in late September and will be over a number of days, to accommodate the large number of students. Last year's school visit was a great success and we look forward to welcoming this year's Year 2 students.

Marketing Group

The long-standing marketing group continues to meet monthly on the 2nd Tuesday at 1.30pm in Vise House. In addition to coordinating group visits and external promotions such as Australia Day and the Easter and Christmas Fairs, the group has a key role in marketing the museum to the public. In April, this included a publicity campaign through posters, newsletters, media articles and direct mail-outs to let the public know that the museum had reopened. A second round of publicity has just occurred, including mention on local radio and a submission to Preview magazine and the group is looking at new target groups such as aged care and home schoolers.

Have you checked out the BHS page of the BWMCA monthly newsletter lately? Margaret Thursby is doing a great job of providing interesting snippets of history to attract potential visitors.

Fundraising and promoting the museum to the public is an ongoing task and if you think you could help in any way, the group would love to hear from you via the bhsinc4556@optusnet.com.au.

New Display and Collection Management Team

The management committee has recently approved the establishment of a new team, to merge, revitalise and make more sustainable, the current Collection Management and Collection Care roles. It will also replace the Interpretation Plan working group which was established in 2024 to develop and implement the new Interpretation Plan for Pioneer Cottage.

The new team will be responsible for maintaining and developing new displays as well as managing and caring for the Collection.

An expression of interest for participation in the new team will be sent out in the near future.

New Treasurer

Following the resignation of Margaret Welshe as BHS treasurer, Athol Lubbe has agreed to take on the role. Athol has also recently agreed to take on the treasurer's role at the BWMCA.

BHS Volunteer Polo Shirts

Volunteers can now purchase a BHS polo shirts to wear while on duty at Pioneer Cottage and at local events in which BHS is participating, such as Australia Day and the Easter and Christmas Fairs.

Lorraine Buhk has gone to considerable effort to make these available and the management committee has endorsed the choice of colour (white). The shirt has an embroidered BHS logo.



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