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James Lindsay (junior) – A Community Leader for Half a Century

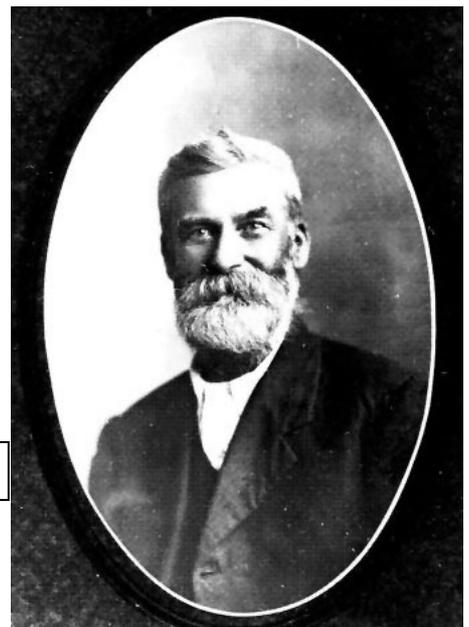
by Bill Lavarack

In 1866 James Lindsay (senior 1828 - 1909) immigrated to Australia from England with his wife Elizabeth Wilcox Voller (1825 - 1866) and two sons, William and James on the sailing ship *Golden City*. James Lindsay junior (1856 - 1933) was born on 29 December 1856, in Southwick, Durham, England. The family was probably from the small town of Ryhope. In Australia they lived at Ipswich. As so often happened in those early days, misfortune struck the family. James returned from a trip to Toowoomba to find his wife and son William had died from typhoid fever and his other son, James, seriously ill. James junior recovered and with his father then lived for four years in Gympie.

In 1874 with his son, who was 17 at the time, James Lindsay (senior) selected land on Buderim on what is now Lindsay Road. James junior married Caroline Barlow (1858 - 1921) in Toowoomba on 15 April 1884. James and Caroline (Carrie) lived on the family farm along with James senior. The farm was on the present Lindsay Road and extended north to include land now on Amaroo Drive. The two older Lindsays and Caroline were to spend the rest of their lives there. James and Caroline were the parents of three sons and four daughters: Archibald Voller (1885-1955), Herbert Sydney (1886-1965), Lilian May (1888-1956), Constance Emma ('Connie' 1889-1946), Emily Caroline ('Carrie' 1893-1980), Cecil Pugh (1896-1990), Hilda Kate (1899-1996).¹

James Lindsay (jun.) possibly about 1915

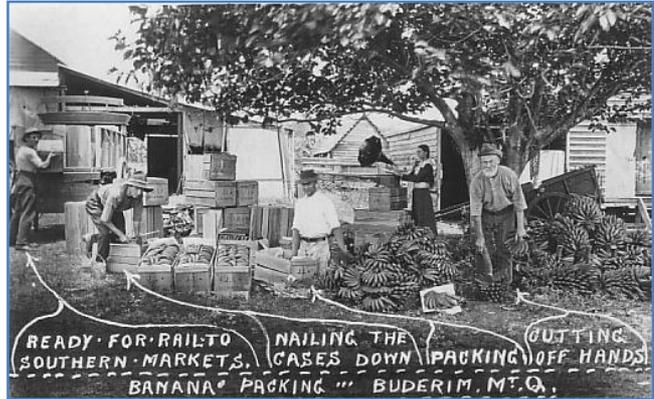
About 1885 the Lindsays built a house from local pit-sawn timber, which they named *Ryhope*. This house was on the Lindsay's property, which included land on the present Amaroo Drive, a street running parallel to Lindsay Road.



¹ See also the photograph on page 5.

The Lindsays were prominent sugar growers from their arrival on Buderim, initially sending their crop to the Dixon and Fielding mill in Mill Road. Over the late 1870s and early 1880s the sugar industry on Buderim continued at a reasonably steady level without booming, despite poor international prices. However in 1879 and 1880 there was increasing dissatisfaction with the price that Dixon and Fielding were paying and several growers, including James Lindsay junior, grouped together to form a body named the Buderim Mountain Sugar Company, with the aim of developing a new sugar mill. John Kerle Burnett, who had previously managed the Dixon and Fielding mill, was appointed as mill manager and land was purchased near Martin's Creek (where the current Post Office is located). This mill eventually failed and was closed in 1890.

As problems grew in the sugar industry, the Lindsays turned to growing bananas in 1883, the first to do so on Buderim. Bananas were an excellent crop for Buderim's climate and rich soil. The first crop realised 2d a dozen at the Brisbane market. Initially the bananas had to be transported to the markets in Brisbane by sea from Mooloolaba. This could leave the crop waiting on the wharf in danger of rotting, at the mercy of the weather as ships were often delayed by rough seas. Eventually the coming of the rail to Palmwoods and Woombye in 1891 solved this problem. There is an interesting photograph of the Lindsay family packing bananas in front of their house. Identifiable in the photograph is James senior.



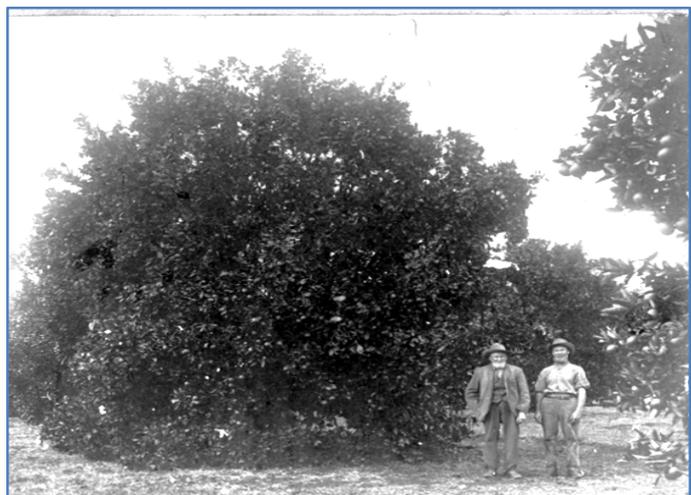
Packing bananas at 'Ryhope'. James (sen.) on right. ? Hilda working gramophone.

In the meantime the Lindsays also planted coffee and citrus. Their coffee was praised for its high quality. Citrus turned out to be a most useful crop despite some pest problems. The following letter by James to the editor of the *Queenslander* illustrates the success of the crop: The *Queenslander*, 15 October, 1898, page 761:

Prolific Orange Trees.

TO THE EDITOR.

Sir,— I saw in the 'Queenslander' of the 24th instant a report from your travelling reporter to the south-west of an orange tree owned by a Mr. Searle, of Mitchell, that yielded 136 dozen oranges last season, and that Mr. Searle would like to hear from any other orchardist that could beat that record. I have fourteen trees that can each beat Mr. Searle's tree easily. They yielded this season 310 cases, averaging eight dozen to the case, or a little over 170 dozen per tree. I had one tree yield thirty cases, or 240 dozen oranges, and another



James senior (left) and James junior with a prolific orange tree.

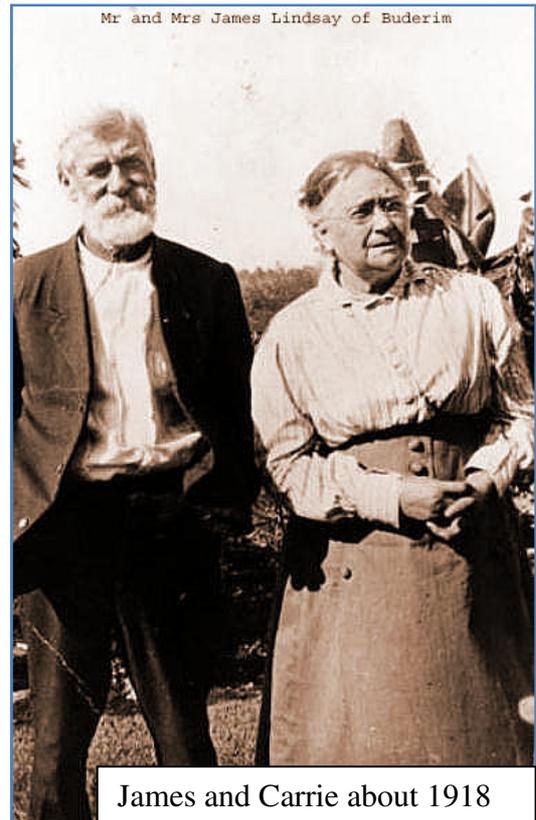
twenty-six cases, or 208 dozen oranges. My trees are the large round oranges, and are about 21 years old. My neighbour, Mr. Wallace Burnett, picked from an Emperor mandarin tree this season thirty-six cases, containing fourteen dozen to the case, or 504 dozen mandarins. Mr. Searle's tree may do for Mitchell, but would never do for Buderim.

I am, sir, &c,

*JAMES LINDSAY, 15 October,
Buderim.*

In addition to his farming activities James junior was prominent in the affairs of the Buderim community. In 1875 he was on the committee which lobbied for a school on Buderim. This resulted in The Buderim Provisional School which was later upgraded to be the Buderim Mountain State School in 1887. He represented Buderim's Division 4 on the Maroochy Shire Council for 26 years including as Shire Chairman for one term. He was a prominent member and Chair of the Buderim Fruitgrowers and Ratepayers. He was President of the Buderim Progress Association for several years. He had an important role in the founding of the first School of Arts in 1885 and also involved in the new School Arts building in 1924. He remained a member of the School of Arts Committee until his death in 1933. He was also instrumental in securing a loan from the Government for the Buderim Tramway. Subsequently he was a member of several deputations to the State Treasurer for a reduction of the resulting debt.

He was vice president or president of several sporting clubs, including vice president of the Athletic Club in 1905. The Lindsay family were prominent in the early days of tennis and cricket on Buderim. Successive generations have continued to live, play sport and get involved in community affairs on Buderim. In short he was the major leader in the Buderim community for many years.



A long-lasting legacy which James junior left to the community was the Buderim Library. In 1883 James was able to convince the Brisbane School of Arts to send him a box of books to be used as a public lending library. This commenced operating from the Lindsay house. Brisbane sent a box of books on a regular basis and they were distributed on loan from Lindsay's verandah. Initially they

came and went by sea to Mooloolaba or by boat up the Pumicestone Passage to Mellum Creek and then by road to Buderim. After 1891 the rail opened to Palmwoods – a much more efficient operation.

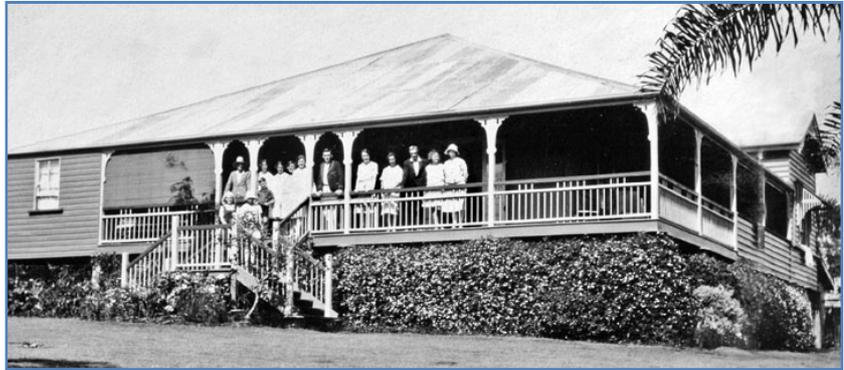
When the first School of Arts was built in 1887, the library operated from the hall. This arrangement was to last (although later in a dedicated room) to the present day in the new School of Arts which opened in 1924 (now known as the Buderim War Memorial Hall). Here it should be mentioned that the building of both the original and the new School of Arts Hall was in a large part due to the work of Councillor James Lindsay. In thanks to him for his community work he was presented with a polished silky oak desk and chair in 1924 The following appeared in the *Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, 21 November, 1924, page 9:

BUDERIM'S WEEK-END CARNIVAL
PRESENTATION TO MR. LINDSAY.

Mr. Warren, MLA., after the opening made a presentation to Mr. J. Lindsay of a polished silky oak hall desk and seat, on behalf of the citizens of Buderim. In the course of a speech mention was made that Mr. Lindsay had been residing in Buderim for 53 years, 20 of which he had represented the ratepayers on the Maroochy Shire Council. The hope was expressed for the mantle of Mr. Lindsay to fall on the shoulders of some young man, who would be filled with the same high public spirit.

Two of his daughters converted the Lindsay home into a guest house named *Ryhope* in the 1920s and 30s.

Right: *Ryhope* in 1930.



Like other Buderim guest houses, its days were numbered by the end of the Buderim Tram in 1935 and by the vastly improved Bruce Highway in the late 1930s. It was sold and moved to Cambooya on the Darling Downs in 1993.

However it must be stated that not all James Lindsay's views were in tune with those of modern society. In a letter to the Editor of the *Brisbane Courier*, on 1 August, 1896, page 6, titled *Black Children in State Schools*, he strongly argued against admitting coloured children to the Buderim Mountain State School. There was some local agreement with Lindsay, but it is debatable how well his views were received by the Buderim public of the day. In any case they were to fall on deaf ears in the Education Department in Brisbane. In part James argued as follows:

These black children are the offspring of Kanaka men with aboriginal women, and their surroundings may be imagined. They live in miserable structures of but one room, in which all the family live and sleep together. The aboriginal women and children are totally innocent of the use of soap or comb. Yet these are the children they would thrust among innocent little white children. ... It will be said we ought to educate the blacks and make them better. ... By all means but give them a provisional school, so that they can be taught by themselves, and not contaminate others. ... Through the endeavours of the present teacher the Buderim School has been raised to the first position for discipline, efficiency, and attendance, reaching as far as 95 per cent, and beating all other schools in the district. If the blacks are admitted the school will sink to a very low grade. I should like the blacks to be educated, but let them have a separate school.

AMES LINDSAY, Jun.

Buderim Mountain, 30th July.

An indication of the situation regarding coloured children in the Buderim Mountain State School is revealed by photographs from the period. A photograph of the school in 1889 reveals 35 white and no coloured children, while a similar photograph from 1899 (about two years after Lindsay's letter to the editor), shows 43 white and 11 coloured children, all of whom are sitting in the front row.

Conclusion

But it would be a shame to end this account on a somewhat negative note. Without doubt James Lindsay (junior) left his mark on Buderim. All that I have covered here is only a fraction of his involvement with the Buderim community. He was the major community leader for over half a century, playing a leading role in administration, in agriculture, in the building of two Schools of Arts 37 years apart, in the story of the Buderim Tram and in the founding of the Buderim Library which still operates today.

James Lindsay (senior) died on 18 March 1909, at the age of 81.

Mrs Caroline (Carrie) Lindsay died on 21 December 1925, at the age of 63.

James Lindsay (junior) died on 29 April 1933, at the age of 76.

Both James and Carrie were interred in Lutwyche Cemetery, Brisbane.

Further Reading/Acknowledgements

Nambour Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser, 5 May 1933, page 12, Mr. James Lindsay, Worthy Buderim Pioneer

Narelle Segecic, 2012, Boxes to Bookshelves – A glimpse into the history and life of Buderim Library.

Obituary Mr James Lindsay, the *Brisbane Courier*, 3 May 1933, page 17.

The photographs are mostly from the collection of the Buderim Historical Society.



Lindsay family c. 1896. L to R: Cecil Pugh, Lilian May, wife Caroline (née Barlow), Archie Voller, Emily Caroline (Carrie), James Lindsay Jnr, Constance Emma (Connie), Herbert Sydney. Missing Hilda Kate (born in 1899).