

Bungan

The name Bungan is first recorded in a survey in 1814 as Bongin Bongin, referring to the area (700 acres) which included present day Mona Vale and Bungan and was granted to Robert Campbell junior. Bungan Beach is bordered by Mona Vale to the south and Newport to the west and north. The land rises to the summit of Bushrangers Hill at 103 metres, a natural lookout point. Despite the name there is no known connection with bushrangers.

In 1890s Alfred Yewen built a cottage, Bungania, at the north end of the beach on the headland. Before the 1920s few people lived at Bungan. In 1908 Napier Thomson built the Eyrie and another family lived nearby, in 1914 Betty Morrison, nee Pollock, lived on the slopes above the beach, and in 1919 Adolph Albers built Bungan Castle atop Bungan headland. Transport was by horse and cart or on foot. Families kept a few cows to supply milk. Time was spent walking, fishing, boating, or bathing.

Gradually the area has become residential, but some of the land next to the beach has been protected as a reserve, named for Betty Morrison..

Memories

Betty Morrison remembers building the family house at Bungan Beach in 1913.

"All our building materials came from the city on a steamer, the Allawatta, a small boat which came, at least once a week, to Newport wharf and then it was carted up by local residents. The timber people would put all our stuff on board and then it would be dumped here [at the top of the hill on Barrenjoey Road]

I was a bit young for that [carrying down the timber], thank goodness. My brother had to do that. Did I tell you about the tank? Well, of course, these people that brought our stuff, I mean sometimes they wouldn't even tell us there'd be some more up there. There was no road to the top, just a track. When my brother wanted it he'd go and get it. Of course, he only brought half a dozen things at a time, if that. So then the tank arrived. We had a big 1000 gallon tank which fitted in outside. My brother went up one day. He was an engineer too, he was very careful, thought about things. This time he went up and pulled the plank he wanted and forgot about the tank.

I was out there, the walls were only uprights. You could step out wherever you wanted to. There was this terrible noise, terrible noise. If we'd had a few wars before that I'd 've thought it was another war coming. Then it dawned on me, I was terrified of this noise and it dawned on me. It shot round the corner where I was standing inside, with nothing to protect me, it went through right down there [to the beach], my brother, who was six foot three, leaping after it as if he was going to stop it. In any case he'd have been killed, I suppose. Then he got it up, I suppose with someone's help, certainly wasn't mine! And he was days fixing it, darling galvanised iron patches all over it. It lasted for thirty years with the original patchwork."

and World War II

... "Yes, well, of course, we were going to be invaded you see...we knew about the war, of course, but we didn't know about the coast defence. Mrs Porter sat out on the back, which looked away, their gully went right down to Pittwater, great big trees, beautiful trees. They were sitting at breakfast, all the trees started rocking, all the trees began to shake. Nobody told anybody. This was the secrets of war. Did you ever hear such nonsense! I mean she could have had a fit... Anyway, Mrs Porter rushed down and they said, oh, it was the army and they were going to make a tank trap. So they cut all the trees down, they dug along here, you see, this way going to Pittwater. The backside of it they made a big wall which the Japs were not going to be able to get up. Having come thousands of miles from Japan.

We had barbed wire everywhere, to say nothing of the army, but the trouble was they didn't have any weapons. It was absolutely amazing. Bill and I went into hysterics except we were a bit worried what was going to happen. There were a couple of gun emplacements here, some here and some other here, but nothing to put in them!"

Betty Morrison, oral history, 1984.

Further reading

Guy Jennings, *The Newport Story 1788-1988*, 1987.
Comprehensive history.

Joan Lawrence, *Pittwater Paradise*, 1994, *Pittwater Pictorial History*, 2006
Historical and contemporary information.

Alan Sharpe, *Manly to Palm Beach*, 1983.
General history.