

TUNCURRY ROAD – Early Transport

From the earliest days of settlement in the Cape Hawke district, first at Forster, then Tuncurry, all communication with Sydney and Newcastle was by sea. Sailing ships travelled the coast bringing supplies and carrying the products of the area and any passengers offering. The settlers of Failford, Nabiac, Coolongolook also found it more convenient to convey themselves and their goods down the lake and the Wollamba River to the port by boat as roads were almost non-existent. As for communication with Taree, first mention is made of a bridle track which wound through the thick scrub by way of Blackhead. Another route was up to Krambach and then proceeded through Tinonee.

Eventually a road of sorts was made through the bush from Tuncurry, following the tracks of the bullock drays, which were the main means of transport at the time. This joined the road from Nabiac to Taree, now part of the Pacific Highway. This early road wound through the hills, down the gullies and across creeks full of potholes and steep climbs. One of the few signs of habitation, apart from an old settlers hut, was a shanty at the junction of the road to Nabiac, this catered for the thirsty traveller and is still known to the older locals as "Wineshop Corner."

The first motor transport to cater for the general public was started by Mr W Affleck who purchased an Argyle car and ran a service from Nabiac to Taree via Tuncurry. When the railway reached Taree in 1912, another Argyle was purchased and William Affleck ran a service between Tuncurry and Taree.

First Arglye Car



First Opening of Taree Railway Station c1912

While heavy cargo still went by sea the railway offered a faster means of getting perishable freight to the Sydney market, no mean consideration in the days before refrigeration. Both Charlie Bowers and Vince Fazio ran trucks to Taree, picking up the boxes of fish, packed in ice, from the fish wharf, carting it to catch the evening train at Taree, reaching the Sydney Markets by morning.

Joe Fazio, son of old Vince, ran a service car into the train in the early thirties and became a legend in his time, reputed to hold the unofficial speed record between Tuncurry and Taree.

About 1936, Mr Rupe Beale of the Bellevue Hotel, sponsored the first bus service to Taree, with a view to reducing the fare and increasing the tourist traffic, Brian Ivens being the proprietor.

Today, despite a better surface and the elimination of a few steep hills, the Tuncurry road still follows the old bullock track through the bush carrying the heavy traffic generated by the rapid growth of the Forster and Tuncurry area.

REFERENCE: *Winds of Change* written by Mick Constable.