

MEDIA RELEASE

80 years of Binna Burra

1933 to 2013: Binna Burra to celebrate a milestone of history

10.30am – 12.30pm
Binna Burra Lodge
Beechmont QLD 4211

On Saturday 7th December, a gathering of local Beechmont community, tourism partners, shareholders and nature lovers will unite and celebrate **80 years of Binna Burra** – a remaining icon of Queensland Tourism, where families & individuals can experience world-heritage listed Lamington National Park.

The Minister for Tourism, Jann Stuckey will be in attendance proudly celebrating this historic occasion, as will members of the founding Groom and Lahey families.

Celebrations leading up to the big day commence on Wednesday 4th December with a five day program of history-based events scheduled for lodge guests and campers (attached). Events include history trails, shingle cutting demonstrations, guest speakers and even and old-style cross-saw competition.

The first Binna Burra camp was held over the Christmas holidays in 1933. Romeo Lahey, Arthur Groom and 70 hardy adventurers set up a collection of tents on the "saddle"- the grassy area on the lead up to the Lodge. For five shillings a day, they were provided with accommodation, meals and guided walks through the rainforest.

In 1933, a hoop pine tree was planted to mark the founding of the original camp, and on Saturday 7th December 2013, 80 years on, we will be walking in our pioneers footsteps and planting another hoop pine to mark the occasion.

To see what is happening at Binna Burra today, to go their website, www.binnaburralodge.com.au.



For information/images, contact Rachel Allen: rachel@binnaburralodge.com.au p: 1300 246 622 www.binnaburralodge.com.au
Binna Burra Lodge, 1069 Binna Burra Rd, Beechmont, QLD 4211

The History of Binna Burra Lodge

One of Australia's longest-established nature-based resorts, Binna Burra Lodge was founded in 1933 by Arthur Groom and Romeo Lahey. These two pioneering conservationists shared a vision to create a place where people could stay and experience the beauty of the Lamington National Park rainforest. Through interpretive walks and educational programs, they believed more people would become committed to preserving this natural wilderness for future generations.

In the early 1930s, they purchased the last freehold title on the boundary of Lamington National Park and formed a public company to fund the establishment of what was to become Binna Burra Lodge.

"In one sense, the Lodge exists because of the vision, sense of purpose and dedication of two men who hit upon a brilliant idea."

Harry Throssell, author "Where the Beech Trees Grow: The Story of Binna Burra"

"We used to run down the hill to wash in Bellbird Creek, also the source of cooking water. There were no paths, we went straight through the bush behind Arthur Groom with his machete knife. Romeo Lahey was a most interesting man to talk with. He knew the whole district like the palm of his hand, loved the country and knew every tree. At night we had stories and sing songs around the campfire. We didn't need any organised entertainment, as we made our own fun." **Margery Pryor, participant in first Christmas camp.**

Despite cyclonic storms which ripped through the mountains from Boxing Day until New Year, the camp was declared a success and the decision was made to build permanent cabins on the property.

An old Canungra boarding house was dismantled and brought up to Binna Burra by packhorse, to serve as the dining and recreation room. For the cabins, tallow-wood slabs and stringy-bark shingles were hewn from the local timber.

By Easter 1934, the first hut was nearly finished and, by 1939, Binna Burra Mountain Lodge could accommodate 54 guests. The road was extended in 1947 to eliminate that last 400m trek and a network of walking tracks provided easier access to the rainforest wilderness. The very first track built was to Bellbird Lookout.

Binna Burra quickly became a popular destination with keen bushwalkers of all ages. It also attracted a number of scientists studying the flora and fauna of this living laboratory. Guided, interpretive bushwalks were a feature of the Binna Burra experience even from the earliest days.

After his initial contribution towards construction and track building, Romeo Lahey remained as a director of the company, on and off, until 1960. As resident manager, Arthur Groom lived on site. He and his wife Marjorie and their three sons, Donn, Tony and Richard, lived in the cabin which is now used as the LNHA Environmental Study Centre.

During the late 60s and early 70s, the Lodge was improved and extended using mostly volunteer labour. The 'Friends of Binna Burra' (FOBBs) have continued to make a significant contribution over the ensuing years.