“BLACKBERRYING AT BULLI”

The nineties saw the beginning of the blackberry harvest for which Bulli became renowned. The vines spread rapidly through the district and Sherbrooke was first to feature blackberry picking and blackberry jam in 1891 when the vines overran the mountain and gave concern to the Department of Agriculture. In 1893 picking absorbed the attention of all in the season. In 1894 the kerosene tin became and remained the popular blackberry container and Thirroul and Bulli became picking areas, extending along the hillsides from Woonona to Clifton as the years went by. G. S. Turnbull, storekeeper of Bulli, contracted to supply Sydney jam factories and bought from local pickers. Landowners charged 2/- per hundredweight for the right to pick on their land. Turnbull encouraged the trade; miners, their wives and children picked and added to their income, and Newcastle proved the best market for blackberry jam. From a despatch of four tons in 1894, the trade rose to thirty-five tons in 1898 and moved upwards to 100 tons during succeeding years. The 9.0 p.m. milk train in summer months from Bulli became “practically a blackberry train”.

In the new century the vines became a pest, threatening to ruin acres of agricultural and grazing land, and the need for their eradication became pressing.