

“Spanning the Years”



Tea Gardens Family Research & Local History Inc

'The Cottage'

Cnr Myall and Yalinbah Streets

TEA GARDENS 2324

PO Box 250 Tea Gardens 2324

Email: teagardensfrg@gmail.com

WEB: <http://tghnfrg.tidyhq.com>

ABN 95 947 789 163

NOVEMBER 2024 - NO: 50

OPEN DAYS

Except Public and School holidays

Mondays—Cottage

1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th—9.30am – Noon

3rd—1pm– 3pm

SATURDAYS—Tea Gardens Library

9.30—11.30am

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

To assist those researching their family history in a happy and friendly manner.

To preserve, share and promote our community's local history.

PATRONS: Janis Winn & Owen Holbert

PRESIDENT: Judith Glover

VICE PRESIDENT: Lesley Turner

SECRETARY: Anne Shannon

TREASURER: Ros Bridger

HISTORICAL EVENTS: Linda McIntosh

LOCAL HISTORY: Garry Worth

LIBRARIAN; Shirley Cox

NOTA NEWS: Anne Johnson

COMMITTEE:

Margaret Munright

Jenny Little

Diane Kiss

Frances Mitchell

PUBLIC OFFICER—Shirley Cox

We acknowledge the Worimi people, the traditional owners of the land on which we meet.



MEMBERSHIP

Annual Membership 1st July—30th June

\$15—New member joining fee

\$30—Annual Renewal

\$10— Extra Family member.

Regional Australia Bank

BSB: 932000

Account: 500044432

At the cottage, we have access to
Ancestry.com
FamilySearch.org
Library research books
Folders containing just about everything

At the Library, we have access and help
Ancestry Library Edition
Family Search Library Edition
Find My Past



As our year draws to a close, I am sure we all will welcome the time to spend with family and friends and maybe close our computers for a while.

2024 has been quite a successful year for our small group and while we are still waiting for news that the first sod to be turned for the local library extensions, we continue to meet in the Club Cottage where we are very comfortable.

We have finished re-recording what we have left of our library, having to downsize considerably after we moved from Shop 3, and now comes the process of what might be added to the library and what we keep for reference for ourselves. We have also finished recording and updating our local cemetery—a long process due to covid and other interruptions.

We have welcomed 4 new members, and thank you to Fran for also standing for committee. Sadly, we said farewell to a 'long standing' member who was always there to lend a hand at garage sales, festivals etc. Before she passed, Kath handed her family research, notes and personal stories over to her eldest granddaughter to continue their family research. -rest easy Kath.

If you are looking for something to do over the holidays – try researching on Trove. A number of years ago I googled the address in England where my grandfather was born – Woo hoo! the home was up for sale, so I googled the Estate Agents, this enabled me to see the floor plans, rooms inside and the laneway behind the rows of homes. Of course the home has been updated from 1880 on the inside, but the outside and laneway are just the same. It was also interesting too to view the sale prices over a period of years.

On behalf of our committee I take this opportunity to wish all members and friends from other groups to which we email our journal, a very happy, Holy and safe Festive Season and we look forward to catching up in 2025 with all your news.

Happy researching over the holidays – if you can find the time!

Jude

President TGFR&LH

While every effort is made to verify the contents in this newsletter, our group does not accept responsibility for the accuracy of the articles submitted by our members.

Submitted articles remain the property of our members and must not be copied or reproduced without permission of the contributor by email—teagardensfrg@gmail.com

We appreciate the Tea Gardens Country Club's generosity for allowing us the use of the cottage.

Many families keep old traditions which are handed down through the generations.

Have you stopped and thought about old traditions and where they started?

The Christmas Tree



It is claimed that in Germany about 723 the English missionary St. Boniface encountered pagans preparing a sacrifice at an oak tree dedicated to the god Thor. Boniface took an axe to the tree, and, when not struck down by their god, he proclaimed to the awed pagans that a nearby evergreen was their "holy tree." Other sources report that a fir grew on the site of the fallen oak.

Whether that tale is true or not, evergreen trees became part of Christian rites in Germany, and in the Middle Ages "paradise trees" began to appear there. Meant to represent the Garden of Eden, these evergreen trees were hung with apples and displayed in homes on December 24, the religious feast day of Adam and Eve. Other decorations were added—Martin Luther reportedly first hung lighted candles on a tree in the 16th century—and paradise trees evolved into Christmas trees. By the 19th century, Christmas trees were a firmly established tradition in Germany. As Germans migrated, they took Christmas trees to other countries, notably England. There, in the 1790s, Charlotte, the German-born wife of King George III, had trees decorated for the holiday. However, it was a German-born prince, Albert, and his wife, Britain's Queen Victoria, who popularized the tradition among the British. The couple made Christmas trees a prominent part of the holiday's festivities, and in 1848 an illustration of the royal family around a decorated tree appeared in a London newspaper. Christmas trees soon became common in English homes.



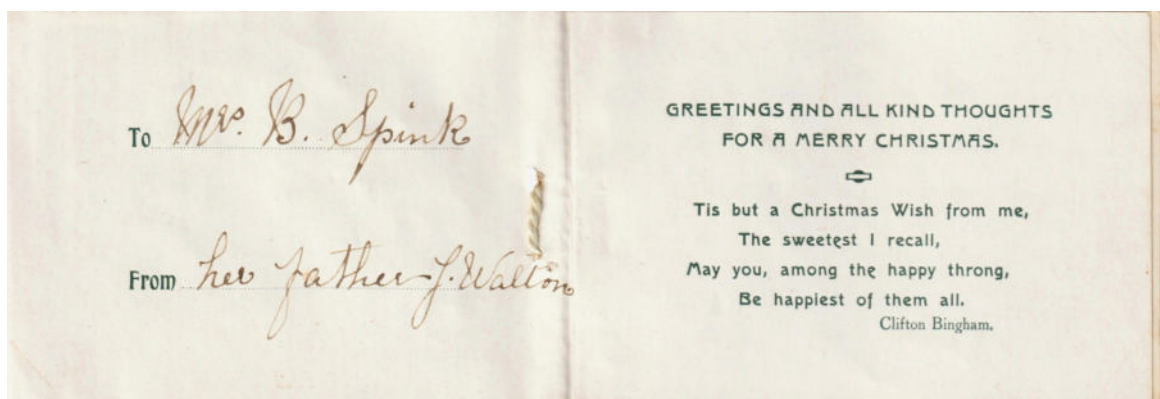
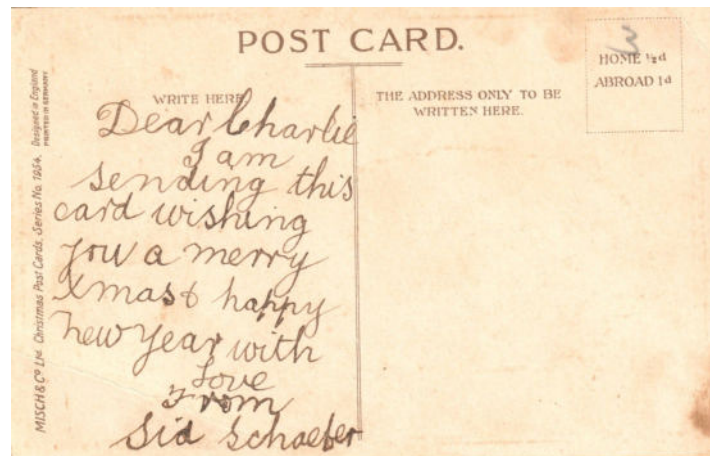
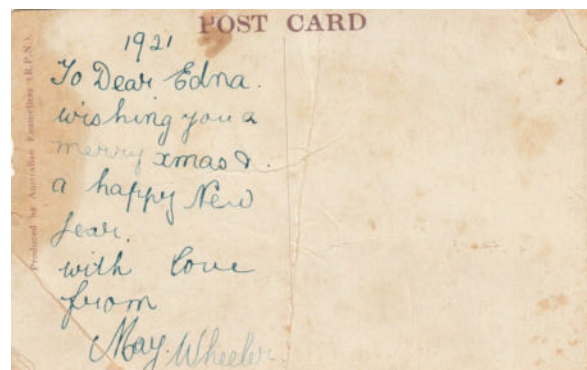
The origin of the Christmas Stocking, of which there are many interpretations, is the story of a despondent nobleman whose wife had died, leaving him penniless and the sole parent of their three daughters. Left with no money for a dowry, the nobleman was concerned for his daughters' opportunity to marry well. Without a sizable dowry, no one of equal wealth and status would be interested and with nothing to inherit they would be left destitute. Hearing of this fathers' dilemma, St. Nicholas came to the family home and filled the girls' stockings, which were hanging above the fireplace to dry, with solid gold spheres so that they would be able to marry after all. This story has continued to fuel Christmas decoration for 100's of years.



Another tradition followed each Christmas is the Wreath hanging on the front door. From its ancient origins in pagan rituals to its modern-day representation of Christian faith and festive traditions, the wreath embodies the timeless themes of renewal, salvation, and the joy of welcoming others into our home and hearts.

Harking back to German folklore in the 16th century, Christmas wreaths were originally Christmas tree decorations. Christmas trees were pruned to make them fit in a room and the chopped off excess was woven into a wreath, the shape symbolic meaning of eternity. The green represent the continuity of life and nature and red berries and thorny holly leaves represent the crown of thorns worn by Jesus and the red berries said to represent the drops of blood or signs of fertility. Hanging a wreath on our front door can be interpreted as an invite to the meaning of Christmas into our home and an open invite to family and friends.

Christmas greetings from the 1920s



CHRISTMAS TRADITIONS

My Grandmother's Christmas Stories

by Family Research member

My dear Nanna was born in 1909 Derbyshire, England and when a child was given an orange for Xmas which was a very special treat. She carried it around with her saving it for as long as she could, then after eating the inside kept the peel in her apron pocket. When the peel dried Nanna ate it sparingly savouring each tiny morsel until it was all gone.

The photo taken when Nanna was a teenager is with her best friend Sarah.



Sarah & Nanna

* * *



Nanna - 1952

Many years before I was born Nanna was making Xmas puddings. They were tied in cloths and placed in the copper of boiling water. Checking them some time later it was discovered that one of the cloths had come untied and all the contents were boiling around in the water. Words were said that cannot be repeated and the contents of the copper tossed out near the old apple tree. A family joke to stir her up was to ask Nanna if the apple tree had started growing any Xmas puddings.

* * *

STREAMER REMNANTS OF CHRISTMAS 1968 at my mum and dad's holiday cottage at Arcadia Vale. The twisty streamers were pinned into the ceiling which was canite, good for decorations but not for fires!

This was the first year we hadn't cut a tree from the bush. We all missed the smell of the Swampy Oak tree, but mum didn't miss the mess from the falling dead pine needles. Such happy carefree times enjoyed by all the family. The streamers stayed pinned until Easter, when they would be carefully wound back up ready for the next year.

Every Christmas in the 70s, three in-law families, 25 people, all had Christmas Day together as all our children were young—Santa somehow just knew where to leave the presents. One year my brother-in-law had his very first Christmas Day off from the hospital, and his niece broke her arm on our brand new trampoline—

B-I-L spent the day at the Maitland hospital—what a day, we will all never forget.

Member No 8.



Family Christmases are rather a mixed bag, so we read in the newspapers, and certainly they were in our house.

My mother was born on Christmas Day 1909 – my grandfather spent the day throwing water, which would have been a precious commodity in western NSW, on the walls of the house to try to cool the bedroom. Mum always said she only received one present a year until she qualified for Mother's Day, but she made up for it by announcing her engagement on Christmas Day, and then also marrying on 25th December.

By the time I remember Christmas, Mum reckoned it was the busiest day of the year for her, preparing lunch, then having everything ready for going visiting friends and relations all afternoon, with slices of cake and pudding to exchange at each house and a carful of flowers to take to the cemeteries. We would finish up for tea at Rose Bay, absolutely exhausted. We children had been far more interested in waking up early for our presents, especially Santa's stocking (just a sock) with the guaranteed threepence for an ice cream in the toe, rather than helping with the washing up!

Cake for each occasion was the order of the day – as well as the pieces taken around in the afternoon slices were posted to family in the country. The big specialties for our lunch were the chicken, a once-a-year event, the pudding with the money and tokens, the muscatels and nuts and the glace fruit.

Our tree was a live pine growing in a honey tin – the decorations began with handmade chains and became more elaborate as the years went on – the first year we had lights on the tree was amazing. Presents remained on show in the lounge room for at least a week and there was a succession of visitors.

When I married, it was the opposite end of the scale – my father-in-law had died on Christmas Day. The fire season was at its height and lunch was sometimes interrupted by a callout to the volunteer fire brigade.

Now we relax and share the work around the family. Time at the beach is important and having the family together is the focal point. Still, there has to be pudding with money, and cake!

Merry Christmas to you all.

Shirley



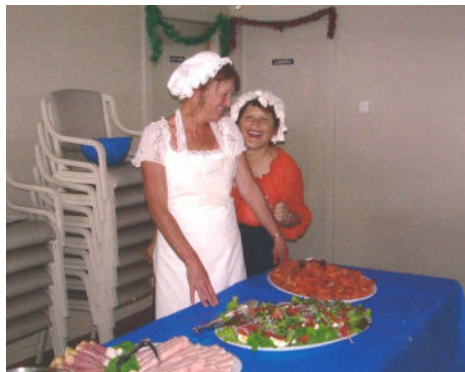
A lovely reminder of past and present members celebrating Christmas.



2004-Christmas celebrated at Tahlee



2006- Christmas celebrated with a picnic at Jimmys Beach



2009 -Convict Christmas at the Surf Club



2012— Christmas in Shop 3



2016 at Benchmark-Hawks Nest



2017—Benchmark Hawks Nest



2019-Country Club Tea Gardens



2022—& Henry's 90th Birthday
TG Country Club

1980s ON THE MYALL & THE “INVASION” OF CHRISTMAS TOURISTS—Christian Patteson

Growing up in the tourist villages of Hawks Nest / Tea Gardens came with mixed blessings. Or one could say double edged swords. The twin towns on the Lower Myall River are sandwiched between the waterways of Port Stephens and the Myall Lakes. Add in beaches, offshore islands, bushland, wild life galore and step back to the 1980s. No local or tourist could deny it was paradise.

Visitors would remark how lucky us locals were to have this gem to ourselves much of the year. Yes, we did have great times, but overall, it wasn't that simple! Just like our city and country friends we still had to go to school or work. We still got sick. It still rained. Also, there was also a lot of building construction in the expanding villages then. That meant the streets were not always quiet during the so called “quiet time”. If we ever tried to explain any of the above to the tourists, most seemed indifferent or oblivious that any such “glitches” on one's life could actually exist in paradise! More likely they just didn't want to think about it.

I didn't like school much. In my young brain, each year dragged on. The shrill of Hawks Nest's Double Drummer cicadas in late November came as a relief. The timing like clockwork coincided with no more exams, the imminent end of the school year, Christmas around the corner and summer fun. To this day when I hear that species of cicada, the same subconscious feelings return.

As Christmas approached, the local construction industry would wind down. Apart from the loud cicadas it was a quiet and peaceful time. Beach trips with no one there and so on. But this would end with a bang about Boxing Day as thousands fleeing the city overtook. They would pack the normally empty holiday homes to the brim as well as adjacent camping areas. Some camped anywhere and everywhere. Some seemed to have little regard for village tranquillity. Loud parties went half the night. During the day the invaders crowded the beaches, river and lakes. Roads became difficult to navigate around street side cricket matches. Other pedestrians seemed oblivious to the existence of cars and walked all over the road. If they did this in the city they would be run over. We had a saying that some holiday makers had a switch in their mind turning off most common sense at the Lions Lookout coming in to town. They wouldn't turn it back on until on the way out. They were of course just in holiday mode, nevertheless we would sometimes shake our heads at what we saw !

In my primary school years none of this worried me much. Somehow my parents still found places to escape. But as a teenager it became frustrating. While some of my peers loved interacting with the visitors, I was not so keen. For me, having to put up with school etc through the year with little spare time, it was then frustrating to have the time off only to have “paradise invaded “.

Note these busy periods did come with great positives. There was Christmas, extended family reunions and so on. And the tourists boosted employment. At age 15 I decided to take advantage of that scoring my first job in a local Takeaway food shop. I would work almost every day for 6 weeks over the holiday period. This gave me a LOT of pocket money.

As a young adult I still had that job for a while working long and hard for the same period. I remember so very well us staff (and the boss) “sneaking” out of the shop at the end of each Australia Day weekend late January. During the afternoon we would observe the rapidly deserting main street as the masses finally headed home. By dusk the street was empty and we would excitedly shout “they've gone” and crack open a celebratory drink. It was our turn for a belated Christmas. At that age I didn't have to go back to school so would make sure I left the first week of Feb free to enjoy paradise and still do.

Fast forward to 2024, the towns are bigger and technology has changed but what else?

CRUMBS of CHRISTMAS cake left on the plate. Santa has been! (Crumbs courtesy of Dad.)

Early morning. The trembling excitement of childhood, the wonder. Presents and aunts and uncles and cousins and even a morning visit to church.

One year, I actually heard Santa's reindeers' bells jingling in the night. The odd look on Mum's face when I revealed this astounding moment the next morning. (It was Dad, testing the bell on my first ever bike.) To me, it was wondrous. All of it.

The first Christmas tree I remember was home made - a broom stick with carefully drilled holes that Dad had inserted with dowel and loops of green raffia. Kids today would laugh at such a thing but it was a different time. In the 1960s home made was still a necessity, not a hobby craft. And most dads made and fixed everything.

A child, despite Sunday School has a loose grasp on religion, so for me Christmas was family and presents and Christmas pudding in a cloth. I still remember the words to the traditional Christmas carols and like them best.

Memories of making awful cards and paper chains at school. Then walking home in the heat, fascinated by the melting tar on the edge of the strip of sealed road. Well, maybe squishing in the soft tar a bit. Sorry Mum.

Snake season. Still hate snakes. To be followed by beaches and sand in the cossies and sand in the tomato Saos as well...warm cordial and the smell of the family dogs after a swim. Seeing which kid could peel the longest strip of sunburnt skin. Occasional treats of banana paddle pops and SunnyBoys...

So thank you Mum and Dad for a time of wonder, love and childhood joy. (Rhonda W)

JULIA WEBSTER'S (b.1887, Glendonbrook, NSW)

CHRISTMAS CAKE RECIPE

*The mixture can be halved for a smaller cake.
It also makes a great wedding cake.*

230g sultanas
230g raisins
180g currants
110g prunes, seeded and finely chopped
110 g dates, seeded and finely chopped
60g peel (optional)
120 ginger, finely chopped
60-120g cherries cut in halves or thirds
60-120g almonds, sliced or flaked
230g brown sugar
250g butter
4 large or 5 medium eggs
1 tablespoon fig jam (optional)
340-350g plain flour
1 good tsp baking powder
Pinch salt
Half a level teaspoon of mixed spice
Quarter level teaspoon mace

Cont'd



Preparation

Wash sultanas, raisins and currants in a colander under cold running water. Drain and pat dry on paper towels, then spread out thinly in trays lined with paper towels. Wash dates (and prunes if desired) before chopping. Lay in trays to dry. Cover trays with gauze cloth. Leave for a few days to dry out. THEN put all fruit in a bowl and pour over 6-8 tablespoons of brandy. Cover with plastic wrap. Soak for 3 to 4 days. Shake bowl frequently to distribute brandy. NB. Almonds are not added until mixing the cake.

The Tin

A round or square tin to take a half pound fruit cake mixture. (c. 7.5"x7.5"x 2.5" or c. 18.5cm square by 7cm high)
Grease bottom and sides of tin.
Line bottom and sides with brown paper cut to size. Grease brown paper.
Then line again with Glad Bake.

Mixing

First set oven set at 150 degrees Celsius. (Not sure about fan forced. Think I use 10-20 degrees less.)
Sift at least twice together: flour, baking powder, spices, salt.
Coat fruit with one quarter of the flour mixture. This stops fruit sinking to the bottom.
Add almonds.
Cream butter and sugar until smooth. Don't over beat.
Add fig jam and whizz around a few times.
Add eggs, one at a time. Don't over beat.
Then to egg and butter mixture, gradually add about one third of the flour, then some of the floured fruit, more flour, more fruit etc. This stops the fruit sinking to the bottom of the cake.
Spoon mixture into the tin spreading evenly, making sure that there is plenty in the corners of the tin.
From a crouching position drop cake c. 6 times on the floor. Lastly, hollow out a small indentation in the middle of the cake to stop it rising too high.
Cover cake with a piece of brown paper resting on top of lining.

Cooking

Place on oven shelf 2 rungs from the bottom and in the middle.
Cook for 3 to 3.5 hours (depends on tin and oven).
Test with skewer to see if cooked.
Do NOT open the oven for at least 2 hours. Resist peeking!
When cooked, cool in tin. Then wrap in linen tea towel until ready for icing. Store in an air tight container. (Cake doesn't really need icing. Personal choice.)

Tip: to seal any cracks in top of cake, cover with well wrung-out damp paper towel. Can be repeated while cake is warm.



PUDDING IN A CLOTH or **steamed** in a bowl

Same mixture as the cake. *However, unless you want a large pudding, I would halve or quarter the mixture.*

Preparation

a. Long length of cooking twine.

b. Cloth:

well-washed unbleached calico.

Douse cloth in boiling water - use tongs to fish out.

Wring water out tightly

Quickly dust with plain flour. Rub in well. Cover well to form skin.

Wrapping

Spoon mixture into centre of cloth. Gather sides up in your hands and measure the sides of your clenched fist above middle of mixture. Wind twine around repeatedly above your fist and tie tightly and repeatedly.

Put some plain flour firmly in the gathered top hole - helps prevent water seepage.

Boil 3-4 hours. Check water level and add boiling water as necessary. Drape or tie top of cloth over pot or handle. Keep tied section above water.

Tip:

A china saucer in the bottom of the boiler will stop the bottom of the pudding burning.

If not eating immediately, change cloth carefully after *thoroughly* cooled. Hang in airy space to allow skin to firm. Cut pudding keeps well in the fridge.



GREETINGS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Germany—*Frohe Weihnachten.*

Denmark—*Norway and Sweden - God Jul*

China—*Shèngdàn kuàilè.*

Fiji—*Siganisucu.*

France—*Joyeux Noël*

Indonesia—*Selamat natal*

Italy—*Buon Natale.*

Japan—*Merikurisumasu*

England—*Happy Christmas*

Australia—*Happy Christmas or Gooday!*



We are a family research and local history group, the following pages are snippets about events and the history of our twin towns.

TEA GARDENS – HAWKS NEST

No one is certain how Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest were named, there are lots of theories, some of which are below.

Tea Gardens –It was either because the vast Australian Agricultural Company which was granted 500,000 acres in the area in 1826 unsuccessfully attempted to grow tea although it is equally plausible that it was named because of the abundance of tea-trees along the Myall River.

Hawks Nest - There was a time, long before satellite navigation, when the large nest of a hawk was used as a navigational marker for early sailors to indicate the entrance to Port Stephens. That is how this place became known as Hawks Nest

The areas were occupied by the Worimi Aborigines prior to white settlement and the first Europeans to work in the area were timber-cutters along the Myall River. The timber was hauled by bullock train to mills, the remnants of one still at Winda Woppa. Ships bound for Newcastle and Sydney picked up the timber after unloading the ballast along the banks of the Myall River.

<https://www.aussietowns.com.au/town/hawks-nest-nsw>

teagardenshawksnest.com -Tea Gardens Real Estate

www.smh.com.au - Nov 2008

Wikipedia 2016

<https://www.portstephens.org.au/about-port-stephens/history/landmarks-and-villages/#tea-gardens>

The Naming of Hawks Nest—*another theory handed down through family generations*

Re the naming of 'Hawks Nest'

William Hardy – the son of Richard – married Mary Ann (surname could have been Hawke, not sure).

Mary Ann was the niece of the two maiden sisters "Misses Hawk's" who were very wealthy and owned property in Hawks Nest area.

It is claimed Hawkes Nest is named after the 2 sisters.

When Mary Ann (their niece) married beneath her status they disowned her and disinherited her.

One of Mary Ann's daughters was Lilian Jane Hardy who married Vincent Fazio of Tuncurry.

This information was passed on to Anita Munro – Lilian's daughter approximately 80 years ago.

Anita Munro was always told stories of the aunts' and that Hawks Nest was named after them. We have no reason to believe different.

Rob & Wanda Munro – 6th July 1992

PAST TIMES IN TEA GARDENS

Since the public toilets opposite the Tea Gardens Police Station have been recently beautifully enhanced, I checked back to when they were erected in 1963, the same time as the boat loading ramp was also being completed a short distance away. The Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest Chamber of Commerce, which had been formed in 1958, was responsible for these projects –its aim was to improve our area and make it more attractive to tourists. Dr. Pacy was the first President and George Hurle the Secretary.

The bridge at Karuah had been built in 1957 and the road to it from the 12 mile was sealed in 1960, so our area was becoming increasingly busy, especially in holiday times.

The Mungo Brush Regatta was held around Christmas each year and the only access was by water until the Chamber pioneered the course of the new road to the Myall Lakes in 1958, with plans to extend the link to the Bombah Point ferry – this happened later, as the preliminary budget was only £200 (about \$3,700.00 today)

1959 saw the opening of the Yacaaba Lookout, another of Dr. Pacy's wishes.

An Ambulance Station was also on the Chamber's list and this eventuated in 1968.

The need for a bridge linking Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest was first mentioned by the Chamber in 1958 and in 1963 it was placed on a priority list to be built within a minimum of two years and a maximum of four, but despite their hopes it was, as we know, it took ten years.

Two members of our community remember these past times well – retired plumber Peter Webb who was involved with building the toilet block in 1963, and Les Wilkie who worked with the team constructing the road to Mungo Brush.

Ann Johnson

Tea Gardens Family Research & Local History Inc..



Christmas is a time of peace, joy and the reminder of the magic and wonder of the holiday season. It evokes anticipation and excitement, especially in the young ones eagerly waiting for Santa, but it should also bring to our thoughts for the people who aren't as fortunate as ourselves and to those tireless workers on Christmas Day who make it 'special' for the less fortunate people in our communities. Think about the REAL meaning of Christmas.

We wish you a safe and happy Christmas season and look forward to reading your Newsletters and Journals throughout 2025.

Tea Gardens Family Research & Local History Members