

Nibbles: This issue of Nibbles, our Christmas edition, includes our "blast from the past" about early Anglesea buildings, as well as an article by Susan Clarke our Museum curator, about the tradition of Christmas weddings. But first of all the quiz ...

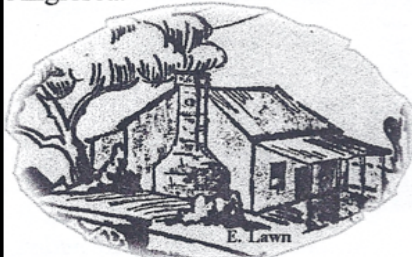
Quiz: Try your luck at these questions. The answers are towards the end of this issue (no peeking).

- Q.1. In what year did the "Australian of the Year" awards begin?
- Q.2. Where is the lowest point in Australia?
- Q.3. Who founded Australia's first commercial brewery?
- Q.4. In which Australian state is Lake Disappointment?
- Q.5. About what proportion of the Australian population lives within 50km of the coastline?

Why were all the early Anglesea buildings constructed of timber ?

Simply because - it was almost impossible to cart bricks there over the existing two wheeled tracks with horse drawn vehicles.

Research shows there were no suitable bluestone deposits known to be available near Anglesea.



The closest, just west of Freshwater Creek was mined to construct that area's Lutheran Church. Also, the early tracks through the ironbark forests presented enormous physical

difficulties for horse drawn wagons to cart hand made bricks to this newly discovered locality.

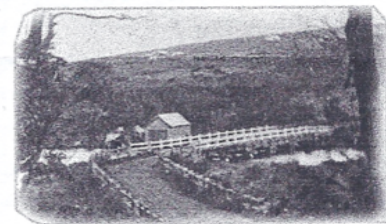
However - some bricks did reach the district for the construction of house chimneys. Many chimneys were also built of just local rocks.

Anglesea at first was only used as a summer holiday retreat, and a timber cottage was the popular way to go. In the twenties a couple of houses were constructed of cement bricks. These alternate building blocks were manufactured on site - but the idea did not become popular.

During 1886 an 1887 there was another two releases of Nobles land in the McMillan Street, Jackson Street, and River

Esplanade areas.

In 1892 the much needed bridge was built, making the Noble street area closer to the township. Land in this vicinity was then released for sale.



Even after the bridge was built the permanent population of Anglesea remained on the eastern side of the river, and the holiday-makers kept mostly to the western side.

I have been reliably told that local children seldom crossed the bridge! ■ L.B.

A Christmas wedding in the family? Why did a lot of people get married on Christmas Day in times past? In England, during the 18th and 19th centuries, getting married on Christmas Day was a popular tradition. Christmas weddings usually occurred out of necessity as Christmas and the day after Christmas were often the only days of the year that young working-class couples were guaranteed to get off work. Even Charles Dickens' Ebenezer Scrooge was forced to reluctantly give his long-suffering clerk, Bob Cratchett, the day off in the opening chapter of *A Christmas Carol*. Christmas weddings appear to have been even more common in inner-city areas, home to large industrial working-class communities. In a number of cities, particularly in London, it was a tradition that churches offered free marriages and baptisms on 25 December.

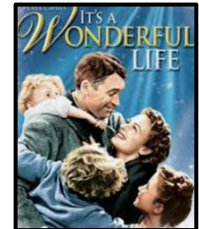
There was a Christmas wedding in one of Anglesea's early families when Rosalie Bannister (youngest daughter of Henry Bannister) married George Stewart, whose family were from Newtown, on 25 December 1905 at St Paul's, Durban, South Africa.

[sources: <https://www.findmypast.com/blog/history/christmas-day-weddings>; *Geelong Advertiser*, 26 December 1905]



The History of Christmas: I love Christmas! I loved it as a kid, I loved it as a dad, and I especially love it as a grandad. It's one of the few times that the whole family gets together, and at least for a short time, the worries of one's daily life are put aside. As a kid I could barely wait for Christmas morning so I could rush downstairs and open my presents. I didn't know it then, but as I discovered as a dad, a lot of work would go into preparing for those moments of "kid" pleasure. I can remember sitting up until at least midnight on Christmas Eve over the years assembling trikes, scooters and pushbikes, pumping up footies, wrapping books and games and then placing them carefully around the Christmas tree. You'd smile on Christmas day when asked "Dad, I got all these beaut presents from Father Christmas, but what did you and mum get me?" But none of it would have been so enjoyable without the 'behind the scenes' work of my mum, and later, my wife. They really made it all happen. We'd sit down to Christmas dinner, pop our Christmas crackers, put on our paper hats, read the corny jokes, laugh lots, and eat a beautifully and lovingly prepared meal. I wonder if the person who invented the automatic dish washer won a Nobel prize. Should have. Since being a member of our historical society I've looked forward to and enjoyed our Christmas meeting each year. Sadly, because of COVID-19 and the necessary isolation and distancing policies, we have had to cancel this year's event. Even so, I'm not letting you escape a few of my interesting Christmas facts.

The "Number 1" Christmas movie of all time: Without exception (and I looked at a lot of best movie lists) the best Christmas movie of all time is "It's a Wonderful Life" made in 1946 and starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed. It was based on a short story called "The Greatest Gift" written in 1943 by Philip Van Doren Stern about a man who has given up his dreams to help others and whose imminent suicide on Christmas Eve brings about the intervention of a guardian angel, Clarence Odbody. Guaranteed to bring a tear to your eye.



The "Number 1" Christmas story of all time: Other than the obvious, the number 1 Christmas story of all time is the novella "A Christmas Carol" by Charles Dickens written in 1843. To quote one critic, "It is a ghost story, a story of redemption, and a history lesson all at once." It was also made in 1951 into one of my favourite Christmas films starring Alastair Sim as Scrooge.

Father Christmas: Did you know that today's stereotypical image of Santa dressed in red was largely as a result of a "Coca Cola" advertisement in 1931. Illustrator Haddon Sundblom painted Santa as "warm, happy character with human features, including rosy cheeks, a white beard, twinkling eyes and laughter lines and a RED costume."

Christmas Trees: Did you know that Christmas trees were first used by Ancient Egyptians and Romans and that (according to the internet, and who am I to argue) spiders and spider webs have often been used to decorate Christmas trees because they are symbols of prosperity and goodness.

Finally, since we can't actually pull a Christmas cracker together, just imagine we have, and you're holding a small plastic toy in your hand, your Christmas hat is on your head, and you're reading your Christmas joke. Well here it is (without any apologies).

What does Santa suffer from if he gets stuck in a chimney? Claustrophobia! (Ho! Ho! Ho!)

On that jolly note, a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you all from the Committee of the Anglesea & District Historical Society. (Karl Jacklin - Editor of Nibbles)

Answers to the Quiz: Q.1 1960 Q.2 Lake Eyre (about 15 metres below sea level) Q.3 James Squire Q.4 Western Australia Q.5 85%

The month of December: Here's a list of some of the things that happened during the month of December in Australia in years gone by.

3rd December 1854: The Eureka Rebellion at Ballarat culminating in "The Battle of the Eureka Stockade."

22nd December 1899: Western Australian enacted full women's suffrage.

26th December 1945: The Sydney Harbour Yacht Race was held for the first time.

8th December 1956: The 16th Summer Olympics were held in Melbourne.

17th December 1967: Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared whilst swimming at Cheviot Beach.

24th December 1974: Darwin was devastated by "Cyclone Tracy."

Historical Jokes:

1. What was the most popular kid's movie in Ancient Greece? *Troy Story*
2. What was written on a knight's headstone? *Rust in Peace*
3. Where did Ivan the Terrible buy his coffee? *Tsarbucks*