



THE PIONEER

RURAL & RESIDENTIAL
PROPERTY

Christmas time in Stroud

As we prepare for Christmas 2015, I thought it would be timely to see how Christmas was celebrated in years past.

Stroud has celebrated Christmas in different ways. Schools concerts have been constant. Fundraising for wartime comfort funds were common when our men and women were away serving their country. As well, Christmas Tree prize-giving was a favourite of the children.

Two celebrations that I was not expecting were Christmas Races and Christmas Balls. The races were held at The Branch from the latter 1800s through to more recent times. The Branch was also host to the Christmas Balls.

As an aside, Christmas 1900 reports noted that there were many people passing through Stroud onwards to Commonwealth celebrations that would take place on 1 January 1901, Federation: the birth of our nation.

On Boxing Day 1900 the Stroud Christmas Race Club held their meeting. The attendance was large but entries were lower than previous years. The officials included Messrs. McNeil, Daunt, McCrae, Crick, and Franklin. It was reported that there were 'several games of chance' which I am sure is what we call betting today¹. C J Lemottee held a publican's booth and was busy all day. Our current councillor, Karen Hutchinson, has fond memories of the Christmas Races at The Branch in slightly more modern times ☺.

In the lead up to Christmas of 1934, there was an all-night Christmas Ball held at The Branch on 16 November. They had lovely decorations, lots of food, and a crowded dance floor. Evening frocks were the preferred outfit for women and the favoured fabric was marocain of many hues though



salmon pink and navy were popular. People came from all around, including Karuah, Allworth, Girvan, Stroud, Booral, Washpool, Bunyah, Minmi, Raymond Terrace, and Tea Gardens. Apart from celebrating the upcoming festive season, the night was an occasion to raise funds for the children's Christmas presents².

Fast forward to 2015. R & R Property wish you a safe and happy Christmas. We look forward to serving you in 2016.

Sharon Burke ©2015

Special thanks to the Stroud Facebook community for contributing to clarification around the Christmas Races at The Branch.

¹ *The Maitland Daily Mercury*, 29 December 1900.

² *The Raymond Terrace Examiner and Lower Hunter and Port Stephens Advertiser*, 22 November 1934.