



*December 2022 Newsletter  
Magazine Section*

*FRIENDSHIP, FELLOWSHIP  
AND FUN*

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*Christmas*

"It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." — *Mother Teresa*

"Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but of reflection." — *Winston Churchill*

"Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more." — *Dr Seuss*

"Love the giver more than the gift."  
." — *Brigham Young*

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*Mary Reibey*

Originally a convict deported to Australia, Mary Reibey nee Haydock (12 May 1777 – 30 May 1855) was viewed by her contemporaries as a role model of success and became legendary as a successful business woman in the colony of New South Wales.

A woman of great determination, Mary Reibey contributed enormously to the city's economy, architecture and society in the 1800s. Following the death of her husband Thomas Reibey in 1811, she took over the running of his merchant and shipping business, while raising her seven children.

Baptised Molly Haydock, she was born on 12 May 1777 in Bury, Lancashire, England. Following the death of her parents, she was reared by a grandmother. She ran away and was arrested for stealing a horse in August 1791. At the time, she was disguised as a boy and was going under the name of James Burrow. Mary protested that she had only borrowed the horse so she could get home, but the local court in Stafford, England, didn't buy her story, and sentenced to death, but it was later commuted to seven years transportation to the penal colony of New South Wales.

Mary arrived in Sydney on the Royal Admiral in October 1792 and soon caught the eye of a junior officer on the store ship Britannia, Thomas Reibey. On 7 September 1794, 17-year-old Mary married Thomas Reibey, after he had proposed to her several times

Thomas Reibey was granted land on the Hawkesbury River, where he and Mary lived and farmed following their marriage. They built a farmhouse called Reibycroft, which is now listed on the Register of the National Estate.

Thomas Reibey commenced a cargo business along the Hawkesbury River to Sydney, and later moved to Sydney. Thomas Reibey's business undertakings prospered, enabling him in 1804 to build a substantial stone residence on a further grant of land near Macquarie Place.

They acquired several farms on the Hawkesbury River, and traded in coal, cedar, furs and skins. He entered into a partnership with Edward Wills, and trading activities were extended to Bass Strait, the Pacific Islands and, from 1809, to China and India.

Thomas Reibey died on 5 April 1811, after contracting a fatal illness on his final trading trip to Bengal. Mary assumed sole responsibility for the care of seven children and the control of numerous business enterprises.

Mary was well accepted in Sydney's social circles, and became a close friend of the Governor, Lachlan Macquarie, and his wife Elizabeth.

Macquarie made a request of his superiors in England to establish a bank, but when it was refused, he went ahead with the plan anyway. Rather than establish the bank with government funds, he did it by public subscription. Macquarie, his wife and Mary Reibey were three of the six founding shareholders.

The bank began trading out of Mary's Macquarie Place house in 1817. The bank was the Bank of New South Wales, now known as Westpac

In the emancipist society of New South Wales, Mary gained respect for her charitable works and her interest in the church and education. She was appointed one of the Governors of the Free Grammar School in 1825.

By 1828, when she gradually retired from active involvement in commerce, she had acquired extensive property holdings in the city. In the census of that year, when asked to describe her condition, she declared that she "came free in 1821".

Reibey built a cottage in the suburb of Hunters Hill, New South Wales circa 1836, where she lived for some time. The cottage, situated on the shores of the Lane Cove River, was later acquired by the Joubert brothers, who enlarged it. It is now known as Fig Tree House and is listed on the (now defunct) Register of the National Estate.



*Fig Tree House*

On her retirement, Mary built a house at Newtown, Sydney, where she lived until her death on 30 May 1855 from pneumonia. She was 78 years old.

She is featured on the obverse of Australian twenty-dollar notes printed since 1994.



*Mary Reibey on the \$20 Note*

The oldest son of Mary and Thomas Reibey, Thomas Haydock Reibey II (1821-1912: clergyman, farmer and politician), became the Premier of Tasmania from 1876 to 1877. Mary, the matriarch of the family, obtained the grant of 300 acres of land upon which Thomas II was to settle and build the Entally homestead and outbuildings in 1819. The original house and some outbuildings are now an historic house in Hadspen on the outskirts of Launceston, in northern Tasmania.



*Entally homestead and outbuildings, Hadspen*

## *A Girl on a Train*

Once, a train ticket examiner who was on duty on a Bangalore bound train from Mumbai caught a girl who was hiding under a seat. She was around 13 or 14 years old. The ticket examiner asked the girl to produce her ticket. The girl hesitantly replied that she had no ticket. The examiner told the girl to get off the train immediately.

Suddenly, a voice from behind said "I will pay for her". That was the voice of Mrs Usha Bhattacharya who was a college lecturer by profession. Mrs Bhattacharya paid for the girl's ticket and requested her to sit by her. She asked what her name was.

"Chitra", the girl replied

"Where are you going?"

"I have nowhere to go," the girl said

"Then come with me."

After reaching Bangalore, Mrs Bhattacharya handed the girl over to an NGO to be taken care of. Later Mrs Bhattacharya moved to Delhi and the two lost contact with each other.

Some 20 years later Mrs Bhattacharya, now Professor Bhattacharya, was invited to San Francisco to deliver a lecture to a college there.

She was in a restaurant having a meal. After she finished she asked for the bill, but she was told that the bill was already paid. When she turned back she saw a woman with her husband

smiling at her. Mrs Bhattacharya asked the couple “Why did you pay my bill?. The young woman replied, “Ma’am the bill I paid is extremely little compared to the fare you paid for me for the ticket for that train journey from Mumbai to Bangalore”.

Tears rolled down from the eyes of both women.

While hugging each other, the young woman said “Ma’am my name is not Chitra now. I am Sudha Murty. This is my husband.... Narayan Murty.”

Mrs Sudha Murty is the chairman of Infosys Ltd the multimillion-dollar software and outsourcing company founded by her husband Narayan Murty

The Murty’s had a daughter Akshata who is married to Rishi Sunak the young Hindu Prime Minister of Britain

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## *A Lunar Eclipse*

A lunar eclipse occurs when the sun, Earth and moon line up and the shadow of the Earth falls on the moon. Such an event occurred on the evening of 8 November 2022. The eclipse resulted in a “blood moon” when the moon was fully in the Earth’s shadow.

Attached are my photos taken of the moon entering the Earth’s shadow; the “blood moon” when the moon was in the Earth’s shadow; and the moon exiting the shadow.

Peter Loveday



*Entering Earth's Shadow*



*Blood Moon in Earth's Shadow*



*Moon Exiting Earth's Shadow*

## *Mistletoe and Robins and the Mistletoe Bird*

Many ladies from England have been kissed under the mistletoe. This follows an ancient tradition. Legend tells us that Norse god Baldur, God of truth and light, was slayed by an arrow made from the mistletoe branch. His bereft mother wept tears of white berries which brought Baldur back to life. It was decreed that the mistletoe was never to be used again as a weapon and that she would place a kiss on anyone who passed beneath it.

The kissing tradition has spread throughout out the ages. Thought to have been popular initially with the working class and spreading into the middle classes during the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Customarily men can steal a kiss from any girl standing beneath the plant and any refusal of a kiss can lead to bad luck and a lack of marriage proposal for the following year! After every kiss a berry should be removed from the bush and once all of the berries have been taken the kissing must cease!

But not in Australia where mistletoe has a bad reputation as it is a sap sucking plant that requires a host tree. However there are a few reasons to celebrate if you've spotted the bright red, octopus-shaped flowers of the mistletoe in your area. Many people assume mistletoe is an introduced tree, but there are ninety species of mistletoe in Australia and seventy of these re native.

Many Australian animals feed on mistletoe. This plant is more nutritious than the trees they live in and the nectar and fruit is loved by native bids such as honeyeaters, lorikeets, bowerbirds, emus and cockatoos as well as the mistletoe bird. If there is mistletoe in your area you're likely to spot native birds more often.

And then there is the red robin at Christmas in England where robins were called robin redbreast after the postmen whose uniforms were red breasted. Robins were around at Christmas and were painted on early Christmas cards. In Australia we have 50 species of robin and they are about all year not just at Christmas



*Mistletoe Bird*



*Flame Robin*

## *Charles Dickens*

Charles Dickens may have created the ghosts of Christmas past, present and future but anyone familiar with his work knows that any mention of spirits is not restricted to the spectral kind.

While alcohol flowed freely through the pages of his books, the author's relationship with drink is perhaps less well documented. A letter to his wine merchant in 1845 has now come up for sale that puts this relationship under renewed scrutiny.

In the note to James Livermore, a City of London importer, Dickens bemoans a misfortune that led to the loss of 13 gallons of wine from Tuscany.

*"I have had a cask of Italian wine sent me, from Carrara," he wrote. "And I want you to be good enough to send up a man tomorrow morning, to bottle it off. It seems there was an old hole in the cask; and thirteen gallons have leaked away on the passage! So I want to take care of the rest, without delay. Six or seven dozen bottles will be quite as many as I shall require, I fear, after this waste."*

Dickens put his writing career on hold in June 1844 to travel across Italy for a year, staying in towns and cities, including Carrara in Tuscany. On returning to Britain he published a travelogue, *Pictures from Italy*, in which he described the country as a "chaotic magic-lantern show".

"In another letter, he talks about having got drunk on Carrara wine while he was there with a woman called Madame de la Rue. He describes their evening as full of 'intoxicating and rapturous excitement'.



*Carrara, Italy*

About two weeks after his letter to Livermore, Dickens paid the wine merchant £20. This is likely to have covered the bottling service as well as the purchase of further wines or spirits.

Claire Tomalin, the author of *Charles Dickens: a Life*, described him as a "heavy drinker". She wrote that on his final tour of America, two years before his death of a stroke aged 58, Dickens was heavily fortified by alcohol.

She writes that on his reading days he would have fresh cream and two tablespoons of rum at seven in the morning, a sherry cobbler — sherry, sugar and slices of orange — with a biscuit at midday, a pint of champagne at three and an egg beaten into a glass of sherry before his evening performance.

Dickens's well-stocked wine cellar at his death suggests he liked to indulge. An inventory he wrote days before he died in 1870 notes that his collection at Gads Hill Place in Higham, Kent, included more than 200 bottles of port, 60 bottles of champagne, 60 bottles of chablis, 60 bottles of sweet wine, more than 100 bottles of claret and 20 bottles of spirits including brandy and whisky.

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## *Eating in the FIFTIES and SIXTIES*

Pasta was not eaten in Australia

Curry was a surname.

A takeaway was a mathematical problem.

A pizza was something to do with a leaning tower.

All potato crisps were plain; the only choice we had was whether to put the salt on or not.

Rice was only eaten as a milk pudding.

Calamari was called squid and we used it as fish bait.

A Big Mac was what we wore when it was raining.

Brown bread was something only poor people ate.

Oil was for lubricating, fat was for cooking.

Tea was made in a teapot using tea leaves and never green.

Sugar enjoyed a good press in those days and was regarded as being white gold. Cubed sugar was regarded as posh.

None of us had ever heard of yoghurt.

Seaweed was not a recognised food.

"Kebab" was not even a word, never mind a food.

Surprisingly, muesli was readily available, it was called cattle feed.

Water came out of the tap. If someone had suggested bottling it and charging more than petrol for it, they would have become a laughing stock!!

But the one thing that we never ever had on our table in the sixties .....  
Elbows or iPhones.

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## *A Christmas Thought From Roger Morrow*

**Get your relatives speaking to one another again by sending a heartfelt Christmas card with a picture of your family with an extra child nobody knows.**

If you could sit on this bench and chat for 1 hour with anyone from the past or present who would it be..??



I would like to talk to my Scottish g.g.grandmother. She came to Australia with her husband and small children in 1839. I would ask her:

- Did you choose to come to Australia for a better life?
- Was it a hard or easy decision to leave Scotland knowing you may never see your family and friends again?
- Did you and your family correspond?
- Did you speak in English / Scottish Gaelic?
- Did you know the settlement where you were sent was a new area?
- Before you and your husband decided to settle in NSW, were you informed about the extreme weather conditions, the snakes, the flies, mosquitos, the Kangaroos, the Indigenous peoples, etc?
- Where did you live and who built your house?
- What in life were your biggest regrets and the hardest to bear?
- Thank you for being a pioneer and paving the way to shape the lives of your descendants.

Lesley McQuire

## *A Covid Christmas*

Twas the night before Christmas, but  
Covid was here,  
So we all had to stay extra cautious this  
year.  
Our masks were all hung by the chimney  
with care  
In case Santa forgot his and needed a  
spare.  
With Covid, we couldn't leave cookies or  
cake  
So we left Santa hand sanitizer to take.

The children were sleeping, the brave  
little tots  
The ones over 5 had just had their first  
shots,  
And mom in her kerchief and me in my  
cap  
Had just settled in for a long winter's  
nap.  
But we tossed and we turned all night in  
our beds  
As visions of variants danced in our  
heads.

Gamma and Delta and now Omicron  
These Covid mutations that go on and  
on  
I thought to myself, "If this doesn't get  
better,  
I'll soon be familiar with every Greek  
letter".

Then just as I started to drift off and  
doze  
A clatter of noise from the front lawn  
arose.  
I leapt from my bed and ran straight  
down the stair  
I opened the door, and an old gent stood  
there.



His mask made him look pretty weird  
But I knew who he was by his red suit  
and beard.  
I kept six feet away but blurted out quick  
" What are you doing here, jolly Saint  
Nick?"

Then I said, "Where's your presents,  
your reindeer and sleigh ?  
Don't you know that tomorrow will be  
Christmas Day? ".  
And Santa stood there looking sad in the  
snow  
As he started to tell me a long tale of  
woe.

He said he'd been stuck at the North  
Pole alone  
All his white collar elves had been  
working from home,  
And most of the others said "Santa,  
don't hire us!  
We can live off the CERB now, thanks to  
the virus".

Those left in the toyshop had little to do.  
With supply chain disruptions, they could  
make nothing new.  
And as for the reindeer, they'd all gone  
away.  
None of them left to pull on his sleigh.

He said Dasher and Dancer were in  
quarantine,  
Prancer and Vixen refused the vaccine,  
Comet and Cupid were in ICU,  
So were Donner and Blitzen, they may  
not pull through.

And Rudolph's career can't be  
resurrected.  
With his shiny red nose, they all think  
he's infected.  
Even with his old sleigh, Santa couldn't  
go far.  
Every border to cross needs a new  
PCR.

Santa sighed as he told me how nice it  
would be  
If children could once again sit on his  
knee.  
He couldn't care less if they're naughty  
or nice  
But they'd have to show proof that they'd  
had their shot twice.

But then the old twinkle returned to his  
eyes.  
And he said that he'd brought me a  
Christmas surprise.  
When I unwrapped the box and opened  
it wide,  
Starlight and rainbows streamed out  
from inside.

Some letters whirled round and flew up  
to the sky  
And they spelled out a word that was 40  
feet high.  
There first was an H, then an O, then a  
P,  
Then I saw it spelled HOPE when it  
added the E.

"Christmas magic" said Santa as he  
smiled through his beard.  
Then suddenly all of the reindeer  
appeared.  
He jumped into his sleigh and he waved  
me good-bye,  
Then he soared o'er the rooftops and  
into the sky.

I heard him exclaim as he drove out of  
sight  
"Get your vaccines my friends, Merry  
Christmas, good-night".  
Then I went back to bed and a sweet  
Christmas dream  
Of a world when we'd finished with  
Covid 19.