

**Len McRae, Much Loved Latin Teacher**

*Pioneer Poles - The McRae Family*

The Pioneer Poles were created by Margaret Gernson and Paul Ingram in 2005 to tell the story of our local history through the families of our early pioneers.

*John and Elizabeth McRae, circa 1862*

The pioneer Poles at this site represent John, Elizabeth, and their son George, of the McRae family.

John's father, Duncan McRae was one of the earliest pioneers to help settle the Tea Gardens/Hawks Nest area. He was only 14 years old when he arrived in Australia from Stroud in the UK.

In 1862, Duncan came to the Myall Lakes area with his wife Eliza, and set up a saw milling business. They owned three vessels that were used to transport timber from the Myall Lakes to Sydney; the "Calistonia", "Star of Peace" and "Janet".



*Saw Mill at Winda Woppa*



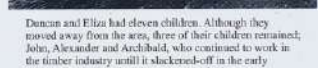
*A drogher, fully loaded in Timboi*



*Five of the McRae children, early 1900s.*



*View across Winda Woppa towards Tea Gardens*



Duncan and Eliza had eleven children. Although they moved away from the area, three of their children remained; John, Alexander and Archibald, who continued to work in the timber industry until it slacked-off in the early 20th century, when they then turned to fishing.

John built a house at Winda Woppa as a wedding present for his wife Elizabeth, and planted pine trees there in 1911. The trees still stand today.

John's second son, George married Ida Rose Asquith in 1932, after meeting her when he was fishing in Nelson Bay. In 1935 he started prawning and fishing with another well-known local, Abe Sheather.

Ida also worked with George on the beach during the annual mullet run. During the Depression in the 1930s they literally had to live off the sea to provide for their children. Their eldest children married members of the Fildens family, and are still involved with the local fishing industry (today, operating Tea Gardens Seafood Co-op and Murner's Restaurant.

*Fishing on the Myall Lakes, 1934*



*Hauling Fish at Jimmy's Beach*



*Beach Haul, being unloaded at Tea Gardens*



**The year 1933 was a good one for Merewether Carlton rugby union football club.**

That was the year the team played the touring All Blacks, and won the premiership for the second year in succession.

This picture was submitted to *Your Town Yesterday* by D. Rose, of Bull St, Cooks Hill.

Pictured are: H. Clarke (trainer), A. Jones, J. Harkins, W. Elliott, E. Howarth, D. Borthwick (trainer); standing — L. Howarth, D. McDonald, G. McNamara, T. Hills, J. Mason, J. Fairhall, J. Rutherford;

sitting — O. Alderton (selector), D. Rose, Ald. E. Rowlands (vice-president), L. McRae (captain), T. Hills Snr (selector), J. Hills (vice-captain), E. Clarke (secretary-treasurer); front — A. Malcolm, Eddie Clarke (mascot), J. Tolhurst.

Len, when on the OBA Committee, told us that he was born in 1911 in the house under the three pine trees planted by his father that year at Winda Woppa. These huge trees can now be seen from all parts of Port Stephens. The plaque above, photographed 13 October 2017, is on the river to the west of the trees, also photographed that day. The rugby union photo and story was published in the Newcastle Sun under the heading 'Winning Team'. Len started at NHS, the School On The Hill, in 1924.