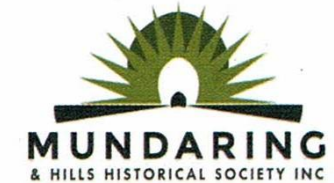


Mundaring & Hills Historical Society Inc.



Well, here we are one year on from 2020's Christmas article when we wished our readers a less 'interesting' year. I don't think that 2021 has delivered that wish. In fact, the main topic of conversation still seems to be 'COVID' and 'pandemic', although now we can add 'vaccination' to the list!

As our readers know, the temperature around Christmas Day is often in the high 30s or early 40s. With the wonders of modern day living, many of us have some way of keeping cool and surviving the heat.

Spare a thought for the European settlers of the early 1900s who were unused to the intense heat of the Australian summer. Can you imagine bringing the family to the hills, and then living in a tent during the hottest part of the year? If you were fortunate enough to own a piece of land, then the process of building a home was long and arduous. Building materials were scarce and possibly out the financial reach for the early settler. It was an era when settlers had to make do with what they could find and houses were built from materials that were available locally such as stone, scavenged pieces of wood, corrugated iron, even mud brick.

Electricity did not reach the hills until the mid-1900s, so even the task of keeping the food cool was difficult. One of the most popular methods was the Coolgardie Safe. It usually consisted of a timber or metal framed cabinet with hessian fabric draped down the open sides. A filled water tank sat on top of the cabinet which dripped water down the fabric covered sides.

The designs differed from the commercial to the home-made model. Make sure you check out some of the different refrigeration methods used in the Perth hills at the MHHS's exhibition, **'Open All Hours'**, on at the Mundaring District Museum throughout Summer.

