



Anglican Diocese of Newcastle

Parish of Bulahdelah– Tea Gardens

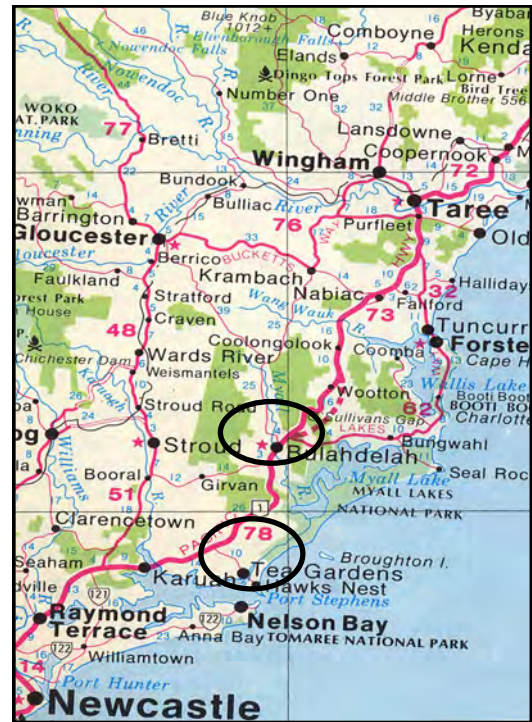


Parish profile, 14th February, 2012

Document prepared by Frank Horwill, Doug Burroughs and Ross Weightman



St Andrews Tea Gardens



The parish of Bulahdelah / Tea Gardens extends from Tea Gardens in the south to Coolongolook in the north—a distance of approximately 100 kilometres. The two centres within the parish are St Andrews Tea Gardens and St Johns Bulahdelah. Both churches are well respected in the community. Parishioners are predominantly active in church life. The township of Bulahdelah is essentially a rural centre servicing a large district. Tea Gardens is a growing retirement area with a population that swells during holiday times. The centres are linked by the Pacific Highway which has mostly been upgraded to dual carriage way.



St Johns Bulahdelah

Parish History



*Myall River and
Alum Mountain
Bulahdelah*

The first place of worship in Bulahdelah was the Church of England school building, under the umbrella of the Parish of Stroud. In 1888 the Parish encompassed the whole of the Myall with churches at Bulahdelah, Bungwahl and Gloucester and the districts of Karuah and Carrington. About this time people from Nelson Bay, Tea Gardens and Hawks Nest were taken by steamer to Carrington for services. The Provisional District of Bulahdelah was established in 1912 and became the Parish of Bulahdelah in 1921.

Tea Gardens was in the Parish of Clarencetown at this time but from 1949 Bulahdelah was asked to take responsibility for the church in Tea Gardens. By 1958 the Parish of Bulahdelah had centres at Bulahdelah, Tea Gardens, Wootton, Bungwahl, Boolambayte, Markwell and Charlotte Bay. Services were also held at Hawks Nest at times as the Singing Bridge was not built till 1974 and access to Tea Gardens was by boat and later a punt.

In 1966 each church in the Parish was asked to form its own vestry meeting of 12 persons to co-ordinate its own affairs. These were disbanded in 1984 and a monthly parish Council Meeting was held with one representative from each centre. It was believed that Hawks Nest would outgrow Tea Gardens so in 1968 it was agreed to build a church hall on land owned in Hawks Nest behind the Community Hall. This did not eventuate and by 1972 attendances had fallen and the idea of a church in Hawks Nest was scrapped. In 1975 Bulahdelah again became a Provisional District and remained as such till 1989 when it was granted status as a Parish under the Rev. Dr. Ian Copeland. Due to growth of the Tea Gardens area, the Parish centre was moved to Tea Gardens in 1996.



*Easter
Dawn at
Hawks
Nest
Beach.*

St Andrews Tea Gardens

While a significant percentage of people in the area identify themselves as belonging to the Anglican Church, regular attendees number fifty-nine on average for the 8 o'clock service and twenty-three for the 10 o'clock service. The majority of parishioners, while of retirement age are very active in the church and local community. The construction of the new St Andrews church was managed as an owner builder project with local congregation members providing much of the labour. A modern four bedroom house was purchased shortly after as a new rectory.

Communion services are held weekly at the 8 o'clock service and fortnightly at the 10 o'clock service.

Congregation numbers swell in holiday times with many regular "part time" parishioners making up the numbers. Dawn services are traditionally held on the beach at Christmas and Easter times with large crowds attending. The large majority of parishioners come from within the parish boundaries.

While the local primary school population is approximately 240, only small numbers of children attend Sunday School which is held during the 10 o'clock service.



St John's Bulahdelah

The members of St John's Bulahdelah worship in a 100 year old building in a town which boasts itself as "the heart of the Myall Lakes".

The average congregation at our 10 am service is about 20 persons, mostly over 50's, but in a mainly rural region where over 800 persons said in the 2006 census that they were Anglican, and so could potentially be reached by the centenary and evangelistic outreach.

Although small in number, the congregation is very active in voluntary community affairs, including the Chamber of Commerce, the local Library and Information Centre, leading two Know Your Bible [KYB] study groups, arranging Men' s Breakfasts and in the Bulahdelah Central Christian Education Association.

Although the Rectory is now in Tea Gardens, the old rectory on the St Johns property [and now rented out], could potentially accommodate a Youth Worker.



The township of
Bulahdelah from
Mt Alum