

Unusual Snow Events in Queensland

These are just a few of the unusual snow events that have occurred in Queensland over the years

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Snow on the Vine. An occasional occurrence on Queensland's Granite Belt

Laidley Snow Surprise

A fall of snow was reported in the Laidley district in July 8, 1880. This unusual occurrence took place on July 3, when snow covered the ground to the thickness of two inches (5 cm). Mr. Alfred Skinner of the Mt. Mistake sawmill, just 16 miles from Laidley stated "It is rather an uncommon thing to hear of snow falling in this country; we were rather surprised to see the snow, but it gave trees and mountains a beautiful appearance".

The snow began falling about 2pm and continued until 10pm. A number of men, engaged in putting a new shoot down the mountain for the purpose of lowering cedar logs, enjoyed themselves snow-balling one each other. Another report of the fall stated it was still to be seen in the afternoon of the next day in sheltered spots, and there was some snow on 'Laidley Creek' about 7 miles from the railway station.

Laidley is a small town between Ipswich and Toowoomba

Once Upon a Time It Snowed in Ipswich.

In 1934, the Queensland Times published a story recounting the experience of a park curator named FW Turley, who said he saw snow falling in Queen's Park. According to the article, Mr. Turley was on his way home from Redbank when he saw "unusually heavy clouds in the west". Fearing a severe storm was on the way, Mr. Turley "made haste".



"Shortly after 5pm Mr. and Mrs. Turley were watching the progress of the storm when they were amazed to see snow "come dancing down." The article, published on Monday, September 3, states. "Mr. Turley observed that this was the first time he had seen snow fall in Queensland during his 45 years' residence here. "The snow continued to fall for fully two minutes.

"Added to the evidence of sight was the fact that the snow made no noise in its descent on the roof, and as the sun was shining at the same time they were able to observe this phenomenon in its most beautiful setting. "The flakes were quite thick and were as large as sixpences." No snowfall has been recorded in Ipswich since but it's not unheard of in Queensland.

Source: Queensland Times 8th Jun 2018.

Remarkable Snow Falls in The Tropics

Mackay residents Ted and Agnes Keast are members of a special club. They've seen snow in the tropics.

On July 19 and 20, 1965, freak snowfalls were reported across a wide range of Queensland's high country, extending as far north as Dalrymple Heights, in the Eungella ranges west of Mackay. Running a dairy farm on the side of Mt Dalrymple at the time, Mr. Keast said he was astonished one day to see snowflakes drifting down from large black clouds.

Mr. Keats recounts, "It was about 4 o'clock in the afternoon and I went to bring the cows into the yard. The sky went real black and I reckoned, "Boy, it's getting cold". Then we could see these tiny little flakes coming down and they hit your hand and it disappeared. We only had one day, thank goodness. Boy it was cold." Snow was recorded on Mt Dalrymple for a second time in 2000.

Source: Daily Mercury 26th May 2012.

Snow Falls Near Roma 13th July 1960

My Dad remembers a fall of snow near Roma He recalled how incredibly cold it was and he, the boss and four or five others were cutting timber, when this stuff started falling. He said the property owner, an old bloke, said "What's this? Bloody hell, I think its snow!" He'd definitely not seen it before.

It was close to lunch so gang knocked off work, climbed into the back of the Toyota Ute and went back to the homestead, which was close. According to my Dad, most of the snow disappeared on hitting the ground, but piled up a little bit in sheltered spots.

Back at the homestead, after all had had some lunch the Boss said, "Well I don't know what these young blokes are doing but I'm going to bed". And so, Dad and the "young blokes" went to bed, too. It was that cold.

Temperatures recorded at Roma over this period were:

Day	12 th	13 th	14 th	15 th
Max	12.8	14.4	17.2	17.8
Min	3.9	.06	4.4	2.8

Given that the minimum temperature at Roma on the 13th July was 0.6 C, a cool afternoon would have been possible. Local phenomena can result in pockets of cooler temperature. This is evidence that snow can be observed falling when temperatures are above freezing point.

Source: Chakae D'Ellencourt.

Meanwhile on the 13th July 1960, Snow Covered the Bunya Mountains.

On the same day as the Roma snow fall, a 20-cm mantle of snow covered the Bunya Mountains, just 155 kilometers north west of Brisbane. Children made snowmen and tree branches broke under the weight of the snow. One Bunya Mountain resident reported that he had woken in the morning of the 13th to find three inches (7 1/2 cms) of snow on his bed. It had apparently come in under the roof during the night. Another resident commented that the snow was the worst she had ever seen and a glass of water in her bedroom still had a coating of ice at 11am. They must breed them tuff in the Bunyas.

Source: Toowoomba Chronicle, July 14th 1960

Snow Falls Again in the Roma district and a Large Area of Central Queensland

Coincidentally, on the 19th July 1965, as the Brisbane Repertory group opened in the play 'Breaking Point', a story about polar exploration, snow fell in central Queensland's.

The Post master at Dulacca, east of Roma reported that 'The country side around here is completely blanketed, we are sitting in front of two electric heaters wearing jumpers and overcoats'. (Telegraph, July 19). He continued 'The kids had their noses glued to the windows, even the grown-ups were elated. One resident t has just spoken to me. He is as happy as a child, having just made his first snowball'. At Alpha in central Queensland, more that 3cm of snow covered roofs and steps of houses. Other western towns experiencing snow at this time were Bogantungan, Injune, Chinchilla, Condamine and Surat.

Source: Courier Mail, July 20th 1965

Temperatures recorded at Roma over this period were:

Day	17 th	18 th	19 th	20 th
Max	18.2	12	12.6	13
Min	-1.3	1	3.1	1.7

Snow falls at Springbrook in the Gold Coast Hinterland

In 1984, Snow fell over a wide area of South East Queensland. Queensland's Gold Coast is renowned for its Sun, Surf and Sand, but on the 3rd July, 1984, light snow fell in the hinterland at 'Springbrook Lodge'. Doug and Annette Robbins, who owned the Lodge at the time recorded the fall on VHS video tape.

Source: Doug Robbins

Uluru Snow Fall

Strange as it may seem, there have been reports of snow falling at Uluru (Ayers Rock). A person who observed the event recalls, "I was the first person to see the snow falling on Uluru in July 1997. It was either the 7th or the 11th. It was very cold. My family and I went to the rock around 6:30 am to get sunrise photographs and when we got there we realized it was snowing. Fairly slushy snow I admit but snow indeed. We went to the ranger station

to report this and the Indigenous Elder who was in charge assured us that it doesn't snow on the rock. But when he came to look he agreed that, yes it was snowing. I can't remember what the temperature was but I do remember that the temperature was 4C at the Olgas that afternoon. I have met a few people who were there on the same day including a work colleague and all agree with my recollections"

Source: Weather Zone forum. 'Snow on Ayers Rock'

The Great Snow Storms of 28th-29th July, 1901

Commenting on this event, Government Meteorologist Mr. Clement Wragge said, "Conditions more remarkable than any yet recorded so far as we know in the meteorological annals of Australasia ... In the first place, we find an anticyclonic or high-pressure nucleus over South-western Australia, absolutely abnormal, inasmuch as the barometer at the crest or summit reads 30.72 in. On the other hand, the Antarctic disturbance 'Ekron' is stationary, or nearly so, over the Tasman Sea. Now, the conditions just cited are the two great factors in producing the exceedingly cold weather over all South-eastern Australia, including snow in Adelaide, South-eastern Queensland, and other places where before such type of precipitation was unknown. The exceedingly cold air pouring down from high aloft on the great anticyclone in the far South-western part of the Commonwealth, and flowing around the steep slopes of this wonderful atmospheric mountain [Low Pressure System], has so condensed the vapours of the depression.

Reports from South East Queensland Towns follow:

TOOWOOMBA July 29.

The heaviest snowfall that has ever been experienced on the Darling Downs fell at intervals from midnight on Sunday till 5 o'clock this afternoon. In some places the snow was 2in. deep, and the drift snow 1ft. to 18in.

HIGHFIELDS, July 29.

A phenomenal fall of snow took place this morning. The first flakes made their appearance about 5.30, and continued up to 6 o'clock, when heavy snow began to fall, and continued for three-quarters of an hour. The surrounding landscape presented a magnificent sight, and the snow was fully an inch thick on the ground. The scene on the scrub trees was very fine, and had the appearance of a snowy billow moved by the wind. The wheat fields and ploughed land lay like huge sheets between the forest paddocks, and reminded one of a snowy day in the old country. The snow lasted on the ground for upwards of two hours after the fall. Since writing the above another fall has occurred, and there is every appearance of it continuing throughout the day.

PITTSWORTH, July 29.

The weather is extremely cold, with a strong south-westerly wind, and snow has been falling at intervals. The temperature during the day ranged from 32deg F. to 44deg F.

DALBY, July 29.

Light sleet fell here early this morning. The day is bitterly cold, with a keen westerly wind blowing.

WARWICK, July 29.

A very cold snap is just now being experienced here. Throughout yesterday a keen and nipping easterly wind prevailed, and a light sleety shower fell about midnight. This morning the people were surprised on awakening to find the ground covered with snow, which was still falling lightly. The neighboring hills looked prominently white. The minimum temperature for the twenty-four hours was 33deg., and the maximum, 50deg.; rainfall, 3 points. Later. Several falls of snow and sleet occurred to-day, and the weather continues bitterly cold. The maximum temperature to-day was 43deg.

KILLARNY, July 29.

There was a fall of snow here this morning, and the snow-clad mountains in the vicinity present a beautiful sight.

YANGAN, July 29.

A cold westerly wind blow all day yesterday, and this morning the mountains were covered with snow right to the Main Range. Frequent falls of snow occurred during the forenoon, and occasionally a sprinkling reached the plains. The weather continues bitterly cold.

STANTHORPE July 29.

There was a heavy fall of snow here last night, and the ground was covered to a depth of 3in. The weather is intensely cold, and it is still snowing. A strong south-westerly wind is blowing, and stock will suffer severely.

CHARLEVILLE, July 29.

A very cold and cutting westerly wind sprang up on Saturday night, and continued to blow fiercely all day yesterday. The weather to-day is clear and bright.

LONGREACH, July 29.

The weather is extremely cold and bleak. The thermometer was down to 30deg. This morning, this being the lowest temperature recorded this winter.

WINTON, July 29.

The weather is very cold, with a bleak wind. The thermometer this morning registered 32deg. The Brisbane Courier, Tuesday 30 July 1901, page 5.

SNOWSTORM AT STANTHORPE

Stanthorpe, Monday, July 29, 3 p.m. And still it snows – snows, as if it would never cease. Snows as if it had never snowed before, and never in the memory of the oldest inhabitant has it ever snowed like this. Commencing in the early part of Sunday night, the community woke up on Monday morning to find the whole landscape clothed in spotless white, underfoot 3in. of a pure mantle lying over all, overhead a dull leaden sky, lowering and threatening, and the air full of flakes; feathers from the Antarctic regions, hurrying, scurrying along, whirled hither and thither by a southerly blast, bitter and biting enough to take the teeth from a handsaw. Mountains in the distance at one moment dark and threatening looking, at the next as a sharper blast than usual swept the air and cleared (partially) the atmosphere they loomed up like huge sheeted ghosts, and later still, as the sun for a few brief moments struggled to break through the

wrack of clouds, they sparkled and glistened as if diamonds had been scattered o'er them, each pine tree and mighty tor standing out in bold relief, making the whole scene one of fairy-like beauty; but cold, bitter, biting cold, in its chaste purity. This only lasted for a few brief minutes, when the mighty mass of clouds piled up in the south and west were swept upward, and again blotted out the whole landscape, leaving only Mount Marlay and Mount Banca in view, like some hoary giants frowning down upon the little town lying in between them, nestling at their feet.

Source: Snow in and about Stanthorpe in the Newspaper Records 1863 – 2010. Robert MacMaurice.



Snow covered landscape, looking towards Stanthorpe from Mount Marlay in 1925

If any reader has a snow story of their own, please contact me, Nicholas Oughton at: najoughton@gmail.com
I would love to use it in these pages if you are happy for me to do so. Also, your observation and report of snowfall in SE Queensland can make a valuable contribution to the record of snow in our State.



Snow covers the ground around the Methodist Church, Amiens, 1921
Queensland state library



Ninety-four years later. Amiens Methodist Church (second picture), on morning of the 17th July, 2015.
Amiens is an old Soldier Settlement that lies to the north-west of Stanthorpe.

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