Date of re naming Green Hills as Bonny Hills found to be 1 November 1948.

Wauchope residents have been closely connected with Green Hills / Bonny Hills over the past 70 years. Day outings or longer stays at the beach for picnics, surfing, fishing or simply relax have been very popular. The move by the Wauchope Surf Club from Nobby's to Bartlett's Beach post war and formation in 1958, of the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Life Savings Club is testimony of this connection.

Many will be surprised to learn that an official record held in a collection at National Archives Australia (NAA) at Chester Hill in Western Sydney, contradicts the commonly held view that the name Green Hills was changed to Bonny Hills in 1947. The official date when the Post Office was approved to begin was 1 November 1948.

This was changed from the name that the Postmaster General had previously notified to be made official from 11 August 1948 as Suterville.

Bonny Hills is one of at least four names by which, we know has been used officially or used locally to name this area and community. The name used by the Birpai people seems to have disappeared into history. Grants Head is referenced in Return *to Lake Innes: Journals and Letters written by Annabella Innes* (2020), which was edited by Clive Smith. Annabella, a niece of Major Innes, wrote after 1848 of riding her horse from Lake Innes House and refers to Grants Head by name. She describes looking towards the Camden Haven and back towards Tacking Point. When Shire maps were first published, the name used was Green Hills (sometimes written as Greenhills).

Recent research undertaken in 2023 for the Bonny Hills Progress Association has uncovered correspondence in a National Archives Australia dated 26 July 1972 to the District Postal Manager Kempsey, and signed by the Historical Officer, Department of Postmaster General stated that:
"Bonny Hills was opened as a telephone office on 11 August 1948 under the name of <u>Suterville</u>. This was one of the three alternatives originally submitted by the local people for consideration. Shortly afterwards the Progress Association requested that the name be changed to Bonny Hills and this was supported unanimously by the residents. The origin of the name was not given. However, the Department agreed to the change of name and the telephone office became known Bonny Hills on 1 November 1948."

Earlier research by the BHPA using Trove online and reading copies of the Hastings Shire Gazette (1946-50), produced no evidence of a Government Gazette notification as a change of name from Green Hills, an official opening, or the name change being recorded in any local newspapers, including Wauchope's weekly publication of the Hastings Shire Gazette.

From records commonly quoted, it was Jack (A.D.) Suters of Wauchope visiting the area on horseback in the 1880s. He later purchased a large parcel of land. He sold 20 acres in 1933 to Tom Bartlett. Tom farmed this area and had a major influence in subsequent improvements of facilities of Green Hills, so others could stay near the beaches for holidays using facilities he lobbied the Shire Council to build.

Tom's son, Arthur wrote his father's memoir, entitled Arthur G Bartlett (1991) *The History of Green Hills-Bonny Hills: From March 1933*. Explaining the reason for the change of the villages' name, he recalled that in 1947, *'When the Adamsons had made an application for a postal and telephone service, they received a letter from the Postal Department stating that until the name was changed, they couldn't have the Application approved as there was another registered as "Green Hills".*

We believe from the evidence of the Historical Officer's statement above *that the first re-submitted application included three names, one of which was Sutersville and another Grants Head. Subsequently, the Post and Telegraphs Director wrote approving the name Suterville and approving the allocation of funding for a trunk line from Laurieton to Green Hills.   /2*

The Hastings Shire Gazette, 19 Aug 1948 reported that "a Trunk line from Laurieton to Green Hills had been installed by PMG Department". This was connected to the property of Bob and Tara Adamson on the corner of Jordan Ave and Hill Street (near Bartlett Reserve).

Arthur G Bartlett *continues, 'The name we (The Grants Head Progress Association) had preferred was "Grants Head" as it was on all maps and still is on some maps today. A further meeting was called. A woman visiting from Armidale, Ellie Young (nee Adamson) suggested Bonny Hills and as this was adopted by the majority of the meeting, we were outvoted. This was the name submitted to the Postal Department and accepted, so the name Bonny Hills it was called." Mr Adamson could now arrange for* the installation of a switchboard in the Post Office.

It is likely that residents continued to use the more familiar name "Green Hills" and even "Grants Head' when referring to local news and events. The Bonny Hills Progress Association find it strange that The Shire Clerk, in his monthly reports to the Hastings Shire Council meetings, published in Hastings Shire Gazette, continued into the 1950's to refer to this community as Green Hills. Finally, Mr Adamson himself, when deciding to sell the business in 1949, published an advertisement headed 'Post Office for Sale Green Hills-Bonny Hills.'

Knowing the official date will help those planning for an 80th or 100th celebration of Bonny Hills. On 1 November this year, the Wauchope-Bonny Hills Surf Club's celebrations' venue 'Beaches' which is open for drinks on Friday from 5pm will have a "Raise a Glass" toast at 6pm for those interested in local history and wishing to celebrate now having an official date.

Ian Richardson
Bonny Hills

ADDENDUM

The Library record of derivation of names of towns, villages and other localities in the Port Macquarie-Hastings Council has this record.

PLACE NAMES

Bonny Hills   Beachside town between Port Macquarie and Laurieton. Originally known by the European settlers as Greenhills. When application was made to build a Post Office in 1947 the Postal Department wrote to say that as there were other localities known as Greenhills so another name was required before a Post office could be built. At a special meeting of the Progress Association the name Grants Head was proposed, however a women visitor suggested Bonny Hills which the majority of those voting adopted. This name was submitted to the Postal department and accepted. Many disputed the choice thinking it should have been named Suterville after A D Suters, an early settler. Another early settler, Tom Bartlett preferred Bartlettville.