

"When the Obelisk is in with the tower by the light you are nearly off the rocks east-southerly of the Nobby's; and when the Nobby's is in with the same you are off the rocks north-west of the same.

"The Obelisk open to the west of the Queen's Wharf will head you clear off the rock on the port land going in.

"The Obelisk open to the eastward of the Wesleyan Chapel will clear the Oyster Bank and the North Bank, and will lead in from twenty-four to fourteen feet of water as you approach the Oyster Bank on the starboard side going in, and from eighteen to twelve feet as you approach the North Bank, also on the starboard side.

MERION MORIATY, Port Master."

Sarah Cameron, Newcastle City Council Heritage Strategist stated "The hill the Obelisk is on also hides a water reservoir but from the site you can see most of the region's earlier water supply infrastructure - the reservoir on Brown & Tyrell Streets; on Shepherd's Hill there was another reservoir just north of what is now the Bar Beach carpark; and of course the very important Walka Waterworks at Maitland which is still there and was the first reticulated water supply for the city of Newcastle bringing water into the city."

Plaques placed around the site also share a lot of information about the history of the supply of water to Newcastle.

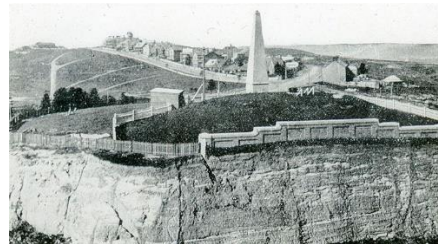
The site has been the site of a couple of serious accidents: "In 1906 the pillars of old mine workings, probably workings of the Australian Agricultural company, collapsed leading to a 'land creep' across the hill," said Sarah. "This led to a commission of inquiry and the establishment of the Mine Subsidence Board as we know it today. If you can imagine under the surface the ground is like honeycomb from the mine workings. A lot of fracture occurs near the surface and a lot of the house in Tyrrell Street and Wolfe Street in The Hill were damaged.

In 1985, a group of young girls (including one now very well-known Australian actress) playing with fireworks, caused an explosion within the reservoir which had filled with gas escaping from corroded gas mains. One of the girls suffered serious burns.

Land creep was also a concern when Fort Scratchley was built. In 1881, construction of the fort came to a halt while 'competent mining professionals' were brought in to assess the site (which had been the site of the first coal extraction in Newcastle) and to consider the potential for the collapse of the mine workings under the site due to the weight of the construction and the percussive effects of the guns during firing.

"Around the 1860's, the Grecian forms of structures like the Obelisk were quite popular," Sarah adds. "It is rendered masonry and although repaired and rebuilt a number of times - including after the 1989 earthquake - it is still maintained by the city of Newcastle."

Sarah says the park surrounding the Obelisk is a wonderful location from which to acquaint yourself with the city of Newcastle and the broader region, "The 19th century layout and plan of the town and it's buildings is still clear from the 1830s, it hasn't changed a great deal. Of course, a lot of the buildings have changed but the street grid and the form of the town hasn't."



Point to Ponder: "The hardest part of healing after you've lost someone you love, is to recover the 'you' that went away with them." Source Unknown

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