



Merewether Historical Society

"A society aimed at recording memories of the past for the benefit of the next generation."

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The Chronicle

May 2024

Meetings: Next meeting will be at the Merewether Bowling Club Caldwell St, on **Tuesday 14 May 2024**, 10.30 for a 10.45 start. **NB this meeting will be preceded by a Special Meeting to vote on changes to the MHS Constitution** Copies of the amendments have been emailed or posted to members for their consideration prior to a vote.

Guest Speaker: Samuel Northe
Community Crime Prevention Officer

Birthdays in May Many happy returns to John Single, Stephen Wright, Margaret Carlin, Hilary Jenkins, Lynn Harrison and any other May babies I have missed. Flower and Birthstone are the lily of the valley and emerald



Merewether Anzac Day Service:



'Anzac Ted' a book by Belinda Landsbury has been presented to Ronald McDonald House as the MHS tribute to Anzac Day.

May 21 Bus Trip: Murrays Brewery then lunch at Salt Water Fingal Bay. Seats still available

THE HISTORICAL YOUNG MARINERS AND CANOE POOLS

[Newcastle Canoe Pool: The Former Map of the World Pool - Wander. \(wanderaustralia.com.au\)](#) and [Newcastle's Mysterious 'Map Pool' | Lost Newcastle](#)

In 1936, a 1 metre high wall was built on the southern end of the Ocean Baths to protect it from rough seas and from being filled with sand. This area would then be available as a paddling pool for children.

Later the bottom of the paddling pool would be covered with sand to guard against bruised or cut feet.

In 1937, the Mariners' Pool, later referred to as the Geographical or Map Pool, was constructed. The circular pool was 20 metres across, with a pigmented cement map of the world on the bottom. Countries, red-dyed for the Commonwealth and the rest green, were about 60cm thick, with 20cm jutting above the water line.



The Map Pool was so popular with bigger children it became too crowded for the tinier ones for whom it was intended.

In 1939, a Canoe Pool, for the sailing of canoes, was built beside the Map

Pool. The maximum depth was never more than 1.2 metres but with the sandy bottom it was generally only 1 metre. The pool was filled by the waves at every high tide and the geographical pool would then fill from it.

In late 1939, pumping equipment was installed and a suction line laid to permit fresh salt water to be pumped into the pools when required. On days when the pools were in demand the pumps worked continuously. The pool began falling into disrepair in the late 1960s.

The council cleared the sand from the map whenever it became covered but as this occurred every high tide the task became impossible and in the early 1970s the map was completely covered by sand.

The cost of pumping the water and keeping the sand out of the pool eventually became prohibitive and it was left to the elements.

A study in the early eighties into the feasibility of restoring the pool found the cost of maintaining the pool was too excessive to justify. Children can now no longer say 'I just swam around the world'.

Years later, another large area was constructed towards the north rocks, which became the Canoe Pool. "The Newcastle Canoe Pool is located next to the Newcastle Baths towards the North of Newcastle Beach

. This extra area was to cater to more people, given the popularity of the Mariners Pool, and to appeal to older children. This large area was used for a range of other water sports, such as canoeing or sailing and also surf lifesaving training.

The concrete map was said to be broken up and removed by Newcastle City Council as it posed a safety risk and was continually filled with sand during large swells.



All that exists today is the Canoe Pool, which has been developed into being a much larger pool with the removal of the young mariner's pool and its map.



Photo credit to the Newcastle City Library's for the historical photos – Hunter Photo Bank

Point to Ponder: "To get the body in tone, get the mind in tune" ZS

Berkovitz

2023/24 Committee:

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|-----------------|--|
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| Vice President: | Dennis Hinchliffe |
| Secretary: | Sue Kenny |
| Asst Secretary: | Denise Wright |
| Treasurer: | Greg Struck |
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