



## 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

November 2024

**Meetings:** Next meeting will be at the Merewether Bowling Club Caldwell St, on Tuesday 12 November, 2024, 10.30 for a 10.45 start. All are invited to join us for lunch at the end of the meeting.

**Guest Speaker:** Our member Darryl Boyce on "History Here and There, Now and Then"

**Birthdays in November:** Many happy returns to Jan Welsman, Denise and Geoff Wright, Shirley Thomas, Irene Tonin and other members who celebrate this apparently popular month! Flower and Birthstone are the chrysanthemum and topaz.

### Mudgee Tour:



Photo of our happy travellers, thanks to Denise Wright. From all reports the bus trip was a wonderful experience with some participants already signed up for next year's visit to Broken Hill. Advance notice to give you lots of time to save.



Many thanks to Suzanne Martin for the above photos.

**Christmas Lunch:** Tuesday 10 December in Fireflies at the Merewether Bowling Club. 12.00 for a 12.30pm start. \$50 for a delicious 2 course meal, champagne or orange juice on arrival and great company. Please see Monica or Denise to book a seat and advise of any dietary requirements.

**Christmas Lunch Harbour Cruise:** Linda McPhail has issued an invitation to MHS members to attend the Probus Club Christmas Luncheon: Ferry Cruise and Christmas lunch on Newcastle Harbour on Thursday 12 December.

\$70 per person to Merewether Seaside Probus Club Account Number: 532900907 BSB: 650000

Unfortunately it is 2 days after ours but it's always good not to have to cook!



[Important Moments in Newcastle History - Hunter Living Histories](#)

## Royal Newcastle Hospital:



"Newcastle Hospital, Newcastle East, NSW, November 1892

The Royal Newcastle Hospital (RNH), as it was named until 2006, was founded in 1817. Residents of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley, as well as crews from visiting ships used the hospital overlooking the Pacific Ocean and the Hunter River port. For over 190 years the RNH was the main hospital for the city of Newcastle.

During the early penal settlement, the hospital was established by convicts for convicts and mainly used as a gaol.

Over the passing decades, the hospital saw several structural changes such as additional buildings to the original building. Some buildings were demolished and the site was eventually transitioned into a health site. It wasn't until 1865 that one of the first new purpose built buildings was erected and it opened for the public (Thorp, 1991).



Royal Newcastle Hospital – North Wing (left) and York Wing (right)

By the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century the RNH gained national and international recognition for its innovative and progressive achievements. Led by medical superintendent Christian McCaffery innovations such as *“overarching emphasis on efficiency, appointment of salaried specialist staff, unit record system for medical records, a domiciliary care service and the emphasis on audit and quality studies”* (Duggan & Hendry, 2005) were introduced. These practices and processes were highly conflicting with the current system and were not well regarded by the health bureaucracy.

It was thought at the time that the sea breeze boosted an individuals' mood and spirit, as well as help treat skin infections. It was thought that the salt air from the ocean assisted to kill infectious 'bugs', it may also have been a psychological

effect of the room and the view, or a combination of both (The Lamp, 2006).



Earthquake damage to the North and York wings of the old Royal Newcastle Hospital, Australia – c.1990

In December 1989, Newcastle experienced an earthquake and much of the hospital was damaged. Some structures were earmarked for demolition and were removed in 1990. The only safe and stable accommodation on the site was the Nickson Building.

Terry Bellamy, secretary of the Nurses' Association branch at the hospital stated the following when the building was ready to be demolished:

*“It's a great shame because the craftsmen who built it were master builders. You can go up to the 7th floor and put a string line down and everything is perfectly straight.”* (The Lamp, 2006)

In 2007 the RNH finally closed its doors to the public and was demolished. 'The Royal' was transferred to the John Hunter Hospital. The Royal's reputation as a powerhouse of innovation, with outstanding medical teaching, clinical training and patient care was the heart of Newcastle.”

**Point to Ponder:** Kindness doesn't cost a thing, yet it's the richest gift you can give.

### 2024/25 Committee:

President:	Geoff Wright
Vice President:	Dennis Hinchliffe
Secretary:	Sue Kenny
Asst Secretary:	Denise Wright
Treasurer:	Greg Struck
Asst Treasurer:	Monica Jordon
Committee	Alison Chapman Iain Kelso Jan Welsman Judy Henry Darryl Boyce Chris Marshall
Hon. Solicitor:	Nicholas Dan

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