



Merewether Historical Society

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

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Meetings: Next meeting will be at the Merewether Bowling Club Caldwell St, on Tuesday 13 August, 10.30 for a 10.45 start. The Club goes out of its way to ensure our meetings run smoothly, and it is good to give something back by supporting their restaurant and bar when we share a lovely lunch at the end of our meetings.

Guest Speaker: Brian Deller will be speaking about the Canal System in the United Kingdom

Birthdays in August: Flower and Birthstone are Poppy and Peridot. Best wishes to Pauline Boyce, Alison Chapman, Bernadette Maher and other members who celebrate this month.



Christmas in July a wonderful day out was had by the 34 passengers on our bus trip to the Carriageway Resort Dungog.



The **Shepherds Hill Military**

Installations is a state heritage-listed site, consisting of a former military gun battery emplacement, observation post and gunner's cottage at The Terrace in Newcastle, New South Wales. It was built from 1890 to 1940. and is also known as Shepherds Hill Defence

Group Military Installations, Observation Post and Gun Placement and Shepherds Hill Battery.

The Shepherds Hill Group comprises:

- The Gunner's Cottage
- The remains of the disappearing gun;
- An observation post complex, and
- The remains of the No. 1 searchlight position, with its attached tunnel and engine room,

Shepherds Hill is one of the best lookout points in Newcastle, 70m above sea level and extending from The Terrace, to the top of the cliff.

Gunner's Cottage

known also as the Shepherds Hill Cottage or simply the Caretaker's Quarters, is an Edwardian period weatherboard residence with a corrugated metal roof and features timber finials. and a porch. The cottage was once used to house Newcastle's artist-in-residence.

Restored by the City of Newcastle Council in 1997, the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol carried out their operations there until 2018.

Observation post complex

The observation post complex is made of reinforced concrete and has five levels with eight observation rooms. It is approximately 8 meters tall and is an interesting structure due to its many interlocking levels.

The structure is in poor condition and requires considerable engineering and heritage conservation treatments to ensure it is preserved.

Gun emplacement

The gun emplacement consists of a gun pit accompanied by two magazines, one for storing shells and the other for propellant charges. There is another station which is above ground, standing north between the main building and the ramp.

No. 1 searchlight position

The site of the former No. 1 searchlight is located on the cliff face slightly east of Strzelecki Lookout, in front of a block of

houses. The searchlight was serviced by an engine room located at nearby 65 Nesca Parade, connected via a 100metre brick and concrete-lined, tunnel which housed its electrical cables.

Heritage listing

The Shepherds Hill Group is historically significant at a State and possibly a national level, because its history forms an important part of the story of Australian coastal defences. During a six-decade period from the late 19th, to the mid-20th century the site was a key defence post. During WWII, the fortifications at Shepherds Hill played a co-ordinating role in the defence of Newcastle. Which was of high significance to the state, because Newcastle had become an area of great strategic and industrial importance in NSW. The majority of the state's shells were produced in Newcastle and it was also the site of the NSW Dockyards. In order to protect these productions, a new system of defence was undertaken, which included the strengthening of Fort Wallis and the construction of two new close defence batteries - Shepherd's Hill and Fort Scratchley. The defence system proved its worth when in June 1942, Newcastle was fired on by cruising Japanese submarines, and Newcastle gained the distinction of being the only place in Australia that returned enemy fire with the launching of guns from Fort Scratchley. The fact that the Shepherds Hill fortification was simultaneously manned by members of the Navy, Army and the Air Force for a variety of functions is rare, and possibly unique in Australia.

Shepherds Hill military installations was listed on the New South Wales State Heritage Register on 2 July 2010 having satisfied the following criteria:

The Shepherds Hill Group is historically significant at a state level because of its important role in the coastal defence of NSW. It was an important defence and Observation post for the state during the time of the Crimean War.

. It was also crucial that Newcastle be defended during periods of war, due to the fact Newcastle was an important industrial centre, that supplied munitions from the steelworks and beef (via the port) to the military during WW2. The Newcastle Steelworks formed an important part of the economy of NSW and were a significant part of the war effort. The surviving complex tells an important story associated with the course of Australian national history and is strongly evocative of the

military defence of strategically important Australian places.

The site is rare as it contains the only unmodified 8-inch Disappearing Gun Emplacement in NSW. This gun emplacement provides a rare example of the disappearing guns that were a new and fleeting development in military technology. Shepherds Hill is possibly unique in Australia because during WWII, it was simultaneously manned by the R.A.N, Army and R.A.A.F for a variety of functions. The tunnel system appears to be intact and in good condition and it may be one of only a few such fortifications surviving under a headland in Australia, with the exception of Fort Scratchley. The No 1 Searchlight engine room and its 100-metre-long tunnel are rare surviving examples of the fortification of the coastline by the installation of a searchlight, high up on a sea cliff.

Shepherds Hill is representative of the integrated coastal defence systems that was essential to the defence of NSW.

wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherds_Hill_military_installations



Point to Ponder: "How am I going to live today in order to create the tomorrow I am committed to? Tony Robbins

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