



## 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 2025

**Meetings:** Next meeting will be at the Merewether Bowling Club Caldwell St, on **Tuesday 13 May, 2025, 10.30** for a 10.45 start. Please try not to arrive too early as the Club doesn't actually open until 10.30. All are invited to join us for lunch at the end of the meeting.

**Guest Speaker:** Tim Ryan will join us and talk about the history of the Merewether Surfboard Club

**2025 2026 Fees** are due by 30 June 2025. \$20 for singles and \$30 for couples. Payment may be made at our General Meeting or by direct bank transfer to the Merewether Historical Society at Newcastle Permanent Building Society: **BSB 650 000 A/C 966001108** (including your name).

**Committee 2025 – 2026:** The majority of our committee members have been serving for at least 5 years with several notching up 15 plus! All organisations need fresh perspectives and new ways of looking at things in order to prosper so please consider standing as a member of the Committee or Executive. It does not involve a lot of time nor experience and you will be given all the support you need

**Birthdays in May:** Many happy returns to Pamela Boyd, Rosemary Richards, Margaret Gathercole, Lyn Harrison, Margaret Carlin, John Jenkins, Krystina Johnson, Stephen Wright and other members who are celebrating. Flower and Birthstone are the Lily of the Valley and Emerald.



**Anzac Day Service:** Thank you letter received from Ronald McDonald House for the book donation.

**Bus Trips;** We will celebrate Christmas in July with morning tea at the Hunter Botanic Gardens followed by a 2-course lunch at the Marthaville Arts and Crafts Centre. Please let Denise or Monica know if you are able to join us. \$70 covers the whole day, including lucky seat prizes.



**Who** can remember the excitement of waiting for the postman's whistle twice a day and once on Saturday? Also the arguments with siblings over whose turn it was to collect the mail, especially at Christmas time when all the beautiful cards arrived and we 'bagsed' the ones we wanted after they were taken down from display after festivities were over.

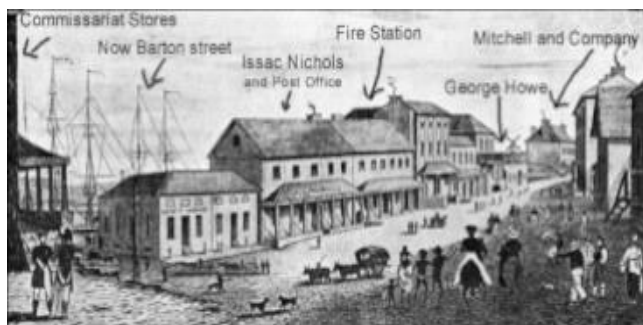
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"Even in the age of the internet – nothing quite beats getting a parcel or letter in the mail. Hearing the purr of the motorbike as they approach, you hope that they slow down at your address. If they do, you are excited and hope that it isn't a bill, if not – you are disappointed and wait till tomorrow" (*or now till the day after tomorrow!*)

"With millions of Australians relying on their posties, it is interesting to take a look at how it all started."

It was convict, Isaac Nicholas, who was appointed as the nation's first postmaster on

25 April 1809. He opened the first post office, located at his house in George Street,



Source: [Fellowship of the First Fleeters Arthur Phillip Chapter](#)

Sydney. When a ship arrived in a harbour, Isaac or his deputy was authorised to go on board, collect the mail, and then issue a receipt. The receipt would let the people of the town know that there was a letter waiting for them at the post office. He was authorised to charge a shilling for each letter and 2/6d for each parcel collected, except for letters to soldiers of the New South Wales Corps, who were to be charged only a penny each.

Similarly in Tasmania, a postal service was also set up, with a permanent post office established in 1812 that had a postmaster appointed there.”

More post offices were set up in the Swan River colony (Western Australia) in 1829, Victoria in 1836, South Australia in 1837 and Moreton Bay (Queensland) in 1842.

“The commercialisation of Australia Post had its roots in the Postal Act of 1825. The Act was to enable the Governor of New South Wales to fix postage rates, and also appoint postmasters outside of Sydney. The post office was one of the first pieces of infrastructure developed in each new colony and town.” These post offices also acted as a distance marker between towns – distance was measured from one post office to the next.

“In 1849, the Australian colonies banded together to establish uniform postage rates and to try and achieve greater regularity in their services across borders. Between 1860 and 1900, in the lead up to Federation, a large number of inter-colonial conferences were also held to discuss ways of making postal services and communications more efficient and cooperative. **The need to provide**

**a common and uniform system of communications between the colonies was one of the key drivers behind Federation**, and in 1900 the heads of each postal department met in Sydney to thrash out the integration of the separate Colonial postal services under the new Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth Post and Telegraph Act was passed in June 1902, and a national Postmaster General’s Department (the PMG) was established, with responsibility for the nation’s mail and telephone services. 5,000 post offices were now under the one umbrella of the PMG. However, due to shortages of supplies and Federal finances,” the States were responsible for the construction and maintenance of the post offices until the 1920’s.

“In 1975 the Post Master General became defunct when a new system was put in place. Responsibility for telephone and mail services was divided, the Australian Postal Commission (Australia Post) would deal with the mail, and the Australian Telecommunications Commission (formerly Telecom, now Telstra) dealt with telephone services.”

<b>2020 Snapshot</b>	<b>Annual Report 2024</b>
Basic letter cost \$1.10	\$1.70
Post Offices 4330	4271
~ people in the workforce 75000	35496

**Point to Ponder:** Life is what you make it, always has been, always will be. *Grandma Moses*

**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:
  - Iain Kelso
  - Alison Chapman
  - Jan Welsman
  - Judy Henry
  - Darryl Boyce
  - Chris Marshall
- Hon. Solicitor: Nicholas Dan

**Merewether Historical Society is proudly sponsored by: Hamilton/Merewether/Adamstown RSL**