

EXPLORE

Mayfield

We acknowledge the Awabakal people, the Traditional Custodians of the land and waters, which are featured in this guide. We recognise their cultural heritage, beliefs and continuing connection to the land and waters, and pay our respects to Elders past and present.



BHP Newcastle Steelworks and Hunter River estuary, showing the filling of Platt's Channel and loss of Spit Island in the foreground. Tourle St bridge can be seen in the middle ground.

Greg & Sylvia Ray's
Ken Magor collection
phototimetunnel.com.au

FOR thousands of years, the Awabakal people have lived close to the Hunter River. In this area known as Burraghinhbihng, the surrounding land was characterised by swampy areas overlooked by a ridge line. There were several islands in the Hunter River estuary and creeks and tidal rivers crossed the low-lying land.

Thousands of stone Aboriginal implements have been found along the riverbanks. Saws, planes, chisels, knives, axes, and hammers were skilfully made on a needs basis and closely resemble the steel implements produced today.

European settlers made huge changes to the landscape in their quest for cedar, shell lime and coal. Waterways became transport links, much of the land was cleared and reclamation was undertaken. The first land grant in this area was made to John Laurio Platt in 1823. The land, comprising 2000 acres, extended from what is now Mayfield West to Ironbark Creek, which enters the Hunter River at Hexham.

Platt planted wheat, corn and maize and built a windmill to crush the grain. His farm was known as 'Platt's Folly' because of the remoteness of the area and his unsuccessful attempts to grow grain. It was common in these times to use the term 'folly' if a choice was regarded as silly or foolish. In subsequent years all the land along the riverfront to Bull Street became known as 'The Folly'.

After Platt's death, part of his property was sold to the Australian Agricultural Company. The company built a two-storey residence for its superintendent, Jesse Gregson, in 1875. The house was surrounded by extensive lawns and gardens and overlooked Shelley

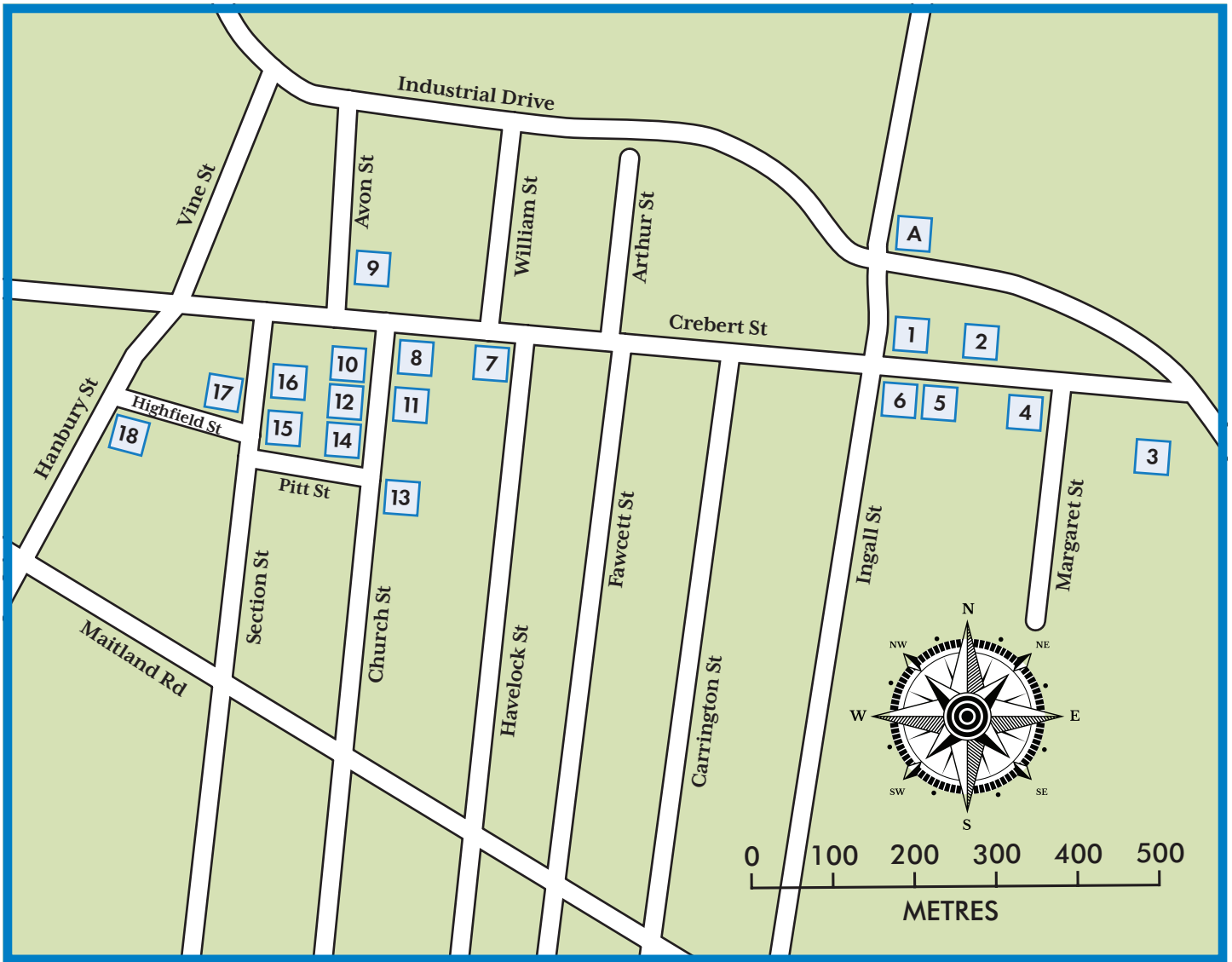
Beach, a sandy beach in the vicinity of today's Tourle Street bridge. In 1935 the estate was purchased by the Catholic Bishop of Maitland, Dr Gleeson, and became the Murray Dwyer Orphanage for boys.

In 1848 Charles Simpson, the Collector of Customs at Newcastle, purchased 36 acres on The Folly. His residence was named Waratah House, after the cluster of waratahs growing on the property. In later years Simpson added to his estate and part of it became Newcastle Golf Links.

When the railway was built in 1857, the railway station was named Waratah, after the most substantial building in the area, Waratah House. The area north of the railway line was then known as North Waratah. The suburb had another name change after John Scholey subdivided some of his land in 1888 and called his subdivision Mayfield, after his daughter May.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, Mayfield was known as the 'Toorak of Newcastle'. It was a desirable place to live in contrast to the noisy, smelly, polluted inner Newcastle. Wealthy families established large estates with grand homes and large gardens taking advantage of river and coastal views.

When BHP opened in 1915 these large estates were no longer required and many of them were purchased to house executives coming to the area. The land was subdivided over time and Mayfield provides an interesting case study of various types of domestic architecture. The changes show the change from semi-rural to industrial and the need to provide worker accommodation.



1 Mayfield East School

This school opened in 1874 on land which had been set aside for the botanical gardens. It was known as The Folly Public School and had a number of name changes, including North Waratah and Mayfield. Today it is known as Mayfield East School. Prior to this, students attended a school which was opened by Robert Tourle in 1858. Located close to the river bank, it was made of rough bush slabs with a shingled roof, and was used for religious purposes on the weekend.

2 Site of Botanic Reserve

An area of 96 acres was gazetted as a Botanic Reserve in 1868. Not much was done to develop the site and the land was mainly used for recreational purposes, especially cricket. The land dedication was revoked by the Newcastle Iron and Steelworks Act of 1912 and the site was then used by BHP for industrial purposes. A small remnant of the reserve remains at the corner of Crebert Street and Industrial Drive.

3 Site of Crebert's Vineyard/Sydney Soap and Candle Works

Peter Crebert was a German immigrant who planted vines on land purchased on The Folly. The first wine was produced in 1859 further west along Crebert Street and as the venture was so successful, he purchased further land to extend his business. Wine was in demand not only for local residents but shipping agents purchased large quantities for their ocean-going mariners. Picnic

and recreational facilities were provided and a trip to the winery was a popular weekend activity for locals. However, the industry could not survive as Phylloxera, an aphid like insect devastated the vines, already weakened by fumes from the nearby copper smelting works.

The soap and candle plant opened in 1886 and was the largest of its kind in the southern hemisphere. The company was very successful and medals were won at international competitions. After World War 1 the company was sold and became Sunlight Lever Kitchen Pty Ltd. The popular Sunlight soap was made at the plant. The company moved to Sydney in the 1930s and the land was subdivided for residential use.

4 Caithness 1917

Built with sandstone from Duckenfield House, a 45-room mansion which was located outside Morpeth. The home was dismantled in 1917 and the sandstone shipped by barge to its new site. There was enough sandstone transported to build three houses in the vicinity.

5 Westmead C1889

Originally the home of Walter Ingall, the property was sold in 1896 to Frank Ireland. After the deaths of his parents, it became the home of Albert Ireland who became manager of the family business J Ireland Limited. A warehouse complex in Hunter, King and Crown streets was the outlet for the successful business, which dealt in general produce, wholesale groceries and imported goods.

6 Ingall House 1895

Built in the Victorian Italianate style, this was home to Robert Ingall, a Newcastle draper. He originally named his home Lorndale, but after his death the property was inherited by his son, Alfred, who renamed the residence Ingall House. In 1913 it was purchased by BHP for its manager, David Baker. Although Baker moved to a new residence in 1919 the house was owned by BHP until 1968.



Lorndale House, Mayfield 1890. University of Newcastle, Norm Barney Collection

7 Redcliff 1894

Frank Witherspoon, who ran the largest retail grocery business outside Sydney, had his home built on a seven-acre plot. The property was purchased in 1919 by the Dominican Sisters, who initially used it as a convent and then opened a secondary school the following year. San Clemente High School continues to operate on the site

8 Bella Vista 1919

Built for the manager of BHP, this grand residence was also used to accommodate visiting VIPs, including Edward, Prince of Wales, Lord Louis Mountbatten and Queen Elizabeth II. With the closure of BHP, the property was sold and then used for various purposes including a wedding and convention centre. More recently, a land subdivision was made which enabled 12 residential units to be built in the grounds. Bella Vista has been restored and is now a single-family home.

9 Pommy Town

Around one hundred houses were built by Lysaghts in the vicinity of Avon, Usk, Vine streets and part of Bull Street. They were needed to attract skilled migrants from overseas to work in its new galvanised steel mill. A few of the properties were on land that was previously owned by Peter Crebert, who planted the first vineyard in Newcastle.

10 Kiandra C1880

This substantial home, with bullnose verandah and wrought iron lace inserts, was built in the 1880s as the rectory for St Andrew's Church. At the turn of the century it was decided to have the rectory closer to the church and a two-storey Victorian building was constructed at 5 Durham Street. Changes to Church organisation saw the rectory move a third time in the late 1960s to the rear of the church.

11 St Columban's Catholic Church

Opened in 1940 this Art Deco styled church is able to accommodate 1000 parishioners. Prior to this time Catholics attended services at the Redemptorist monastery in Woodstock St. The church has been scheduled for demolition as it is structurally unsound but this has meet with opposition as it is listed on the local heritage inventory.

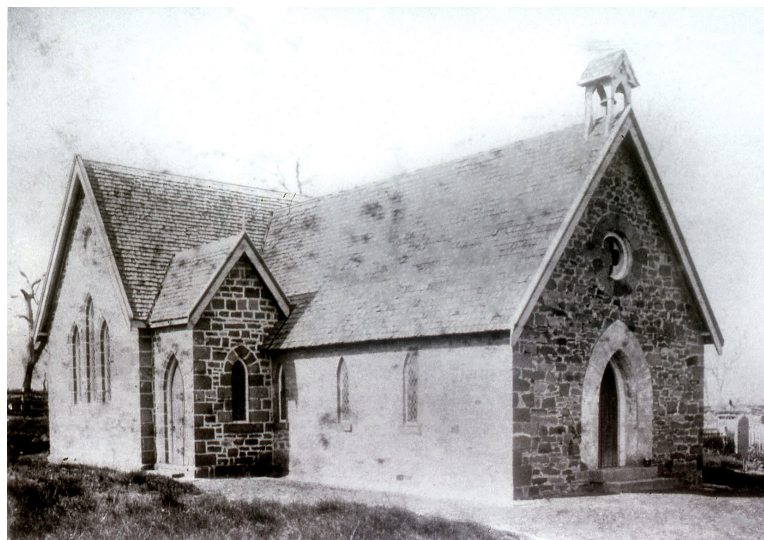
12 St Columban's Presbytery

Purchased in 1939 for use as a presbytery, this building probably dates from late 1800s. It is located opposite the original presbytery, which was demolished to enable the church to be built on the site.

13 Andrew's Anglican Church complex

The original stone church was built in 1861 on land donated by Simon Kemp. A new church, constructed in 1924, was on the site formerly occupied by the church hall, which had been built in 1904. The hall has been relocated twice - the second time in the 1960s to make way for the current church hall.

Part of the church property was dedicated as a cemetery and the first burial was in 1862. Even though the last person was buried in 1902, it was not until 1957 that the government passed a law for the cemetery to close and headstones to be removed. A number of the headstones were crushed and used as road base and retaining walls at Blackbutt Reserve.



Old St Andrew's Church of England early 1900s. University of Newcastle, John Turner Collection

14 Parnell House/St Swithins'/Burgmann House 1898

Built for Magistrate Edward Parnell as a home for his son Walter, it was then sold to David Morison, the co-owner of the Morison and Bearby foundry at Carrington. The change in house name reflected the fact Morison was married on St Swithins' Day in 1903. In 1960 the house was converted for use as a student hostel and was renamed Burgmann House. Today, the building is owned by the University of Newcastle and continues to provide student accommodation.

15 Burrundulla 1886

The name Burrundulla is etched into the fanlight over the front door of the former home of John Ritchie, manager of Hudson Bros. This was a Wickham engineering business which employed about 200 people to produce railway rolling stock. There are cellars underneath and there were stables and a coach-house at the back of the property.

16 Arnott Holme 1885

The manager of the Sydney Soap and Candle Company, Charles Upford, had his residence built on a 5-acre plot of land. It was named Ainsley House, but three years later it was sold to William Arnott and renamed Arnott Holme. The property was sold ten years later to his son-in-law Isaac Winn who renamed it Winncourt. Around 1921 the home was purchased by the Church of England and became St Elizabeth's Girls Home. Later it operated as St Alban's Boys home and was then used by the Methodist Church as an aged care facility and renamed Annesley Court



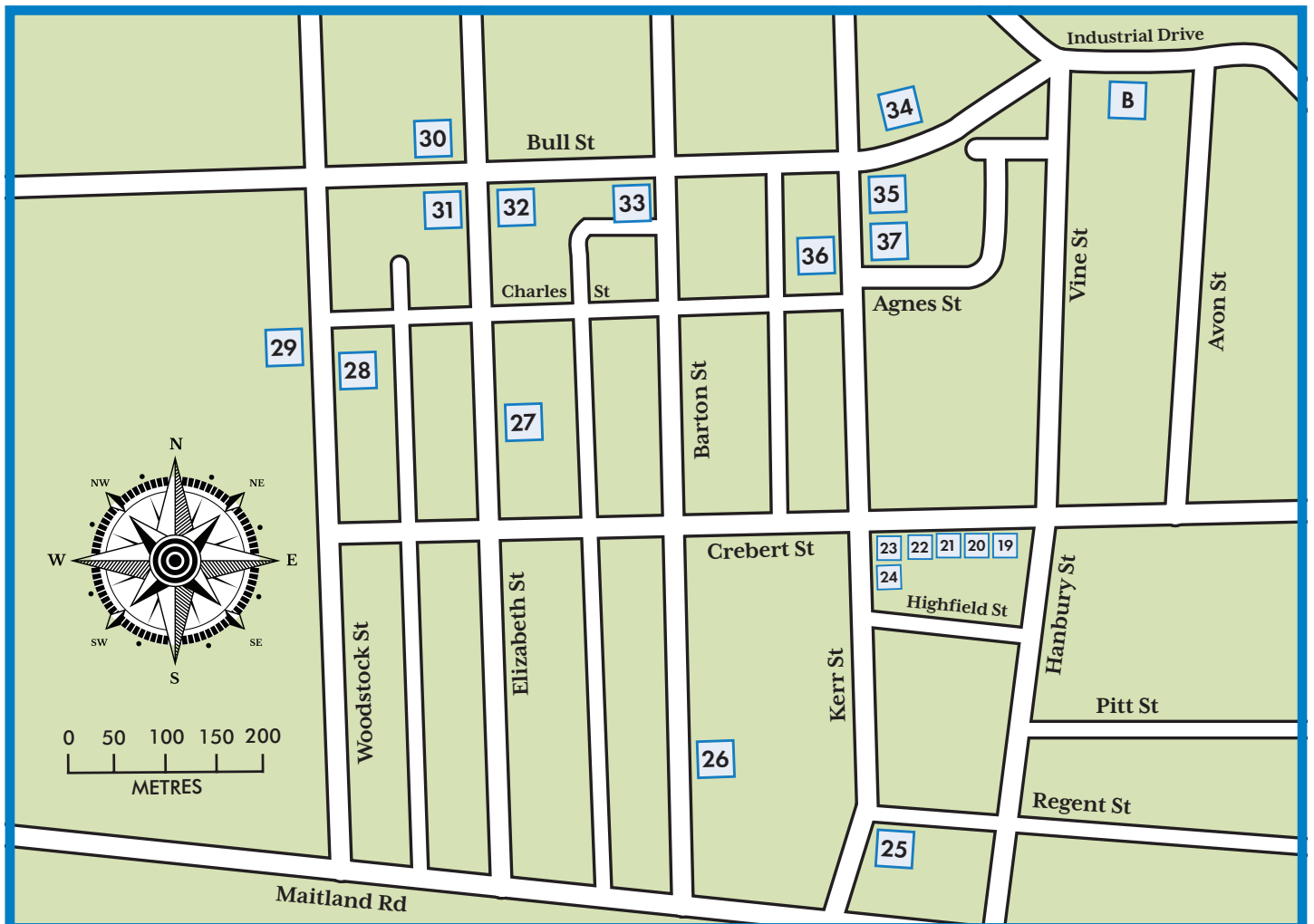
John Scholey's House, Mayfield 1900. University of Newcastle, Norm Barney Collection

17 Mayfield House 1884

John Scholey, a businessman and landowner, subdivided part of his estate in 1888 and called the area Mayfield, after his daughter May. By the 1950s the estate had been purchased by Manufacturer's Mutual Insurance Company, which sold it to the Mayfield Baptist Homes Trust in 1957. It became a hostel for apprentices and was named Lewis House, after Essington Lewis, a former chairman of BHP. In 2021 the property was renovated and now provides student accommodation under its original name, Mayfield House.

18 Winahra 1890

William Arnott built this residence for his daughter Euphemia, who married Isaac Winn, one of the owners of Winn's Department Store. Features of the property include six marble fireplaces in the four bedrooms, a music room and formal dining room and ventilated cornices in the 'smoking room' used by gentlemen after dinner.



19 Chinchen's House 1892

Home of Mr Chinchen, a surveyor, who had a number of commercial interests, including property development. His largest commercial venture was to join with James Hubbard and purchase inner city land from the Australian Agricultural Company. It was subsequently subdivided and sold for residential purposes. This was the start of a lucrative business and a street in Islington is named after him

20 Kooyong 1892

Home of Sam Arnott, second son of William Arnott, who fathered 12 children from two marriages. A number of his children bought property within close proximity of the family home in Section Street. The home originally had a circular driveway at the front that was used by horse-drawn carriages.

21 Irtom

Built for Nelson Creer of Creer and Berkeley Real Estate. He was active in civil life, serving as alderman on Waratah Municipal council for over 20 years and was elected Mayor on three occasions. He joined the real estate and auctioneering company started by his father Joseph Creer.

22 Newmont

Originally built for A Langwill, the general manager of Newcastle Gas and Coke Company, it was subsequently purchased by A Rodgers and family. The Rodgers Brothers commenced their foundry in Hunter Street in 1854 and moved to Wickham in 1878.

23 Tongarra

Residence for Dean Family, who operated a pottery works at the end of Barton Street, close to the river. Opened in 1913, the works had a 125ft high smoke stack which was a landmark in the area. The works were demolished in 1939 and the property was acquired by BHP.

24 Winnonaville. 1878

Originally owned by William Winn, one of founders of Winn's Department Store. Originally the home was on a two-acre plot but over time the land has been subdivided. Like other large estates of the time, it had stables, a coach house and a number of outlying buildings. In 1966 some land was sold and flats were built facing Crebert Street.



Wesleyan Church at Mayfield, 1891. Newcastle Region Library, Ralph Snowball Collection

25 Wesleyan Church

Opened 1890 and was able to seat 150 people. Prominent parishioners at the church included the Crebert, Arnott and Winn families. In 1898 a Sunday School Hall was built at the rear of the site. The old church was replaced in 1937 with the current brick structure which is now known as Mayfield Uniting Church.

26 Barton Hall 1887

Designed by noted architect Frederick Menkens on behalf of his client, Sarah Fayle. This imposing home was built in the Rococo style, an ornamental and theatrical type of architecture, and has been restored to a high standard. It features a tiled bullnose verandah with a heavy timber and leadlight front door with a ruby glass fanlight.

27 Lilibet C1886

This property was built for Archibald Hay, the owner of a furniture store in Hunter Street. The house fell into disrepair and more recently there were plans to keep the façade, demolish the rest and build modern town house structures behind. Fortunately, these plans did not proceed and a change of ownership led to the property being retained and restored to a high standard.



Mr Archibald's Hay's house at Mayfield. Newcastle Region Library, Ralph Snowball Collection

28 Woodstock Manor C1880

Substantial brick home built in Cottage Ornés style (French for decorated cottage). "The rooms are lofty, and fitted throughout in a first-class manner". Early occupants of the house included Albert Edward Cox, who conducted an ironmongery business in Hunter Street and Robert Upfold, who took over from his father Charles, as manager of the Soap Works.

29 Monastery

The Monastery and gardens were originally built on a 27-acre estate. Two buildings were opened in 1887 by Redemptorist Fathers, an Italian order founded in 1732. They were the marble-lined chapel with high timber ceilings and the monastery which was three-storeys high exclusive of an attic floor. In 1940s the monastery facilities were extended with the addition of a retreat house. Due to declining numbers of priests and brothers the monastery closed in 2003. The 'Monastery Residence' now provides student accommodation.



Mount Saint Alphonsus Monastery. Newcastle Region Library, Ralph Snowball Collection

30 Nooroolah C1865

Joseph Gorrick was a solicitor and was elected Member for Wollombi, which covered the area from Cessnock to Gosford. His home was built in the 1860s and extensive views can be gained due to its position on the ridge line. It is one of the oldest houses still standing in Bull Street and has been used as a private school and boarding house.

31 Mount Eden C1885

This weatherboard home can be seen by much of the suburb due to its high position and double-storey height. It has 15 rooms and was constructed on a two acre parcel of land. The home was built for Henry Welden Hammond, who conducted an ironmongery and importing business in Brown Street, Newcastle. The Hunter College for Boys, a day and boarding school, opened in 1919 and operated for a number of years.

32 Grange Mount C1914

A Federation-style house built for Catherine Rundle, the wife of Richard Rundle, who established a tailoring business in Newcastle. Catherine became the Managing Director of the firm after her husband's death. The house was later purchased for the manager of Rylands Rope Works and was sold to BHP in 1969.

33 Rose Mount Villa 1885

The original house on the site was owned by Samuel Chapman, the district coroner. The weatherboard structure was destroyed by fire in 1885, but the family rebuilt and remained here until Chapman died four years later. The home was then purchased by W H Baker, of Baker, Geddes and Love, Solicitors.

34 Former Golf Links

The site was originally owned by Charles Simpson, one of the early European settlers in the area. After his death, Waratah House and the surrounding land was sold to Major Charles Bolton, who further subdivided the land. Thomas Tourle was the next owner and he substantially extended the house and renovated the grounds by planting a vineyard and orchard. Tourle lived here until his death in 1899. In 1911 part of his estate was developed as a golf course by Waratah Golf Club. BHP purchased the golf course in 1919 and Waratah Golf Club gradually developed new facilities at Cockle Creek. The club moved from the site in 1921 and the facility was taken over by Steel Works Recreation Club and used for golf until it closed in 1936.

FURTHER AFIELD:

A Delprat's Cottage

Constructed for Guillaume Delprat, who was General Manager of BHP from 1899 to 1921. He was instrumental in the establishment of a steelworks in Newcastle. Today, the Phytoremediation Research Centre, under the ownership of the University of Newcastle, has been established at the site. Various plants are grown and tested for their ability to absorb toxins from the soil in an area contaminated by industrial use.



Waratah House built by Charles Simpson, later added to by Thomas Tourle. University of Newcastle, John Turner Collection

35 Windeyer's House 1880

Julian Windeyer was a prominent Newcastle solicitor and magistrate, who served as alderman for many years and had two terms as Mayor. Dominican Nuns purchased Windeyer's house and opened a school there in 1917 for 50 pupils. Two years later they moved the school to larger premises at 'Redcliff', on the corner of Crebert and Havelock Streets



Lady golfing, Waratah Golf Club, Mayfield 1930s (Windeyer's house top left). University of Newcastle, Newcastle Sun Collection

36 Thornville 1880

A two-storey, weatherboard dwelling built for Leslie Arnott. The home probably had return verandahs but it is thought the side ones were enclosed when the house was converted into five flats around 1929. It is now been restored for use as a family home with a one-bedroom flat.

37 Glen Airlie C1880

Originally owned by Wal Arnott, it was later purchased by Ralph Goninan of Goninan's Engineering, which was established at Wickham in 1899. The home is situated on a block of 2300 sq metres and features ornate woodwork on the gables.

B Simpsons Cottage

This is regarded as being the oldest surviving dwelling in Mayfield, having been built in 1852 by William McNulty on land owned by Charles Simpson. McNulty lived in the sandstone cottage until his death in 1907. After the Second World War it was purchased by Lysaghts and used as a hostel and then the Orb (Lysaght's) Chapel. In recent years the property has been used for commercial and residential use.

**This walk is divided into two sections, each taking approximately one hour.
Some hilly terrain is covered.**

Main References: University of Newcastle, *Living Histories* (newcastle.edu.au), Cath Chegwiddden – *Mighty Mayfield Then and Now, Book 1: The Early Years* and Julie Keating – *Waratah & Mayfield: nineteenth century industrial towns*

Compiled by Julie Keating 2023 • Graphic Design by kd DESIGN