

# HISTORY OF CARRINGTON

By

Edward (Ted) Coulin

## Introduction

Edward (Ted) Coulin was born in 1922.  
He attended Carrington Public School between 1928 and 1935.

Ted started work at Maritime Services Board (M.S.B.) in 1939.

In 1940 Ted enlisted in the RAAF and became a bomber Pilot.  
He was also Personal Pilot to Governor Casey in Bengal, India.

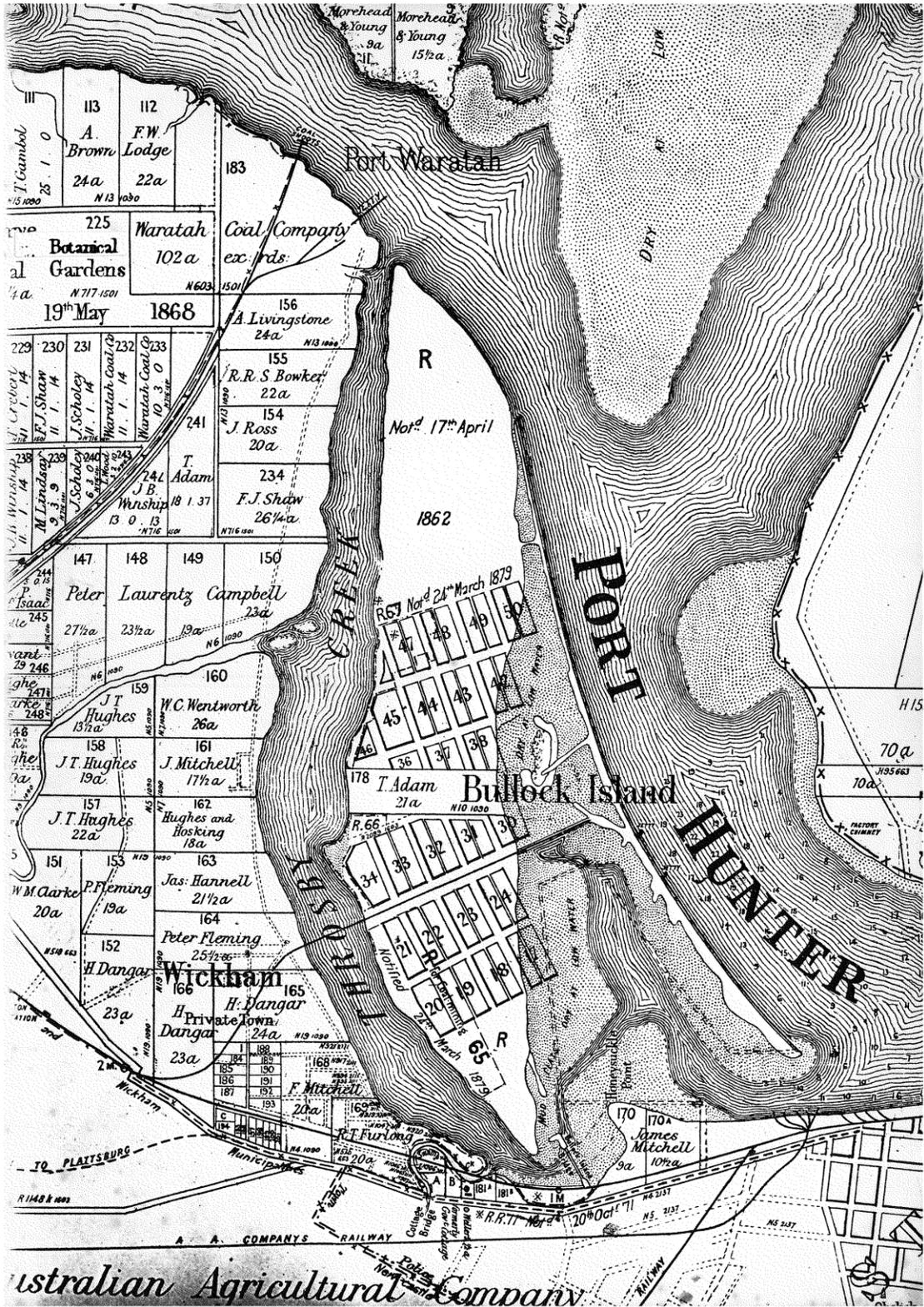
After WW II Ted returned to M.S.B. and became Newcastle Branch Manager in 1966.  
He remained Manager until he retired in 1982.

After retirement, between 1983 and 1995, Ted wrote the History of  
Newcastle Harbour and later History of Carrington.

His entire life was spent around Newcastle and its Harbour.



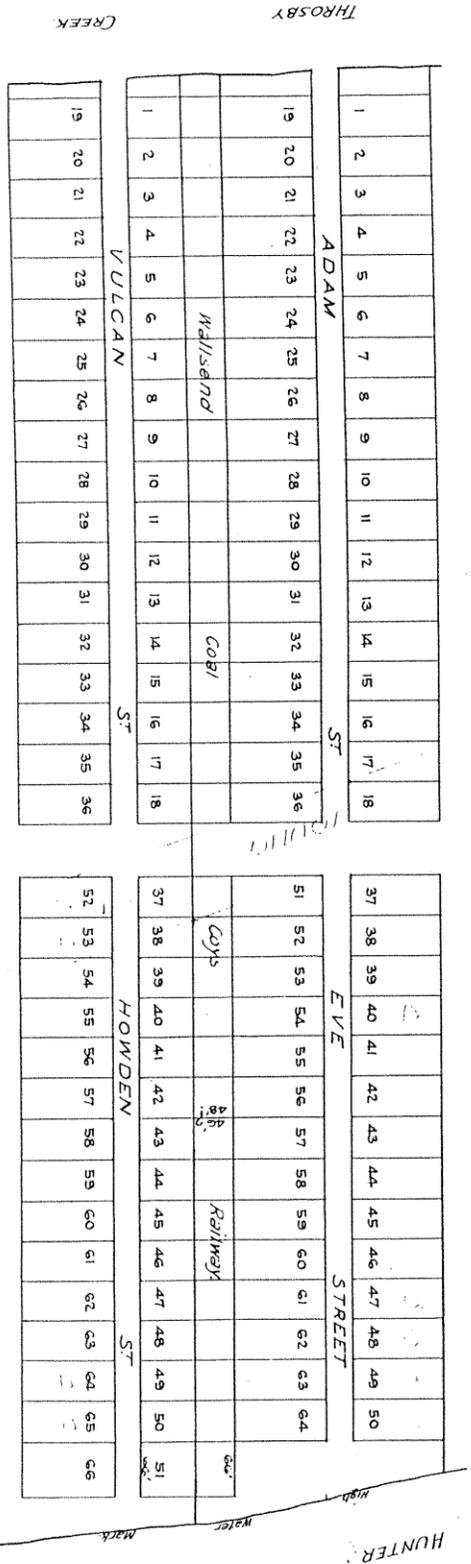
These are maps of Bullock Island and later Carrington.



**PLAN**  
**of subdn of Allotment No 8.**  
**BULLOCK ISLAND.**

HM-636/1000

ALLOT No 9.

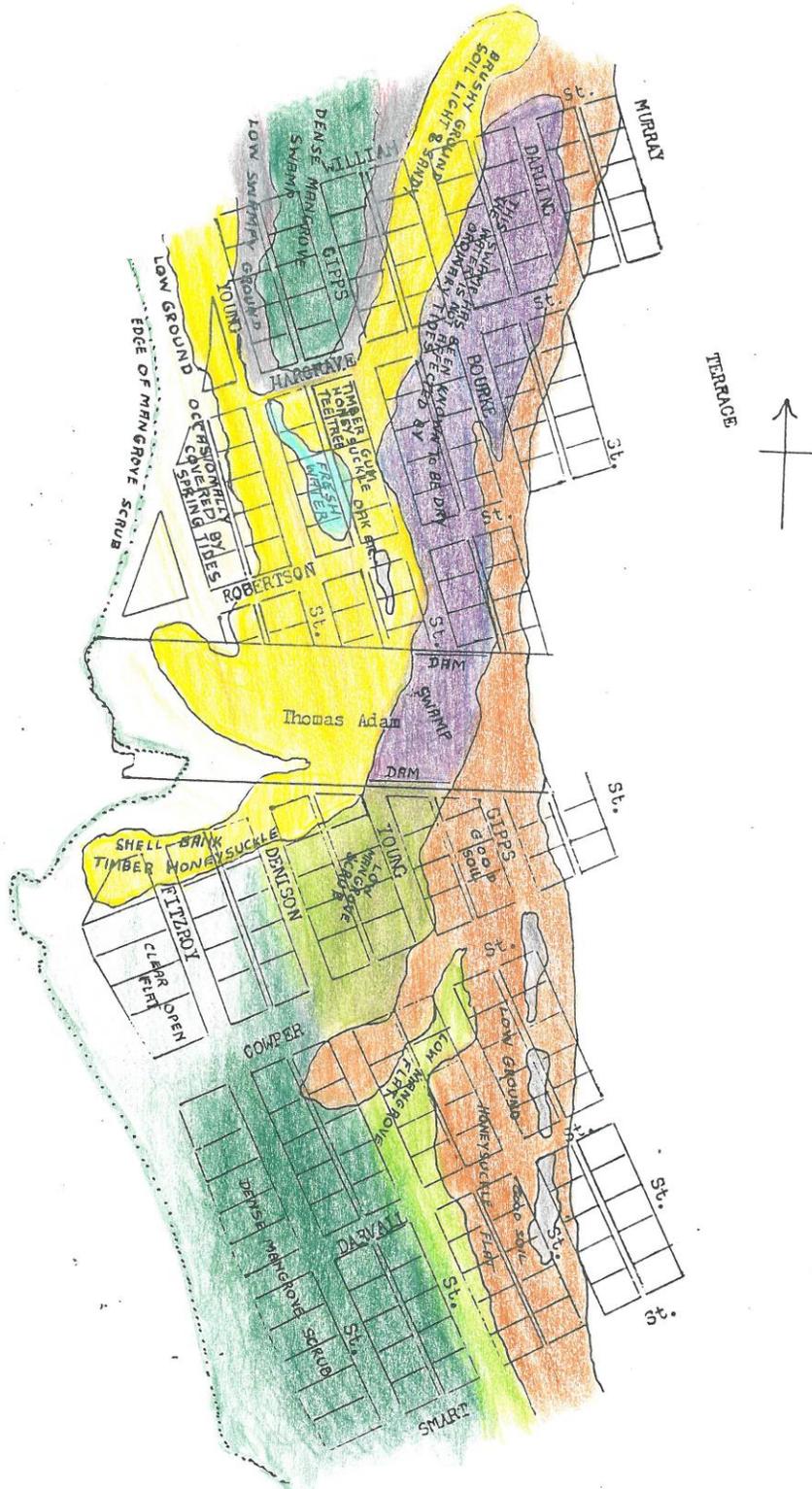


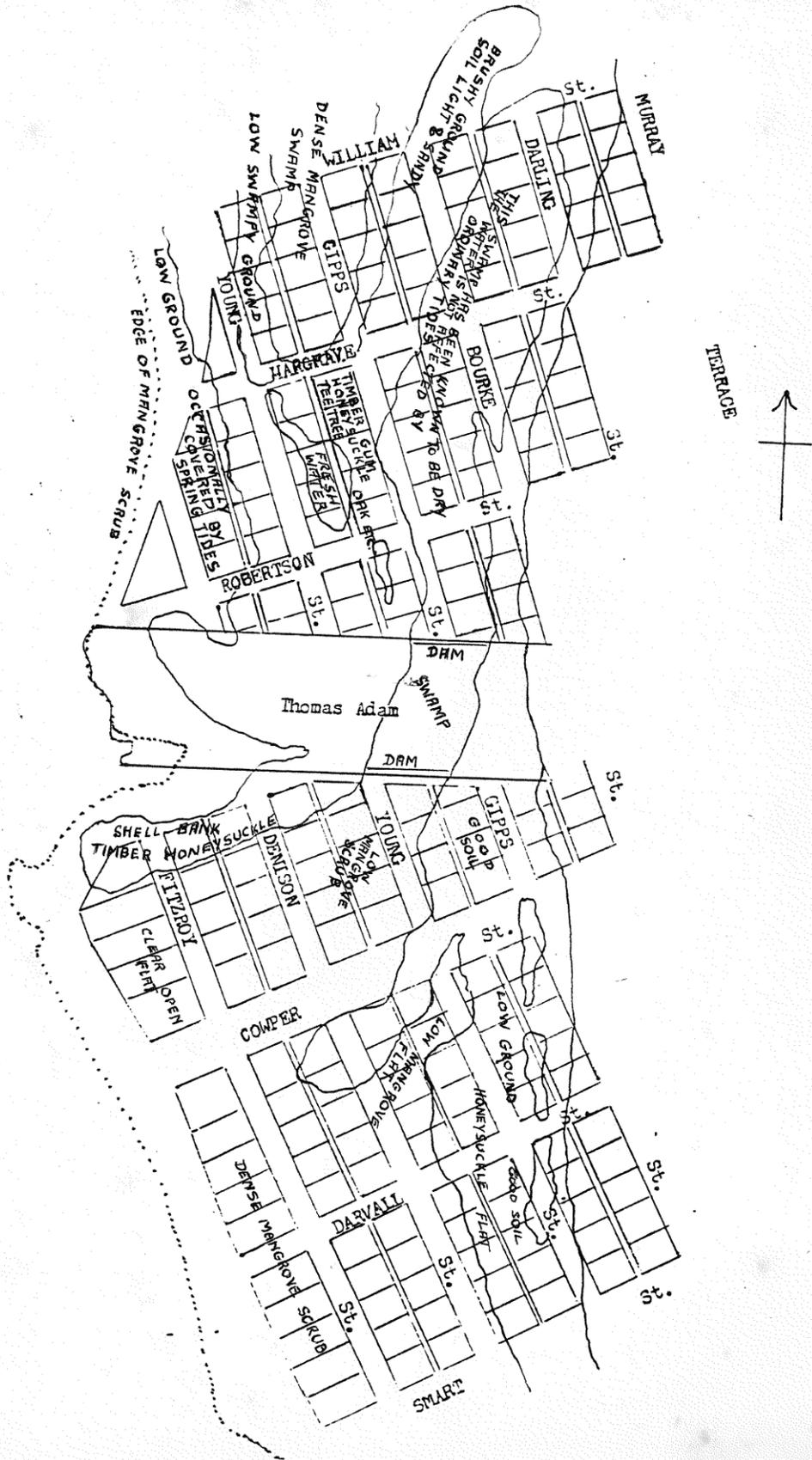
Each allotment is 50' wide and 1/4' long  
 containing 20 perches or 1/8 of an acre.

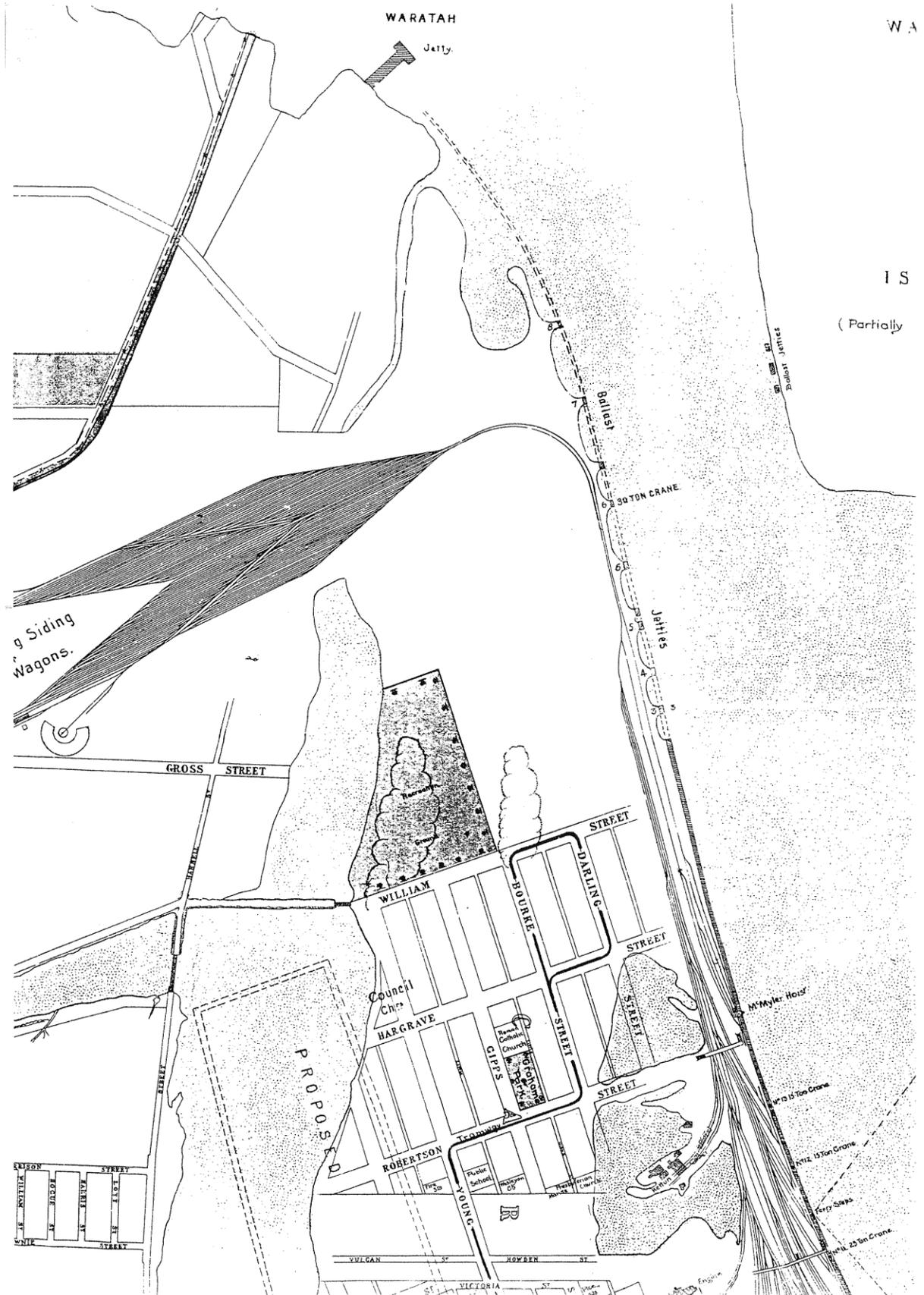
ALLOT No 7.

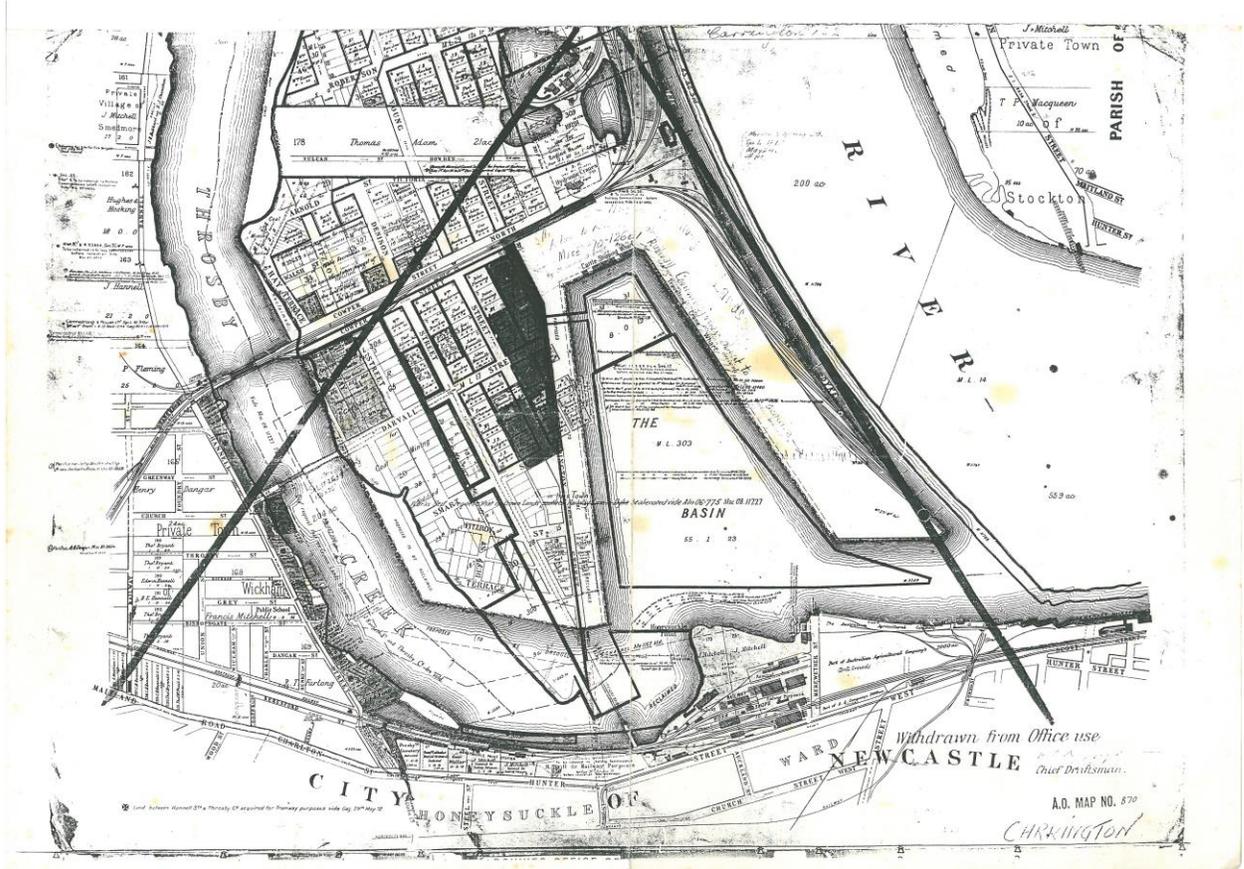
T.M. MACKAY  
 Surveyor











## MUNICIPALITY OF CARRINGTON

### EMERGING FROM THE SLOUGH

#### INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the first Carrington Municipal Council was elected in 1887, the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* reported that Young and other streets were veritable "Sloughs of Despond", an apt description considering the topography of the estuarine island from which Carrington evolved.

During the next forty years, the elected aldermen astutely used council's limited funds to slowly improve conditions for their hardy constituents so that by December 1929, the *Souvenir of Newcastle Civic Week*, when referring to Carrington, recorded that...

'the streets are second to none in the Newcastle district, being tar-paved and all kerbed and guttered and at the present time the footpaths of all the streets are being paved with concrete at a cost of £10,000.' It also stated that the suburb...'is as well, if not better, drained than the majority of the municipalities in the district.'

The transformation was assisted initially by the plentiful supply of ships' ballast, residue from the smelter works at Port Waratah and later, sand pumped from the harbour during major port development.

In earlier days, ships did not have the advantage of water ballast, so if it was necessary to travel empty between ports, dry ballast of any convenient type was used for stability. This meant the ballast had to be discharged before loading of cargo could commence. An Editorial in the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner's Advocate* on 7 November 1877, reviewing development at Bullock Island, made the following observation about the use of ballast:-

We could not help being struck with the thought that in some distant far remote age, some busy prying geologist making researches into the formation of the soil, will not be a little puzzled if he makes a keen survey into the composition of this artificial island. Here we have geological specimens from every part of the world. The whole expanse of ground has been built up of ballast from ships that came into the harbour. In one place we tread upon a layer of London flint, next a collection of stones from the shores of the sunny Mediterranean. These are succeeded by a rock mound from Scandinavian coasts and these in turn give place to blue stone from Melbourne, green trap from New Zealand, limestone from Singapore and even the sunburnt bricks and glazed uncouth carvings from a dismantled village in far off China.

In researching this thesis, I have been mindful of the remarks of the last Mayor of Carrington, Ald. H.N. Coe during the jubilee celebrations in 1937: 'I wish to pay my tribute of respect and admiration to the pioneers of this town, particularly when I realise the hardships and tribulations they had to endure. Carrington was not given to anyone; it was made by those who blazed the track which we of the present generation enjoy.'

I have attempted to highlight some of the problems the early residents faced; to give some insight into the way of life of our forefathers; how they entertained themselves in the absence of radio and television; their compassion in times of grief and misfortune.

## Chapter 1

### GIVING IT A NAME

The western boundary of the original island was defined by the mangroves growing along Throsby Creek, which in the earlier days of settlement, extended north of Selwyn Street and joined the south arm of the Hunter River in an area near the former finished products berth at B.H.P.

According to a plan prepared by the Surveyor General's office in 1865, the eastern high-water shoreline cut across the corners of Hargrave and Darling Streets; Robertson and Bourke Streets; south along the line of Mathieson Street to Cowper Street, then generally along the line of the feed railway to the first (1937) section of the wheat silos, finishing some 1200 feet south of Smart Street.

When Lt. Shortland drew his "Eye Sketch of Hunter's River" in 1797, he did not record the existence of the island but Barrallier's survey in 1801 charted it and recorded the name **Chapman Island** with Throsby Creek separating it from the mainland.

However, when G.B. White prepared his survey of the "River Hunter from Port Hunter to West Maitland" in 1844, he named the island **Bullock Island** and this name was recorded officially when land on the island was offered for sale by the government on 9 February 1848 but the survey of the harbour carried out by HMS "Acheron" in 1851 still referred to **Chapman Island**

I have not been able to find anything to support the oft repeated story that Bullock Island derived its name because bullocks used to cross Throsby Creek to graze. One 1869 report stated that in former years, the island was thickly timbered, chiefly with honeysuckle trees, but by then, almost cleared. The cleared ground was covered with stunted ferns and tufts of long course grass, the soil was generally unproductive and there were no horses or cattle on the island, in which respect it differed from all the other inhabited islands of the Hunter, It did, however, have a large number of goats...'finer than the generality of goats in the neighbourhood of Newcastle'.

It is hard to imagine a registered surveyor, Mr. G.B. White, preparing a plan to submit to government, using a local colloquialism or the government using the same name in the Government Gazette. Not even the Geographical Names Board could supply a source.

**Is it just a co-incidence that an aboriginal word for "swamp" was BULLOOK?<sup>1</sup>**

Mr. Edward Orpen Moriarty was appointed Engineer for Hunter River Improvements on 22 November 1855 and in April 1856 submitted his plans to the government, which included **Bullock Island**. Further recognition of this name came with the appointment of a Select Committee by the Legislative Assembly on 9 December 1856 to investigate the extension of the Maitland-Newcastle railway beyond Honeysuckle Point and...ascertain the eligibility of **Bullock Island** as a site for the construction of wharves.

When the government announced its intention to auction further land on the island in 1865, the Department of Lands gazetted the location of the allotments as "**On Bullock Island at Newcastle**"

All of the Land Grants subsequently issued by the Registrar General to the successful buyers recorded the location as Parish of Newcastle at **Onibyanba**. This was the first time I had come across the name officially but later I was to find many variations of the spelling.

When the Department of Lands in 1867 gazetted its intention to open a parish road (Young Street) through the original 1848 grant to T. Adam, it specified **Onebyganba, Bullock Island**.

In a Petition to the Governor in 1868 asking for Waratah to be declared a Municipal District, the whole of Bullock Island was included in the proposed **Onibyambah** Ward of the municipality. This was rejected by property owners on Bullock Island, who submitted a counter Petition and had the island excluded.

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<sup>1</sup>ENDACOTT, Sydney J. "Australian Aboriginal Words and Place Names" - Georgian House, Melbourne

The government recorded another spelling in 1870. *N.S.W. Legislative Assembly Votes and Proceedings* Volume 1, page 255, referred to **Onebygambah**.

My maternal great grandmother, Margaret Booth, died on the island on 6 October 1871 and her Death Certificate records **Onebigamba**.

To add to the confusion, quotes from early Council of Education correspondence contained in the *Carrington Public School Centenary Booklet*, 1973, referred to **Onybigambah**, the spelling also used by the Principal in his first Class Register in 1873 and subsequently used by the Postmaster General.

The *Newcastle Chronicle* generally referred to Bullock Island but in 1875 did suggest that the ...'cognomen of Bullock Island should be changed to something more euphonious'.

When the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* emerged as the local newspaper in 1876, Bullock Island still appeared to be the preferred name when referring to the island in general but when St. Thomas' Church of England was dedicated in 1877, the paper referred one day to its opening services on Bullock Island and the report of the opening next day reverted to **Onebygamba** and just to add to the confusion, in the same article added an "h" to the spelling when the location was repeated.

St. Thomas' used **Onebygamba** when my grandfather, Edward Booth, was awarded a prize in January 1881.

The government used this spelling when it proclaimed the **Town of Onebygamba** in *Government Gazette* No. 485 of 16 October 1885 while extending the Town Police Act to cover the island.

When Lord Carrington acceded to the request of the residents that the proposed new municipality be named after him, the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on 29 July 1886 hoped that soon ...'under its new personality, the association of swamp and fen, villainously bad roads, and houses built on piles, which at present attach to Bullock Island, will pass away, and that the municipality of Carrington will always be noted as the abode of culture, sweetness and light'.

Though the **Municipality of Carrington** was proclaimed on 30 March 1887, it was not until 27 August 1892 the Governor proclaimed that ...'**Carrington is a Town**'.

## Chapter 2

### A SLOW BEGINNING

The topography of Bullock Island ensured a slow development. (Fig.1)

A large portion of the island north of William Street (now renamed Elizabeth Street) was dense mangrove scrub and mudflats. These conditions extended down as far as Hargrave Street between Mathieson and Young Streets.

Similar conditions existed in the south-west, west of Denison Street and low mangrove scrub penetrated as far as Young Street.

A large area between William and Victoria Streets was swamp... 'the resort of a few landrail and other wild fowl'.

Initially Bullock Island was divided into sixteen suburban allotments of about twenty acres each and two of these, Allotment No. 8, twenty-one acres in the middle of the island and Allotment No. 16, the northern point, were offered for sale by auction on 9 February 1848 at the upset (minimum - reserve) price of two pounds per acre.<sup>1</sup>

Allotment No. 8, eight chains wide, was purchased by Thomas Adam for forty-two pounds; no offer was received for Allotment No. 16. The northern portion of the island later was reserved as the quarantine ground for the Port of Newcastle.

The fences on the Forbes Street side of the fire station area define part of the northern boundary of Allotment 8. On the other side of Young Street, public school students have a clear indicator with the

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<sup>1</sup>G.G. No. 2, 4 January 1848, page 10.

fence which separates their playground and No. 39 Forbes Street while the southern boundary followed the line of Jubilee Place in Victoria Street.

Because of this first subdivision, Forbes, Howden and Victoria Streets run almost due east/west.

Thomas Adam, (after whom Adamstown subsequently was named), a Scotsman, arrived in Australia in 1838 and settled at Newcastle in 1846, where he commenced business as a builder and contractor. In 1853 he sold the southern half of Allotment 8 (ten acres two roods) to John Howden, a blacksmith, for twenty-five pounds<sup>2</sup> and they both subdivided their properties into lots generally in the order of a frontage of 50 feet and a depth of 114 feet. (Fig. ) Adam, or his wife, must have had a keen sense of humour; the street dividing his lots on the west side was called Adam - that on the east side Eve.

Howden made a quick return on his investment, selling four of his sixty-seven lots in 1854 to William Croasdill for two hundred pounds.<sup>3</sup>

Croasdill, whose former home, "Claremont", still stands in Newcomen Street, Newcastle, next to Newcastle Club, was the coal manager for the A.A. Company and owned many valuable properties in the city. He added to his investment on Bullock Island by buying five lots from Thomas Adam in 1856 for four hundred pounds.<sup>4</sup>

The first plan for the development of Bullock Island I have been able to trace was included in a total port plan titled "Design for Improvement - Wharfage and Dock Accommodation" submitted by J. Wolston Ellis, C.E., in 1854. This proposed docks within the large sandbank to the east of the island. Also suggested was a tidal basin closely approximating the ultimate line of The Basin in 1914; together with the removal of Honeysuckle Point and the southern portion of Bullock Island to provide a straight channel from Throsby Creek to the Harbour.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Land Title Register Book 28, No. 850

<sup>3</sup>Land Title Register Book 42, No. 3

<sup>4</sup>Land Title Register Book 42, No. 4

<sup>5</sup> AO Map No. 4404

Mr. E. O. Moriarty's plan for Bullock Island proposed a ballast embankment along the face of the sandbank, extending from the northern end of the island to the neighbourhood of the A.A. Company's staiths on the Newcastle waterfront, some one and one-half miles long. When he began to implement the first of his plans for harbour improvements in 1856, he recommended that the remaining twenty-acre allotments on Bullock Island be withheld from sale until completion of the work.<sup>6</sup> **He told a Parliamentary Select Committee in December 1856 the whole of the sandbank could be reclaimed and he believed that before many years it would be reclaimed and faced with wharves. In his opinion, the sale of the land so reclaimed, estimated to be about seven hundred acres, would pay for all the improvements of the Hunter.**

The potential of Bullock Island was recognised by the Select Committee and it supported Moriarty's idea.

Moriarty officially submitted his plans for the ballast embankment on 4 April 1857. The initial purpose was to direct the ebb tide into Coal Channel running along the city waterfront, to increase the scouring affect on the sides and bottom of the channel. Widening of the embankment and provision of wharves could follow as the trade of the port increased.

In the same year, Thomas Adam is reported to have moved to Bullock Island and with his brother-in-law, William Bowden, commenced a barge building industry. The 1865 sub-division plan of Bullock Island shows the site at the extreme eastern end of Forbes Street, almost on Bourke Street, and Adam's residence nearby would have been very close to 56 Forbes Street. Adam's wife Rebecca, in 1861 gave birth to their fourth son, Andrew, claimed to be the first white child born on the island. Always to the forefront, in the same year Adam tested for coal under Bullock Island.

John Howden also became involved in industry on the island and established a foundry and engineering shop where he carried out smelting, moulding, casting and engineering on a small scale. His forge is shown on the 1865 plan at the south-east corner of his

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<sup>6</sup> Notation on Plan N10-1090 Crown Land Office

property, adjacent to the garage sites of the present police station. No residence is shown and evidently Howden never resided on the island. When he disappeared in 1873, his body subsequently was recovered from the harbour, near the punt he used for transport to the island.

By 1861, heaps of ballast had been placed at intervals of two hundred feet along the face of the sandbank to indicate the proposed line of the embankment (hereafter referred to by its later well-known official name "Dyke"). Dibbs and Company won the contract to remove ballast from vessels and deposit between the heaps. The company had many interests in Newcastle, including the Newcastle Lighterage Company, to handle this and other waterfront activities. The superintendent in 1862 was Thomas Adam.

Ballast had been deposited nearly the whole length of the Dyke by early 1863 but not to any height. Construction then slowed because of the lack of facilities to handle the ballast behind the original line. However, interest in the island must have been increasing because there is a report of an application to lease land on the island in 1863. This was refused; no doubt on Mr. Moriarty's recommendation because he stated that ...'it would be in the highest degree inexpedient to alienate any portion of the land applied for'... He further suggested that the subdivision of the island into suburban allotments be cancelled with a view to one more suitable for the extension of the town (Newcastle) being substituted.<sup>7</sup>

It was no uncommon occurrence by 1864 for upwards of forty square-rigged vessels to be in port, as well as coasters and steamers. There were only two ballast berths in the port; one at Stockton and one at the city wharf. The cost of lightering ballast from vessels at anchor was one shilling and threepence per ton and as a result, much ballast was illegally being thrown overboard. There was a call for four ballast berths at Bullock Island. Problems also were being experienced with the loading of coal at Queens Wharf and with a lack of wharfage for general cargo; it was claimed commerce was being restricted in a degree almost incalculable. An amount of £38,000 was appropriated for construction of wharves and a coal basin but because the then undeveloped state of

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<sup>7</sup>Notation on Plan N10-1090 Crown Land Office File (18)63/8934

Bullock Island would have required expenditure of £100,000 to provide the urgently needed facilities, staiths were erected on the city waterfront and it was to be another fourteen years before coal was loaded at Bullock Island.

### Chapter 3

#### **ONEBYGAMBA**

Eventually the government followed Moriarty's suggestion and subdivided a large portion of the island, other than Adam's original grant, into half-acre lots, set out in a pattern of streets, most of which still bear their original name; so we have Darling, Gipps, Young, Denison and Fitzroy streets running parallel to the river and Hargrave, Robertson, Cowper and Darvall streets, the cross streets. The narrow lanes (as they frequently were called) running parallel to Young Street were not named on the original 1865 subdivision plan but later were given the prefix "Little" and took the name of the major street immediately to the west, so we had Little Bourke Street (now Scott Street), Little Gipps Street (Mathieson) etc. On 10 March 1926, council named these streets after former aldermen.

A very wide Cowper Street made provision for future rail access to the Dyke.

Almost two hundred lots were offered for sale by public auction during the week commencing 25 September 1865...'the most valuable portion of it, consisting of land running along, and having a river frontage, on the eastern side of Bullock Island...'<sup>1</sup> Thomas Garrett, a Newcastle produce merchant, who became an alderman on the first municipal council, paid the top price of the auction, £57, for the lot on the corner of William Street and Murray Terrace. The adjacent lot in Murray Terrace was purchased by David Ross (who built much of the original Queens Wharf, Newcastle,

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<sup>1</sup>Newcastle Chronicle 27 September 1865

and the first jetties at the Dyke) for £39. To-day, the main arrival roads of the rail system connecting the Great Northern Railway with the wharves at Carrington are located almost on the site of the former Murray Terrace.

Other prominent Newcastle residents invested in multiple lots. James Barron Winship, colliery superintendent for the A.A. Company, purchased ten lots including three corner lots at Bourke and Robertson Streets and three corner lots at Gipps and Robertson Streets. Jesse Hannell bought five lots, including Lot 8, Section 42, portion of which is now 57 Scott Street. This portion was purchased later by my grandparents Emily and Ted Booth (after whom Booth Street was named) and I lived there for twenty years.

Peter Flemming, a prominent Newcastle butcher and a city alderman for twenty-seven years, bought four lots on the southern side of Cowper Street and subdivided them into forty-eight lots, each approximately twenty-two feet by eighty-two feet six inches; twelve fronting Gipps Street, twenty-four (twelve either side) fronting Little Young (Lott) Street and twelve fronting Young Street. In the early planning, Gipps Street ran from William (Elizabeth) Street to Smart Street except for the section through Adam's grant. The southern section still remaining is now Hill Street. According to subsequent auction advertisements, these also were prime sites and the first post office agency and one of the early hotels were erected there. My great-grandfather, Charles Booth, whose obituary stated ...'he was the contractor for the filling in of the foreshores upon which the Carrington dyke is constructed...'<sup>2</sup> purchased the lot in Gipps Street next to the post office/store. All the lots east of Lott Street, together with numerous other lots in the south of Lott, Young and Wilson Streets were resumed on 31 December 1913, to enable wharfage and rail development of the Western Basin; giving that area of the suburb its domestic boundary of to-day.

Within a month, land purchasers set about petitioning for a road to the island but it was to be ten years of struggle with the government before a trafficable connection with Newcastle was achieved; almost as long as construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

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<sup>2</sup>NMH 11 August 1903

The Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company, hindered by delays to coal loading at the steam cranes at Queens Wharf, in 1866 purchased a strip of land from John Howden for four hundred and fifty pounds with the intention of applying for permission to construct a shipping place and railway. This strip, bounded on the north by Adam's holding, was forty-eight feet wide and extended from Throsby Creek to the (then) waters of the Hunter River. The company also obtained all the water frontage of all Howden's property and extending out to deep water.<sup>3</sup> The angled walls of the former "Everyones Theatre" clearly define this strip and a portion still appears as a "no-man's land" behind Nos. 29 and 31 Howden (formerly Vulcan) Street.

The government commenced wharf construction at the Dyke in 1866 when David Ross secured the contract to construct two ballast jetties. It was proposed that a tramway be fixed upon each of the jetties and these would extend right and left of the jetties to allow the ballast dobbins to spread the ballast along the Dyke. As the dumping grounds (tips) moved further from the wharves, single tracks were laid and special dump-trucks were hauled by a horse to the tip site. A second truck would be filled while the other was away.

In the same year, landowners began planning a drainage scheme to prevent inundation of the southern portion of the island by the spring tides. Concern was felt that saltwater would get into the wells and render them unfit for domestic purposes.

Evidently land owners, frustrated by government inactivity, set up their own fund for a connecting bridge from Blane (Hunter ) Street to the island because official estimates from the Department of Lands on 31 December 1867 included five hundred pounds to supplement the two hundred and fifty pounds subscribed privately for this purpose and draft plans for the bridge had been approved by Mr. Moriarty. These provided for a straight connection from Denison Street to Blane Street, just east of Union Street.

Another big coal exporter, Lambton Colliery, through Messrs Moorehead and Young, in 1867 bought from Thomas Adam all the remaining unsold land in his section of the original Allotment 8 for one thousand two hundred

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<sup>3</sup>Land Titles Office Book 100 No.605

pounds.<sup>4</sup> The registered ownership of this property later was transferred to the Scottish Australian Mining Company. I could not ascertain when Adam left Bullock Island but an 1869 report in the *Newcastle Chronicle* stated that the premises formerly owned and occupied by him had been empty for years.

The symmetry of Adam and Howden's subdivisions was upset early in 1868 when Young Street, between the south and north boundaries of Allotment 8, was gazetted a Parish Road and pegged out in conformity with the 1865 subdivision of the island. Numerous lots were affected because of the angle at which the road bisected the original grant. Jubilee Place is a good illustration of the upset, having approximately three original property frontages to Howden Street and two to Victoria Street and all properties facing Young Street between Victoria Street and the fire station have angled frontages because of it.

Purchase of land on Bullock Island must have been regarded a good investment, for despite the contribution by landowners towards a bridge connecting with Newcastle, there were only eleven resident families late in 1869 including fifty-five children, forty of whom were of school age and provision of a school was considered urgent. Mr. James Rodgers had just built a small row of cottages near the south end of the island, which were all tenanted. These possibly were at the southern end of Wilson Street because Rodgers owned an acre of land bounded by Denison, Smart and Little Denison (Wilson) Streets and an early map showed dwellings in Wilson Street within Rodgers' holding.

At this stage, there was not a store or shop on the island and all the necessities of life had to come from the city. Dealers paid occasional visits, but generally not more frequently than once in three weeks. The nearest access to Bullock Island was by boat from Honeysuckle Point, the channel to Throsby Creek there being about one hundred and fifty yards wide, and at low water, fordable by pedestrians.<sup>5</sup>

John W. Scott, who had been conducting a shipbuilding business at Honeysuckle Point for thirteen years, was forced to vacate the area in 1869 and moved to Bullock

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<sup>4</sup>Land Titles Office Book 104 No.212 - Book 108 No.740

<sup>5</sup>Newcastle Chronicle 5 October 1869

Island. His establishment was at the southern end of Lott Street. He built several vessels there; erected bridges for the government and for several years the firm was an extensive shipowner in the intercolonial trade.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, in October 1870, the government provided five hundred pounds for the much needed bridge and left it to the Bullock Island Bridge Committee to undertake its construction. Unfortunately final plans prepared by the local District Engineer, Mr. Darley, were more elaborate (therefore more costly) than the original draft plan and provided for an opening centre span. The committee decided to "go it alone" on the 1867 draft plan because in its opinion it was useless to withstand any more humbugging.

A tender for £1030, submitted by Robert Young, was accepted and the first pile was driven on 17 April 1871. Despite the threat of a Supreme Court injunction by Mr. Jas. Hannell, who wanted a clearway to his property further up Throsby Creek, work continued on a temporary platform three feet wide over the full length of the bridge, which apparently gave pedestrian access to the island.

Then the fight began anew for additional funds to complete a trafficable bridge in accordance with the final plans. It was argued that the government had received a large amount from the sale of the land and access should have been guaranteed as a condition of sale.

Early transportation to the city was provided in 1872 by a steam ferry service when Captain Dalton ran the "Waratah" between Market Street and the Dyke.<sup>7</sup>

Application for a school was made in May 1872. Messrs W. Rodgers, J. Scott, G. Murdoch, John Hills and D. McAlpine guaranteed and collected £60 from the citizens towards the cost of the building before the Council of Education agreed to the establishment of the school on 1 October 1872. Distance from the city, discomfort and sometimes the danger of crossing Throsby Creek were mentioned by the inspector reporting on the application. The population of the

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<sup>6</sup>MORRISON W. Frederic - "The Aldine Centennial History of New South Wales" 1888 Vol II

<sup>7</sup>NMH 9 May 1905 p6 - Captain Hugh Boyce - Fifty Years of Ferry Life

island had grown to 120, of whom 63 were children of school age. The Department of Lands dedicated a half-acre site for the school in Young Street on 11 July 1873. This site was in the centre of the existing school area and the school opened on 16 September 1873 with Mr. J. Macara as first principal.

Pupils attending the first day were:-

<u>BOYS</u>		<u>GIRLS</u>	
<u>FIRST CLASS</u>			
KEMLOW	William	COWAN	Kadina
KEMLOW	Thomas	COWAN	Matilda
MORRISON	Andrew	PARKINSON	Mary
CHRISTIE	William	McALPIN	Catherine
McALPIN	Daniel	MORRISON	Catherine
COWAN	William	MORRISON	Mary
RODGERS	Charles	MORRISON	Agnes
			(half day only)
PARKINSON	Henry		
<u>SECOND CLASS</u>			
MERRILEES	George	McALPIN	Mary
CHRISTIE	James	GILLIES	Margaret
CHRISTIE	Colin (half-day)	CHRISTIE	Maria
RODGERS	Alex (half-day)		
<u>THIRD CLASS</u>			
NIL		RODGERS	Kate
		CHRISTIE	Margaret

The official first-day attendance was Boys 11, Girls 11½, Total 22½.

Sixty students, comprising 26 boys and 34 girls, with ages ranging from three to sixteen years enrolled for the final term of 1873 which ran from 29 September to 19 December.<sup>8</sup>

Fresh tenders were called for completion of the bridge, including a central opening span, in September 1873. Once again landowners were called upon to

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<sup>8</sup>First School Attendance Register, Onybigambah Public School. I found this register among many old school records discovered under layers of soot in the ceiling of the school after the 1989 earthquake.

contribute £450, one third of the estimated additional cost and in this connectuion, the Bridge Committee decided to rate the land. Such rating assessment had no legal backing and several wealthy property owners refused to contribute anything. This apparently was one of ...'innumerable petty difficulties (the Bridge Committee had) to contend with ... which include a catalogue of obstacles far too long to introduce here...'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Newcastle Chronicle 19 September 1874

## Chapter 4

**DEVELOPMENT IN ERNEST**

During 1873, there was pressure on the government for additional wharfage for the Port of Newcastle. Most of the city waterfront was occupied by coal loading appliances, which restricted the handling of other cargoes. The government staiths had proved unsuitable, a fact that Mr. Alexander Brown had foreshadowed when he referred to their construction... 'The whole thing was a gigantic piece of folly, ...'

At last, in November 1873, the Department of Public Works called tenders for construction of four sections of wharf at Bullock Island and the successful contractors were Alexander and Robert Amos, trading as A & R Amos.<sup>1</sup>

Thomas Brooks and John Goodsir, trading as Brooks and Goodsir, also won a contract in 1874 to erect four sections of wharf and Messrs A & R Amos obtained another similar contract, making a total of twelve sections. Each section was one hundred feet long, built at intervals of two hundred feet.<sup>2</sup>

In the same year, T. Garrett, Esq., M.L.A. Camden, applied for permission to mine for coal at Bullock Island and also under the waters of Newcastle Harbour between Bullock Island and Honeysuckle Point and Throsby Creek. He subsequently became a director of Wickham and Bullock Island Colliery.

The foundry and engineering establishment of the late John Howden was being carried on by James Morison, Robert Morison and Edwin Bearby and business was increasing. Their specialities were the manufacture of ships pumps, cooking stoves and ovens.

Early in 1875 it was announced that a branch of the Great Northern Railway, to connect the main line with

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<sup>1</sup> Archives Office of N.S.W. - Bonds and Agreements for Contracts 2/934 Item 63

<sup>2</sup> Archives Office of N.S.W. - Bonds and Agreements for Contracts 2/934 Items 72 & 75

the proposed Bullock Island cranes, was to be proceeded with immediately. Orders already had been sent to England for four hydraulic cranes. If these proved successful, a further four would be ordered. It was proposed also to repair four old steam cranes from Queens Wharf and erect them at Bullock Island.

Work on the branch railway proceeded quickly under the supervision of the Superintendent of Permanent Ways and Works, Mr. G. Bewick. The branch commenced a short distance eastward of Hamilton station and continued through Wickham, (a portion of line following the original route still can be seen from Islington high-level bridge) across Throsby Creek, thence by a raised embankment along Cowper Street to the Dyke. The railway embankment virtually divided Bullock Island into two sections, the only crossing being at Young Street.

The bridge across Throsby Creek, near the site of the new road bridge, was constructed by Messrs J & M Burley, the first pile being driven on 7 October 1875<sup>3</sup> It was a substantial wooden structure, about two hundred feet in length and was completed in less than three months.

Residents petitioned for the establishment of a post office and Mr. Duncan Gillies was appointed postmaster on 1 June 1875.<sup>4</sup> He carried out the duties in conjunction with his business as general storekeeper on the corner of Gipps and Cowper Street South. Gillies conveyed mail daily to and from Honeysuckle railway station, which by then, was located opposite Steel Street, Newcastle West, for six pounds per annum.

All the activity on the island and the additional vessels at the Dyke attracted publicans and two public houses were erected and licenced in September 1875; the "Glasgow Arms", licensee Thomas Stephen Cornish, in Cowper Street South where the old building still stands and the "All Nations", licensee Peter James, in Gipps (now Hill) Street, close to the police station site.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Miners Advocate 13 October 1875 p3

<sup>4</sup>Newcastle Chronicle 8 May 1875 p4

<sup>5</sup>Newcastle Regional Public Library - Lists of Publicans' Licences , source of all such references

To complete a progressive year, Mr. Alexander Smith was awarded a contract in December to complete the Bullock Island Bridge to Blane Street. This included closing the opening span with large girders, three-inch planking and a cold-tar asphalt covering.<sup>6</sup>

Worth Place, originally Denison Street, was the Newcastle approach to the bridge. The city end of the bridge was approximately two hundred feet beyond the crossing of the Great Northern Railway and the bridge structure about three hundred and fifty feet long, finishing within the line of Lee Wharf.<sup>7</sup>

Peter James formed the northern approach to the bridge early in 1876. The District Engineer had sufficient funds only for a little over one thousand feet of roadway but he reported that this would extend the road to firm ground and open the bridge for traffic at once.<sup>8</sup> This still left six hundred feet to Smart Street but in September the government found another £2000 for a main road to be constructed along Denison Street. It was reported that 10,000 cubic yards of sand was absorbed to raise the road above tide level, giving some idea of the low contour of that part of the island. Subsequent reports indicated that the road was twenty four feet wide and had stone retaining walls on each embankment.

Although the bridge and main road finally had been provided, access to the city still was difficult because the approach from Blane Street to the bridge was wretched; the Commissioner for Railways refusing to hand over the necessary land to enable council to form the approach.

Regular ferry services from the Dyke continued to be the main transport to the city, the fare being threepence, or sixpence after 10pm.

Tenders were called in April 1876 for the erection of an engine house, boiler house and smoke stack on reclaimed land in Cowper Street midway between the Dyke and Bullock Island, to supply hydraulic power to the new cranes. W.H. Jennings was the successful builder.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Archives Office of N.S.W. - Bonds and Agreements for Contracts 2/934 Item 84

<sup>7</sup> Newcastle Regional Public Library - LHM A623-894/2

<sup>8</sup> Archives Office of N.S.W. - Bonds and Agreements for Contracts 2/934 Item 98

<sup>9</sup> Newcastle Morning Herald 12 July 1876 p3

A licence for a third hotel, the "Sailors Home", was granted to Richard Wilcox in May 1876. This hotel probably was on the western corner of Cowper Street South and Little Young (Lott) Street. The licence transferred to Henry Sharp in 1880 but the annual licence issued to Sharp in 1884 was for the Clyde Hotel which certainly was on that site. There was no further licence issued for a "Sailors Home Hotel", the change of name possibly because of the opening of the Coult's Sailors Home at 88 Scott Street, Newcastle in 1883. In 1925 the "Clyde" became the Carrington Branch Institute of the Newcastle Seamen's Mission.

Construction of the Dyke continued and by the end of 1876 Daniel Sheehy was filling the spaces between jetties No.1 to No.6 and Messrs Brooks and Goodsir the spaces between jetties No.6 to No.9 to provide a continuous length of wharf.

Foundations for the first four hydraulic cranes, which had arrived aboard the barque "Downiemount", were being formed. The cranes were to be erected at three hundred feet intervals and each had a lifting capacity of fifteen tons.

Morison and Bearby's new commodious building, adjacent to the old Howden forge, was in production early in 1877, employing between forty and fifty workers. As well as building small engines for steamers, the firm also cast the cap for the first accumulator at the hydraulic engine house. Ornamental castings for verandahs were another speciality.

Anticipating the development of the island, religious denominations started applying for land. The first areas were dedicated on 13 March 1877; three roods in Gipps Street for the Roman Catholic Church and Presbytery and three roods, two in Young Street for the Church of England and one in Denison Street for the Parsonage. One could hardly say that the government was generous in granting these sites: the Roman Catholic area was in swampland and the Church of England area comprised low mangrove scrub.

In the same Gazette, a small section of land bordering Adam's grant was added to the school area. The school was proving too small for the increasing number of students and tenders had been called for certain additions. An average of seventy two students

attended and Mr. Macara was being assisted by his wife.

A fourth publican, Robert Downie, Senior, applied for a liquor licence for an establishment in Little Young (Lott) Street to be called the "Rampant Lion Hotel". G.H.V. Shelters now occupies the site.

At last, in July 1877, work commenced to upgrade the approach from Blane Street to the Bullock Island Bridge.

By the end of 1877, the first section of the hydraulic powerhouse (as the engine house came to be called) was nearing completion. Only the central engine room, the western boiler room and smoke stack were constructed in the original contract but foundations were laid for an eastern boiler room should increased trade require it. The four cranes were ready and the hydraulic pipes laid. Due to the absence of a reticulated water supply, a large steel elevated reservoir was erected near the Hamilton railway junction so that good quality water, filtered through sand from the adjacent Wickham swamps, could be piped continuously to the hydraulic powerhouse.

Four more cranes had been ordered from England; two with a lifting capacity of fifteen tons and two capable of twenty five tons.

Opening services were conducted in St. Thomas' Church of England on 20 December 1877. The church, constructed by Mr. Smith, a contractor from the Manning River district, is reported to have had concrete foundations to the pillars on which the building rested. It was described as a fine wooden building, one of the most complete churches in the district, with roof lined semi-gothic with cedar. The exerting force behind the establishment was the Rev. John Dixon. Despite the liberality of the church-going people on the island, the opening report stated that further £300 donations would be welcomed with as little delay as possible.

## Chapter 5

**A NEW ERA**

Mr. E. O. Moriarty, by then Engineer-in-Chief, Harbours and Rivers, visited the port on 20 February 1878, inspected the hydraulic powerhouse, tested the cranes with nine and 15 ton lifts and accepted possession from the contractors. Next day he weight-tested one of the cranes with an 18 ton lift, which was handled with ease.

The "Araby Maid" became the first vessel to load coal at the Dyke when it took in coal stiffening at No.6 crane on 14 March 1878 before discharging a locomotive intended for use on the G.N.R.

However, the honour of loading the first coal cargo went to the barque "Downiemount" which commenced loading Lambton coal for Adelaide at 4pm on 19 March 1878 at No.7 crane. This was the vessel which had brought the cranes from England on its previous visit to the port.

Onebygamba, Bullock Island, had by this time an unenviable notoriety for midnight noise and brawling so tenders were called for the erection of a police watch house, the contract going to Mr. W. Dart.<sup>1</sup>

*Knaggs Almanac 1878* advised that the Dyke then comprised 2800 feet of wharf in one continuous length and seven sections each one hundred feet long. Vessels made good use of the wharf and ballast must have been in plentiful supply. On 14 January 1879, seventeen vessels were berthed along the Dyke.

Further land was dedicated for religious purposes in 1878 and early 1879. Two small sections between Bourke and Gipps Streets, each sharing the northern boundary of Adam's grant, were allocated for a Presbyterian Church and Manse while opposite, a small section between Gipps and Little Young (Rodgers) Streets, also bordering Adam's grant, was allocated for a Wesleyan Church. Both allocations appear to have had some dry ground but the three roods dedicated for a Primitive Methodist Church and Minister's

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<sup>1</sup> N.S.W. Govt. Gazette 27 August 1878 - No.262 p3390

Residence on the north-west corner of Hargrave and Gipps Streets appeared on early maps as mangrove swamp.

Additional boilers and machinery for extensions to the hydraulic powerhouse arrived in February 1879 and preparations began on foundations for extra cranes.

A quarter of an acre on the corner of Young and Victoria Streets was set aside in June 1879 for a School of Arts. This was much less than the acre sought but the government felt that in view of the valuable nature of the land in that locality, the allocation was as large as could with propriety be granted.

With incorporation into a municipality delayed only because of a lack of the statutory number of residents, in the same month an Improvement Committee was elected to oversee the requirements of the island. It comprised Messrs. J. Rodgers, Boden, Muirhead, Bearby, J. Scott, Wallwork, Miller, Gillies, Morison, McCann, Cowen and McAlpin.<sup>2</sup>

Construction of the Mariners Welcome Good Templar Hall began in August 1879 in a central position in Denison Street. This came to be known as the Temperance Hall and became the central meeting place of residents.

On 24 October 1879, a new brick public school... 'about the handsomest structure on the island...' was opened on a half-acre lot on the corner of Young and Robertson Streets, adjacent to the original wooden school and there was sufficient land on the site for an additional wing when required. This lot had been purchased in July 1878 from Mr. Walter William Capper, a city solicitor, who "kindly" let the Council of Education have it for £1000. The lot originally had been purchased from the government for £23 in September 1865. The Council was advised that similar land in 1878 was fetching £3000 per acre. Members of the Local School Board were Messrs. D, McAlpin (Chairman), G, Murdoch, John Scott and James Scott. Under the same contract, a teacher's residence was provided.

Onebygamba by then had a population of almost 500 people. The first four hydraulic cranes were busily

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<sup>2</sup> N/cle Morning Herald 5 July 1879 p5

employed and four more were under construction. Spacing between the latter cranes had been increased because of the larger vessels being loaded. As the cranes were stationary, it was necessary for vessels to haul along the wharf during loading in order to retain stability and there were reports that sometimes it was necessary for them to swing at the berth because of restrictions to hauling.

Brooks and Goodsir were awarded another contract in November 1879 to add 500 feet of continuous wharf southward of the existing Dyke wharf as well as filling in 200 feet between jetties Nos. 9 & 10.

One of the new twenty-five ton hydraulic cranes was used for the first time in June 1880 to dismantle buckets, gear and shaft from the dredge "Newcastle". This would have been the crane which later became No.11, in line with Cowper Street, because adjacent to it, Joseph Martindale had contracted to excavate and construct a boat harbour which was to serve two purposes: firstly, to accommodate the many small boats which called at the island and secondly to provide a safe mooring for lifeboats from vessels loading coal at the Dyke. Evidently these lifeboats frequently were removed during loading operations to prevent damage.

Problems of the time are portrayed by such happenings as a large fire on Bullock Island at 10.30pm on 3 June 1880. The No.3 fire unit from Newcastle attended. Unfortunately the home was destroyed but the firemen saved the adjoining property. Fire units at that time were primitive hand pumps equipped with water tanks and hauled by volunteers. They were supported financially by the local populace. In this case it was reported that insurance companies were not subsidising the fire brigade yet the saving of the property spared an insurance pay-out of at least £500. The newspaper reporter, on hearing the fire alarm...'launched himself into the saddle and was in the locality within twenty minutes...' along with many equestrian and other spectators.

An area of 14½ perches on the eastern side of Denison Street adjacent to the northern end of the Bullock Island Bridge was promulgated as a recreation reserve on 11 October 1880 and placed under the control of the Newcastle Rowing Club which recently had erected a new clubhouse nearby.

The ballast depot in Hargrave Street was handed over to the Improvement Committee to manage but within a few months, the introduction of a wharfage tax on ballast seriously restricted supplies from shipping and it was left to the smelting works at Port Waratah to provide much of the early fill material.

No doubt this led to the deputation to the Minister for Works early in 1881 for a bridge at the northern end of Young Street. The Bullock Island Bridge also was proving inadequate. From early contract reports the bridge was only sixteen feet wide and as the island progressed, had become too narrow and unsafe for present traffic. It was reported as dangerous for women and children when vehicles were "flying" over it.

On 6 May 1881, the s.s. "Lennox" sailed for Hong Kong with the "largest ever" cargo of coal; 2785 tons (2830 tonnes). The vessel drew 22 feet 1 inch, also a record and... 'did not touch bottom.' What a difference to the record set on 22 January 1996 by the "Iron Pacific"; 183 904 tonnes (180 999 tons) with a draught of 15.49 metres (50 feet 10 inches).

A big occasion was the lighting of the Dyke with gaslight on 1 July 1881. The spin-off was that it gave residents also the opportunity of using gas and several houses on the island lit up on the same evening.

Early in 1882, money was provided to upgrade Young Street and W.P.J. Monie won a contract to build a small wooden bridge across Throsby Creek at William Street with a narrow roadway through the mangroves to connect with Elizabeth Street, Tighes Hill.

Almost half an acre eventually was dedicated for a School of Arts in November 1882 on the site bounded by Young, Victoria and Little Denison (Thornton) Street. The trustees, who had been appointed in July 1880 were John Booth, Robert Muirhead, James Morison, Thomas Scott and Joseph Boden.

Henry Limeburner, a waterman, started a penny ferry service from near the A.A. Company's wharf to the Dyke End with his row boat. I was unable to trace the year this service commenced but *Knaggs Almanac* first recorded it in the 1883 edition.

A Sailors' Bethal opened in Young Street on 14 June 1883. The site, granted by the government, was on the southern side of the present post office and funds had been provided by Dr. Richard Harris, Government Medical Officer and Health Officer for the Port of Newcastle, whose philanthropy was eulogised at the opening ceremony. Object of the Bethal was the physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual well-being of all mariners.

Scott Brothers launched the steamer "Myall" from their shipyard in November 1883. This was the first ocean-going steamer built on the island and was fitted with engines manufactured by Morison and Bearby.

## Chapter 6

**THE COAL ERA**

Wickham Bullock Island Coal Mining Company, which had commenced operations in 1883 by sinking a shaft at Wickham, adjacent to the Bullock Island railway, commenced sinking another shaft on 19 May 1884. this time on the island near the corner of Cowper and Fitzroy Streets. Originally the company attempted to sink the shaft on Cowper Street but the Improvement Committee successfully had this halted. But the committee's wish... 'that the system of underground coal pilfering, which obtains in other parts of the district, will not be introduced to Bullock Island...' was not granted. Despite petitions to the Minister for Mines, Figure ? shows that much of the island subsequently was undermined. The main fear of the islanders was surface instability and this did occur in Darvall Street in 1896 and at the corner of Young and Hargrave Streets as discussed later.

During 1884, terrace houses were built by Mr. Rodgers and Mr. Miller, the latter being in Little Young (Lott) Street south of the Rampant Lion Hotel. This could be the terrace still in existence. Some twenty other houses had been erected in different parts of the island.

Late in the year a School of Arts Committee was formed to canvass subscriptions. It comprised H. Hurman, Chairman, T.A.Lindsay, Secretary pro tem, J.S.Rodgers, Treasurer, G.Gibson, ..Merrilees, Jas. Scott, F.Ash, B.Lindsay, J.Lawson and J.Allen.

Great inconvenience was being experienced by passengers at the ferry landing at the Dyke when large vessels overlapped and mooring lines crossed the landing steps. Ladies frequently had to climb up and down the face of the wharf as best they could; quite a feat considering the clothing ladies wore at that time.

Another disastrous fire at 1am 30 December 1884 destroyed two homes; one owned by Walter Campbell, engineer at the hydraulic powerhouse. The Honeysuckle Point brigade was the first to arrive and the City brigade also attended but all they could do was prevent the spread of the fire. The fire prompted the

calling of a meeting of property owners and residents early in 1885 to consider formation of a local brigade. While it was admitted that the city brigades had attended the fire as promptly as could be expected, the time lost in travelling had contributed to the loss of Campbell's home. Although the meeting was not well attended, it was resolved... 'That the time had arrived when a fire engine should be procured and a brigade organised on the Island.' A committee comprising Messrs Bearby, Chairman; E. Morison, Treasurer; H. Hurman, Secretary; Gibson, Cowan, J. S. Rodgers, J. W. Scott, H. Sharp and R. Morison was formed to carry out the resolution.<sup>3</sup>

Morison and Bearby started contributions with an amount of five pounds but a report a fortnight later stated that the collectors were not having great success in raising the £100 required.

In record time, the sinking of the Wickham Bullock Island Coal Company (WBICC) shaft was completed to a depth of 227 feet 3 inches by 28 January 1885. The coal seam was nineteen feet thick and above it was 100 feet of hard shaley rock and post, which formed an admirable roof for safe working of the mine.

According to a census taken by Senior Constable O'Meara, there were 1256 residents by March 1885. Another engineering company, Messrs Hughes, Merrilees and Rodgers commenced operations... 'opposite No. 16 hydraulic wharf...', which would have been at the eastern end of Hargrave Street.

Regularly I came across reports giving some idea of conditions the early residents endured. Early in 1885, a causeway was formed well above high water mark in Little Young Street, running from the Rampant Lion Hotel, past Miller's block of new cottages and joining on to one already made running down to Scott Brothers' shipyard. The report stated this improvement would enable residents in the locality to approach their houses during high tide without having to make considerable detour. 'Slowly but surely, we are rising out of the slough (swamp); consequently we don't despond of some day seeing the whole of the streets reclaimed, and macadamised too, well above the wash of the tide.'

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Wickham Council had been trying for years to convince the government to provide another bridge across Throsby Creek to facilitate access to Bullock Island for its residents and those of surrounding districts. It had sought the support of the Bullock Island Improvement Committee as early as 1879. With development of two coal mines imminent, approval finally was given for a bridge to link with Darvall Street and June 1885 found the Scott Brothers busily driving the piles. Mr. Dilsworth won the contract for steelwork.

Peter and Michael Callen, trading as Callen Brothers, won a contract for construction of 700 feet of wharfage at the Dyke in June 1885. This contract involved further filling in of spaces between ballast jetties to increase the length of continuous wharfage almost to Hargrave Street. Earlier in the year, the firm had constructed at least fifteen small mooring dolphins at the upper end of the Dyke.

Morris Light, who subsequently had a large store in Hunter Street West and pioneered the introduction of interest-free terms, opened his original drapery store in Cowper Street, in 1885.

Following a dispute over coal trimmers at the Dyke, the Newcastle Coal Trimmers Union was formed in July 1885 and set rates for day and night work. President was S.Tarrant; Vice President W.Haynes; Treasurer ..Williams and Secretary W.Marsden.

A conditional licence was granted to William Densley for the Cross Keys Hotel to be erected on the corner opposite Morison and Bearby. The site to-day is occupied by the Seven Seas Hotel.

Thomas Walsh built Walsh's Family Hotel in Young Street; now Carrington House. The interior fittings were all of polished cedar and of excellent workmanship and design. No expense had been spared by the proprietor in his endeavour to make the hotel second to none in the district for style and comfort.

A southern wing was added to the Glasgow Arms Hotel, another hotel which compared with many of the leading hotels in the city.

The "Belgic" became the largest vessel to visit Newcastle when it berthed at No.9 Dyke in October 1885

on its maiden voyage. Described as a superior passenger steamship, the vessel was 420 feet long with a draught of 29 feet 6 inches and a gross tonnage of 4712 tons. It had discharged 550 passengers at Sydney and after discharging a part cargo at the Dyke, loaded 4080 tons of coal for San Francisco.

Surface buildings for the Wickham Bullock Island colliery were completed and work commenced connecting the Bullock Island shaft with the original shaft at Wickham.

Hetton Colliery also had started surface work on the small island between the eastern end of Adam's grant and the Dyke. The company's mineral purchase consisted of about 1400 acres, mostly under the harbour and the ocean in the vicinity of Nobbys and had first been applied for some thirteen years earlier by Messrs William Australia Steel, who had proven the existence of the seam; Mr. Hannell, local M.L.A.; Mr. Tighe, Mayor of Newcastle and Mr. Hutchinson, who subsequently became chairman of the company. Difficulty in obtaining land upon which to sink the shaft caused the delay. Morison and Bearby manufactured the first section of cylinders and sinking of the shaft was commenced by the contractor, Mr. Hugh Walker, in December 1885.

Members of the local band turned out for the first time on 31 December 1885 and played a selection of march music along the main road. However, on New Years Eve, ... 'not a drum was heard'.

WBICC commenced full operations on the island in January 1886 and Hughes, Merrilees and Rodgers had more than doubled the size of their original workshop, their workforce having increased to twenty. Further extensions were contemplated and more machinery had been ordered from England. By now, the firm was specialising in steam boilers, as well as machinery, plate rolling, blacksmithing and castings.

Callen Brothers in January 1886 were granted a permissive occupancy of two acres at the north end of the Dyke and established a depot there. The southern boundary of the area would have been in close proximity to the northern extremity of the present No.5 Dyke.

The Darvall Street bridge had been completed in November 1885 and approval was announced in January 1886 for the contractor, Mr. Flynn, to resume work on the approaches. The Onebygamba approach from Denison Street was long and through swamp and was to take many years before it was raised above the Spring Tides.

To-day, the first indication of a fire is generally the sound of the siren as the engine leaves the fire station. Our forefathers, lacking our sophisticated means of communication, developed their own primitive, but effective means. Take for example the fire at the store of Mr. John Rose in Robertson Street on 25 January 1886:-

At about 3 o'clock yesterday morning the firing of three guns on Fortification Hill, the ringing of the Honeysuckle Point fire bell, followed immediately after by the city fire bell and the shrill whistling of the locomotives in the Government yard, rudely startled the inhabitants from their sleep, who speedily realised the fact that the fire fiend was again at his ruthless work...In an astonishing short space of time, considering the distance the panting firemen had to drag their engines - in the case of the city engine, fully two miles - the engines arrived... the city engine dragged by quite a host of pretty well-pumped firemen, Newcastle citizens and sailors.

Once again the question of a fire engine for the island was raised, especially in view of the development taking place.

The Newcastle Wallsend Coal Company disposed of its strip of land bordering the southern boundary of the Scottish Australian Mining Company's holding in Forbes Street to James S. Rodgers (ironfounder) in March 1886 for £1200

Peter James, licensee of the All Nations Hotel, commenced an omnibus service to Bullock Island. I was unable to trace the year this took place. There was no mention of the service among the list of licences issued by Newcastle City Council in November 1883 but there is mention of it in March 1885 and a timetable was given with other services in May 1886: Newcastle to Bullock Island 9.52 and generally every hour till 9pm; fare threepence.

Mr. J.W.Scott retired from the shipbuilding business in 1886 and in partnership with his brother, opened a store. This probably was on the corner of Young and Robertson Streets because he was granted permission in 1889 to erect a twelve-foot colonnade at that location.

Another businessman on the island at that time was Thomas Daniel Winterbine, who conducted a very successful butcher shop, doing a large family trade throughout the district.

## Chapter 7

**CARRINGTON**

On 9 September 1886, a petition for incorporation under the Municipalities Act, bearing 214 signatures, was forwarded to the Hon. James Fletcher, Minister for Mines, for presentation to the government. Residents already had received permission to call the municipality CARRINGTON, after the Governor of New South Wales, Baron Carrington.

The petition was published in the *N.S.W. Government Gazette No.589* on Friday 15 October 1886. In reporting this, the *Newcastle Morning Herald* stated...'The contemplated change embraces the whole of the territory erstwhile known as Bullock Island, a bygone cognomen, henceforth to be whispered with bated breath, if not altogether tabooed from polite society.' Despite these sentiments, the paper continued using the name and even as late as 1896, included in its list of agents G.Wilson, Bullock Island. But the prize for perpetuating the name must go to the Department of Railways which still had a rail freight to Double Junction, Bullock Island, when I retired in 1982.

Because of the agitation by local residents and those of several adjacent areas where mining was taking place or contemplated, a Royal Commission had been appointed to inquire into the condition of the collieries. The Commission extended its investigation to include the prospective working of coal under the harbour and Pacific Ocean and in this regard recommended an increase in the ordinary margin considered sufficient for the safety of a mine. It specified that no attempt was to be made to recover coal pillars.

Despite the exhaustive inquiry, Onebygambians were not happy and pressed for the township to be incorporated as quickly as possible. It was believed that Wickham Bullock Island Colliery was mining under Cowper Street and intended to mine under Young Street. An elected council was considered to have a greater chance of having such mining stopped.

By January 1887, Callen Brothers had completed another northern extension of the Dyke. This included filling

in the spaces between the existing wharf and jetty No.17 and between jetties 17 and 18, taking the continuous wharf north of William Street.

On 14 January 1887, the Hetton Colliery shaft pierced the coal seam at 215 feet. The shaft had passed firstly through sand and water; then 120 feet of strong blue clay, 52 feet of hard grey post rock and one foot of strong blue shale, claimed to be an excellent roof and a guarantee that there was no fear of the harbour being drained; a common misconception by many locals.

The coal seam proved to be 21 feet 9 inches thick.

Mr. Alexander Mathieson, the company's engineer, after whom Mathieson Street is named and whose former residence "Sunnybrae" still stands next to the fire station, had been busy with construction of the surface structures and three egg-end boilers manufactured by Hughes, Merrilees and Rodgers were ready for installation. The firm had by now built commodious premises at the upper end of the Dyke and had extensive plant.

Following gazettal of the Municipal District of Carrington, the government appointed Mr. H.J.Hurman Returning Officer for the first municipal election. Nominations for aldermen were called on 21 May and polling took place on 28 May 1887 at the Temperance Hall, there being fourteen nominations for the nine positions. The elected aldermen were George Butts, Thomas Garrett, George Gibson, James Hughes, Robert McCann, James Morison, James Stuart Rodgers, Henry Sharp and Thomas Taylor.

In the midst of the excitement of electing the first council, Rt.Rev.Dr. Murray, Bishop of Maitland, opened the Roman Catholic school/church in Gipps Street on 22 May. Mr F.B.Menkens was the architect and Messrs McDonald and Nicholl the contractors for the double-purpose building.

Council met for the first time on 1 June 1887 and J.S.Rodgers elected Mayor. Mrs. Rodgers, the first Mayoress, was a daughter of the late John Howden.

At a subsequent early meeting, F.D.Mitcalfe, who had been acting as Council Clerk, was appointed to the position at a salary of £50 per annum, payable

quarterly. His hours of attendance were 3pm to 5pm on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Early council meetings were held in the Temperance Hall while tenders were called for temporary premises for council chambers. The offer of John Burgess of a furnished room, with gas, in Young Street for six shillings per week was accepted and taken for a term of six months.

Council, with very limited funds, faced a daunting task. There was no sanitation, very little drainage and according to a report in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on 13 August 1887, the state of the roads abominable. The main road (Denison Street) was greatly in need of repair while Young and other streets were... 'veritable Sloughs of Despond'. Cowper Street, from the wharf, was almost impassable and the paper suggested a light might help pedestrians pick their way without bogging. Many residents were unable to go outside their doors without getting up to their knees in mud; thus one reads in the Minutes of early council meetings of permission being given for Wm. Moore to erect a footbridge from his residence to Young Street and later an alderman stated he would endeavour to have approaches made to those places, where, at high tide, the husband had to carry his wife out on his back when she wished to go anywhere.

Fortunately early agreement was reached with Mr. Hickson, Resident Civil Engineer, Harbours and Rivers Department, for council to have ballast privileges provided the ballast was used only for streets and lanes. This was of great assistance to the council, especially when it was necessary to have stone retaining walls on the sides of many built-up streets to keep the filling in place, but did not help the many residents trying to raise their properties above water level.

Open drains were another source of complaint. As one candidate for an aldermanic seat had told voters ... 'Now the tidal waters came up and carried off the filth, but as soon as the streets were made, all the garbage and filth would be dammed up'... He proposed that drainage and street making should be carried out simultaneously.

There is a report of such a problem in front of houses in Robertson Street. People were emptying all kinds

of slops and soapsuds in the drain and the tide was not strong enough to flush it, even after stirring up. There was an overpowering stench and one resident claimed that three of his children had cholera and two had bronchitis. His claim was supported by the local doctor who stated that conditions were such that they could breed fever at any time.

This situation would not have been helped by the fact that most residences at the time relied on cesspits to receive human excrement and much percolated through the ground. It was not uncommon for water in nearby wells to be contaminated.

Partial reclamation of areas created lagoons and these became a source of annoyance. One such was the lagoon created by the joining of the Dyke with Robertson and Cowper Streets. Government help was sought to provide a "communication" between the lagoon and tidal waters but the government considered this a council problem even though the lagoon had been created by government projects. Later, the southern portion was reclaimed with dredging from The Basin but a portion near the corner of Robertson and Bourke Streets was not reclaimed until 1932.

Another area was east of Denison Street, where great pools of stagnant water were common. Drains were opened under the main road and it was claimed the constant ebb and flow of the tide would make these places more wholesome.

Still another man-made swamp existed east of Little Bourke (Scott) Street between Hargrave and Robertson Streets. This, in due course, had "communication" with the harbour via a large pipeline adjacent to the footbridge which connected Robertson Street with the Dyke and a portion of the pipeline still protrudes through the foreshore midway between the bases of No.14 crane and the McMyler Hoist. Many an hour I spent swimming or paddling my tin canoe in this waterhole, especially during the Christmas school holidays, when the Spring Tides gave it a good cleaning. It also was reclaimed in 1932.

At least one bright light greeted council in its early months. Repositioning of shunting points and provision of additional rail lines to feed the last four hydraulic cranes being erected at the northern end of the Dyke made it necessary in August 1887 for

the Railway Department to provide a gas lamp at the Young Street crossing, the first street lighting in the municipality.

Communication with the city also was improving. Omnibuses now ran every half hour from 8am; the last bus home 11.30pm.

Council had the value of all rateable properties within the municipality assessed and determined a rate of one shilling in the pound. Fifty appeals were lodged against the valuations but most were sustained. A petition signed by 217 ratepayers then sought a rebate of rates for the portion of the year before incorporation but this was not legally possible.

Undaunted, council sought approval to borrow £4000 at low interest, to get works moving and determined that the level of the rail crossing at Cowper and Young Streets was to be the basis for all street levels, with all streets east of Young Street to have a slight fall towards the harbour and those to the west to have a slight fall towards Throsby Creek for drainage purposes. Later, levels as shown on plans submitted by Mr. Arch Gardiner, who had been granted the surveying contract for a tender of seven pounds, were adopted.

While council was coming to terms with its early problems, development continued at the Dyke. In July 1887, J.S.Rodgers' Newcastle Foundry won a contract to lengthen the jibs of the four hydraulic cranes being erected, to make them more suitable to handle the larger vessels coming to the port. This additional cost exhausted the Vote for harbour improvements and erection of the cranes was to be discontinued but strong local representation, supported by the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce, convinced government to continue the work. Unfortunately this caused many Harbour and Rivers Department employees to be dismissed.

Carrington Council seized upon this opportunity and sought approval from the Colonial Secretary to employ a large proportion of the dismissed men on stone breaking for road making purposes. This was granted and council had the benefit of a 50% wages subsidy from the Casual Labour Board for almost three months.

F.D.Mitcalfe, the Council Clerk, on 3 November 1887, also was appointed Engineer, Surveyor and Clerk of Works, providing his own instruments, at a salary of £110 per annum, payable quarterly. He had no stated hours but was expected to do all the engineering work for council, including surveying, taking levels, making plans and sections, specifications as required, to inspect all work being carried out and give certificates for same.

In the same month, Alderman George Gibson, a stevedore and many years a resident in Gipps Street with considerable property interests on the island, drowned when he fell into the harbour from the Dyke.

James Hughes was granted a licence for Hughes' Family Hotel in November 1887. This was on the corner of Robertson and Bourke Streets. The basement was constructed with large blocks of Lambton stone and a spacious colonnade and balcony faced the two streets. In 1889 the licence transferred to Thomas Smith and the hotel became a popular meeting place. A report of one such meeting in 1890 referred to Smith's Carrington Hotel and on 11 October 1892, a Coronial Inquest was held at Smith's Carrington Club Hotel, which became the official name when the 1892 licence was approved in November.

*Government Gazette* No.736, page 8444, 20 December 1887, announced the dedication of 15 acres of the Quarantine Reserve at North Carrington as a recreation reserve. This area, north of William Street and between Throsby Creek and the prolongation of Bourke Street (which in early planning was to extend to the northern extremity of the island) was similar to most gratuitous government grants on the island - at least 50% was low swampy ground and mangroves. It later was transformed into the site of a fine oval and a cycling velodrome.

As 1887 drew to a close, an Indignation Meeting of ratepayers was called to protest against the manner in which the streets were being formed and a Vigilance Committee was chosen to monitor council activities.

## Chapter 8

**THE CENTENARY YEAR**

Alexander Mathieson was elected in January 1888 to fill the council vacancy caused by the death of George Gibson. He admitted to being a rebel and had acted as chairman of the Vigilance Committee.

The various streets and lanes were surveyed through Adam's grant and it was left to council to determine compensation with the owners of the allotments absorbed by such streets and advise the Crown. Ultimately the government allocated £4000 towards compensation but this lapsed in 1890 when agreement could not be reached with the land owners, the Scottish Australian Mining Company.

I am not aware when "paid holidays" were first introduced but the first Carrington council must have been well to the fore. Labourers petitioned council for a day's pay for 26 January 1888, the celebration of the centenary of the colony and council agreed.

Although approval had been received to borrow £4000, council decided not to overborrow and first debentures were for £600 only.

Another engineering works is mentioned in disputes over street priorities. The Hunter River Engineering Works apparently was located in the northern section of the island and William Street (the early formation of it was hotly disputed) was the nearest and/or only street giving access to the works and Callen Brothers' slip. Of course the street also gave access to Alderman Garrett's prime site.

Alderman Garrett lost his position on council at the first annual election, the new alderman being David Scott, an ironmoulder at the Hunter River Engineering Works.

Mr. Mitcalfe tendered his resignation as Council Clerk and Engineer on 1 March. He stated that his council appointments had taken up the whole of his time. Esmond Hannell succeeded him as council clerk.

Council also had a change of treasurers in March 1888, when there was a change of managers at the Australian

Joint Stock Bank. The policy of the council's bank manager being treasurer existed for many years.

In the same month, council invited designs for council chambers from local architects. It was advised by F.B.Menken that he had no intention of participating.

With an average attendance of 176 from the 242 students enrolled at the public school, the Department of Public Instruction in April awarded a contract to Myers and Thomson to build an infants school at a cost of £450.

First coal from Hetton Colliery was loaded into wagons on 3 April 1888.

One of the last four hydraulic cranes to be erected on the Dyke was used for the first time on 16 April. The cranes had been completed for almost six months but provision of rail facilities had been delayed because of the arduous work of reclaiming low-lying land.

Now that these cranes were in service, four of the steam cranes at Queens Wharf were removed and three of them re-erected at the southern end of the Dyke. This was part of the government plan to concentrate all coal loading at Carrington and free wharves on the southern side of the harbour for other merchandise.

An area of two roods eleven perches of land on the corner of Young and Hargrave Streets was dedicated for a .. 'Town Hall site, Town of Onebygamba (Carrington)' on 15 May 1888.

Callen Brothers were awarded a contract in June for two ballast jetties and six mooring jetties roughly parallel to the A.A.Co's wharves; the start of the Dyke End wharf.

Esmond Hannell tendered his resignation as Council Clerk on 29 June 1888 and a month later Mr. J. Abel was appointed to that position and Clerk of Works at a rate of £75 per annum. Once again this must have been in the form of a contract because the mayor explained to council that the mail was left at his place because of council not having the whole services of the council clerk.

Approval was given for the renaming of the post office from Onybigambah to Carrington as from 6 July 1888.

Earlier, the Postmaster General had called tenders for postal premises and had agreed to lease premises in Young Street offered by John Burgess, next door to the premises being used as temporary council chambers. The lease was for two years from 1 July 1888 and the official post and telegraph office opened on 6 August in charge of William J. Gwynne who had been transferred from the Pelican Flat Post Office.

The telegraph line to connect... 'the important and rising suburb of Carrington...' with Newcastle had been erected along Denison Street a few months earlier.

Mr. Geo. Lane had his tender of £410 for building the council chambers in accordance with the plans and specifications of Mr. G. Saunders, accepted on 7 September.

On 19 September, *The Newcastle Herald* reported that the benefits of incorporation were appearing. Streets formerly impassable were now fit for traffic and many other improvements had been, or were nearing, completion, including installation of drain pipes to replace some open drains.

To make most use of its limited funds, council adopted various temporary solutions to problems. At first, the wide major roads were formed and metalled with small broken stone to a width of only 24 feet; about one-third of their surveyed width. In Little Gipps (Mathieson) Street, the section between Hargrave and Robertson Streets was formed one foot above high water, the top nine inches being smelting works ashes, while the section between Robertson Street and Adam's boundary was approved at ten feet wide and only six inches above high water, providing the cost did not exceed £20. At that time, advertisements in *The Newcastle Herald* offered men's tweed suits from seventeen shillings and sixpence to forty shillings and trousers from four shillings and eleven pence to ten shillings and sixpence.

The alignment of some streets and lanes was delayed because council considered it not warranted to procure a flat-bottomed punt to peg them out in the water.

To-day, most of the Newcastle Harbour foreshores, including Carrington, have a datum of ten feet above

low water, which means about three feet above the Spring Tides.

Further financial problems faced council in September when the Denison Street bridge was declared unsafe for heavy traffic. Contractors were forced to travel via the Darvall Street bridge, resulting in fewer loads per day. Naturally they sought additional rates for cartage, much to the annoyance of council because government contractors were given exemption from the unsafe ruling when they sought similar compensation.

At a special meeting of council on 10 October 1888, the mayor was authorised to sign an agreement with the government for a water supply to the island. Council was to be charged as per meter at Denison Street and it would then charge consumers two shillings and threepence per 1000 gallons.

Alderman Hughes certainly contributed to the development of Carrington. In October 1888, he was building six brick terrace houses in Gipps Street at the corner with Hargrave Street and almost in front of a fine large house he had just completed (possibly 55 Gipps Street). In 2½ years he had built 35 places, including the Family Hotel.

A three-months miners' strike which restricted coal loading, together with the gradual technological advancement of water ballast replacing dry ballast, caused a shortage of material for foreshore reclamation and the Mayors of Newcastle, Carrington and other municipalities formed a deputation to the Minister for Works to try to have the large quantity of silt which was being dumped daily at sea, utilised for reclamation of the foreshores of the harbour. In October, the Minister advised that he had sent to England for a dredge which he considered would deliver a large quantity of material at a cheaper cost.

The Primitive Methodist Church in Hargrave Street, a weatherboard building 35 feet by 25 feet, lined throughout and with gothic windows, was opened at a public meeting on 23 October and first services were on 28 October 1888. According to long-time resident Dick Tressider, the building faced Hargrave Street near Rodgers Street.

It is very clear from early Council Minutes that much action on business coming before council was left to

the mayor to handle. He also made many independent decisions and had them approved at subsequent meetings. The purchase of ballast was left almost entirely to the mayor who also made arrangements with the Harbour Master for convenient discharge berths.

Alderman Sharp was the next casualty on council. After being absent from meetings for three months without leave of absence, his seat was declared vacant and subsequently filled by Frederick Roberts.

Rev. R. East preached the opening service of the Wesleyan Church in Little Young (Rodgers) Street on 18 November. The church was described as a commodious wooden building on stone foundations and was crowded for the opening services. This gave Carrington five places of public worship.

Morison and Bearby continued to expand and in November were adding another large shed to their premises.

Between 30 and 40 gentlemen attended a banquet given by the mayor at the new Council Chambers on 21 December 1888 for the official opening of the building. As was customary at that time, many speeches were given and numerous toasts drunk, but one excerpt from Alderman Taylor is worth repeating. He alluded to the swampy nature of the island at the time of the land sales in 1865 and told of being asked what the owner of a lot adjacent to his intended to do with it. He said he understood it was proposed to build a church later on, to which the enquirer suggested that an asylum would be more appropriate; to hold **all** those who had bought land.

I wonder if any of those attending the banquet had to sit on the two forms council had included for ratepayers use, when approving the purchase of furniture for the new building?

Council met for the first time in its new headquarters on 28 December 1888.

## Chapter 9

**NEWCASTLE HARBOUR IMPROVEMENT ACT 1889**

At the council elections in February 1889, J.S.Rodgers and Thomas Taylor were returned but Thomas Garrett won the third position at the expense of Fred. Roberts. Council elections at that time were held every twelve months, with one third of the aldermen retiring.

Alexander Mathieson became the second Mayor of Carrington.

Administering the new water supply created a few early problems for council. Four major water users, the hydraulic powerhouse, Hetton Colliery, Morison and Bearby and James Russell had been connected and privately metered. Late in 1888, council had provided a horse trough and standpipe near the corner of Young and Cowper Streets and in February 1889 provided similar "amenities" in Robertson Street. Within a month, the taking of water from standpipes was banned until council determined the following rates and conditions:-

Water to be available between 11am and 1pm and from 3pm to 5pm each day except Sundays.

4 buckets	one penny
1 cask	sixpence (five cents)
200 gallon tank	one shilling (ten cents)
300 " "	one shilling and sixpence
400 " "	two shillings
Horse, per week	sixpence
Each bus team	one shilling

Mr. W. McMiles was granted permission to connect water to his bakery in Little Denison Street.

The progress of Carrington was confirmed by an announcement in the *Government Gazette* on 9 April that a Government Savings Bank would open on 1 May 1889.

Tenders were invited from finishing carpenters and joiners in April for erection and completion of five shops and dwelling houses for W. Henderson, who owned two large blocks in Cowper Street South between Young and Denison Streets. These buildings became known as Henderson Terrace and two remain.

Undoubtedly the big event for the island in 1889 was the passing of the "Newcastle Harbour Improvement Act"

by the Legislative Council on 17 April. This provided for various port works, including construction of the Eastern Basin Wharf and the erection thereon of seven more hydraulic cranes. The Harbour and Rivers Department already had erected two buildings at the Dyke End, one a storeroom and the other a large workshop; the channel to the proposed Basin was being dredged and stone ballast was being used to form a retaining wall along the line of the proposed new wharfage.

Council was advised in May that £22,000 had been placed on government estimates for provision of a new bridge. It was planned to be in line with Union Street and would have joined Carrington Street, planned to run parallel with the future western basin wharf line. This was to be the start of another "bridge battle" lasting eleven years.

The newly formed volunteer fire brigade took possession of its new reel on 14 May. Made by Pearse Bros. of Newcastle, it was claimed to be the best reel in the district. Despite the earlier efforts of the brigade secretary, Mr. T.E. Kennedy, and council, government did not notify the fire brigade site in Young Street until 3 August.

Another union was formed in June 1889 when the "crane boys" met in Rose's shed and appointed Mr. McGlinchey secretary.

In the same month, government gazetted the reservation of one acre of land bounded by Gipps, Robertson and Little Gipps Streets as a public market site. The area is now Grahame Park.

Soccer was one early sporting club at Carrington. On 13 July 1889, the young club was beaten six goals to two by Wallsend. J.Jackson was centre forward, R.McQueen half back, E.Ridley full back and W.Jackson goalkeeper and captain. Spectators were kept amused by the misfortunes of the players because the late heavy rains had turned the greater portion of the playing field into a swamp.

Sport was not the only sufferer from the rain. Council received many complaints about drainage. Mr. Shaw's cellar in Young Street had flooded. Alderman Garrett claimed the top of the island was entirely

under water and raised the question of draining land between Hargrave and Robertson Streets.

On 25 August, 800 people attended the opening of the convent for the Sisters of St. Joseph adjoining the Catholic Church in Gipps Street. It was an unpretentious weatherboard building of two stories, designed by F.B.Menkens and was occupied by three Sisters who would conduct the school. The foundation stone had been laid on 31 March by Father Meagher and the opening service was conducted by Father English.

Extension of the railway system north of Robertson Street in order to service the last of the Dyke hydraulic cranes caused access problems to the Dyke for pedestrians and council had been pressing the railway commissioners for some time for a high-level footbridge over the lines at Robertson Street. At night, the lines were poorly lighted and there was fear that someone would be killed crawling under or over the coal wagons. Unfortunately the fear proved to be real when in the early hours of 27 August 1889, a seaman returning to his ship was struck by a shunting train and had a leg and arm almost severed. He was placed on the locomotive and conveyed to Newcastle (no doubt the quickest and smoothest way at that time) but died next day.

Three of the steam cranes which had formerly worked on Queens Wharf were erected at the southern end of the Dyke and were available for use on 1 November 1889, six months later than promised. This meant that 5,500 feet of the Dyke was set aside for the shipment of coal; therefore wharfage for other purposes and additional ballast berths were necessary. A contract for a 400 feet extension at the upper end of the Dyke went to Hodder and Carlson and one for 560 feet plus ballast jetty and mooring sections went to Peter Callen.

Morison and Bearby's premises now covered an acre and the firm had a permanent staff of 120 despite a depression. Wickham Bullock Island Colliery was employing 250 miners.

After much delay, the steam hopper barge "Juno" was fitted with a centrifugal pumping plant and returned to Newcastle in January 1890 to begin work dredging the Basin and reclaiming the area behind the future wharf line of the Eastern Basin. According to the

*Chamber of Commerce Annual Report*, the "Juno" was the first of this class of dredge in the colony.

Alderman Hughes lost his position on council to T.D.Winterbine at the 1890 municipal elections. In his summary of work carried out during the previous year, the retiring mayor stated that 25,000 loads of stone had been used for streets. The new mayor was Alderman Morison.

The unsafe condition of the Denison Street Bridge and the government's amended proposal to overcome the problem by erecting a temporary bridge, caused many protests during 1890, which evidently did little but delay any remedial work.

In April 1890, government awarded F.A.King of Singleton, a contract to erect the eastern boiler house and chimney shaft at the hydraulic powerhouse and in June, the tender of Babcock and Wilcox was accepted for the supply of four boilers, each of 136 horsepower, for the new extensions.

The post and telegraph office was relocated when brick premises of J.Henderson in Cowper Street were leased for three years from 1 May 1890 at £65 per annum.

Also in May, Westcott Marshall and Adams, trading as the Sydney Electric Light Co., won the contract to supply, erect and setting to work, an electric light installation at the Dyke.

In June, the tender of John Lacy was accepted for erection of a fire brigade station.

Throughout 1890, council approved many applications from residents to have water connected to their properties.

Another change in council administration occurred in October when the council clerk, John Abel, was dismissed and replaced by William Rodgers. Office hours still remained 2-5pm Wednesday and Friday.

By November 1890, 15 acres behind the southern Dyke, formerly covered by four feet of water, had been reclaimed by the "Juno", which was working 16 hours each day. James Russel and Co., had the contract to supply and deliver 1,000 tons of bluestone ballast for

the northward extension of the retaining wall at the Eastern Basin.

Carrington was connected to Port Waratah by rail late in 1890, a line one and a half miles long having been laid from the Dyke direct to the smelting works. The line crossed Throsby Creek at the northern extremity of Carrington.

Also at North Carrington, four cottages had been erected on Crown Land and the occupants had applied to the Land Board for leases. Later, many people held leases including Messrs Gray, G.A.Pearce, Neil McPherson, David Williams, George Ramshaw, Geo. Brown Theo Rose, E. Fisher, Fred Scotman, J. Barrington, .. Cameron, Wm. Jackson, M. Barrington, and Thos. Edwards. In due course, the area became known as "Texas".

An infants department, consisting of two classrooms, was added to the public school in January 1891. More than 300 students now attended the school.

## Chapter 10

**NIGHTSOIL TURMOIL**

Aldermen G. Butts and A. Mathieson did not seek re-election at the 1891 municipal elections. They were replaced by D. Owen and G. Marsden. Alderman Scott was re-elected and became Mayor.

One of council's early considerations was a letter from my great grandfather Charles Booth, complaining of nightsoil being deposited on the beach in front of his property in Gipps Street.

Nightsoil was the name given to human excrement because in the cities, before sewerage, it was collected at night and carried away for manure. As mentioned earlier, most residents on the island at that time disposed of nightsoil on their own properties, generally in cesspits. Council decided to call tenders for removal of nightsoil throughout the municipality.

May 1891 saw the completion of the eastern boiler house at the hydraulic powerhouse. It contained four tubular boilers which, as well as being part of the hydraulic power system, were to supply steam to drive the dynamos supplying electric power for the Dyke lighting. The dynamos were housed in a building at the rear of the powerhouse.

Elections for three representatives from Newcastle in the fifteenth parliament of New South Wales resulted in the Mayor of Carrington, Alderman David Scott, topping the poll, thus becoming the senior member for the city and the first labour representative for Newcastle in the Legislative Assembly.

**The Carrington Council meeting on 19 June 1891 was chaired by the Mayor, Alderman D. Scott, M.L.A.**

Eight blocks of land south of Darvall Street, between Gipps and Young Streets, were resumed on 22 June 1891. These were the first resumptions for the Western Basin.

Carrington Blackwatch defeated Adamstown Rosebuds four goals to three in the first round of the J.C.Ellis Cup.

Council signed a three-years agreement with the Eureka Sanitary Company for removal of nightsoil in the municipality. This, of course, was going to cost residents money and there were public meetings on the issue. Council also had its disagreements. Aldermen walked out of one council meeting and the mayor walked out of the next one. Aldermen wanted the reserve at North Carrington used as a temporary disposal depot but the mayor was against it and would not accept a resolution to allow for voting on the issue. The contract price was one shilling per cubic foot if carted away from Carrington and sixpence per cubic foot if buried at the reserve.

Despite the upheaval in council, progress continued. The *Chamber of Commerce Annual Report* for 1891 stated that electric lighting on the Dyke was switched on officially on 2 September 1891. It comprised 50 lamps of 5,000 candle power, which also illuminated the many railway sidings.

This led to pressure being put on council to properly illuminate the suburb at night. The absence of any street lighting would have made it difficult for pedestrians and omnibuses on dark nights. It must have been an experience walking home at 3am after one of the many socials, especially when one considers the distance between many of the partially formed streets and the properties, and the nature of the ground to be traversed. A report in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* stated that...'it is an easy matter for pedestrians to miss their footing, and be precipitated into the dark depths below....'

Rev. G.M.Brown was appointed the first resident clergyman for St. Thomas' in November 1891. He acted also as chaplain to the Seamen's Mission.

After further slanging matches in council and another walk-out by aldermen, agreement was reached for the sanitary contractor to start in terms of his contract.

Alderman Scott then advised he would have to resign as mayor because the Legislative Assembly now met on Friday, council meeting night, and Alderman Owen was elected mayor for the remainder of the council year.

Completion of the hydraulic powerhouse was effected with the installation of a third hydraulic pump late in 1891. This unit had a flywheel 13 feet in diameter and had 25% more power than the total of the other two pumps, ensuring sufficient power for the Eastern Basin cranes. The "Juno" had by then reclaimed the area between the Dyke and the line of the Eastern Basin and had commenced dredging the northern section of the Basin in a westerly direction. Spoil was being pumped into the lagoon between the hydraulic powerhouse and Hetton Colliery.

A start also had been made to lay pipes along the Dyke to provide fresh water to shipping.

New Year 1892 heralded the introduction of the pan system of sanitation and the nightsoil was being deposited in trenches north of the recreation reserve.

It wasn't long, however, before the inspector of nuisances reported on the unsatisfactory manner the nightsoil removal was being carried out. There were now 425 houses on the island.

Residents evidently expressed their feelings about the nightsoil turmoil at the 1892 municipal elections. The three retiring aldermen were defeated. At the next council meeting Aldermen Morison and McCann resigned, believing that the result of the election was a direct censure upon all the aldermen of the previous council. Alderman George Marsden was elected mayor and Messrs Mathieson and Butts returned to council.

Then the dispute with the Eureka Sanitary Company gathered momentum. The company had a contract with the Newcastle Borough Council and was loading the city nightsoil onto a vessel at the Dyke. Carrington Council resolved that the company was not to convey nightsoil from other municipalities through Carrington streets, whereupon the company claimed compensation from the council for loss of profits because the Carrington Council had not made sufficient effort to abolish the cesspit system as required by the nightsoil contract.

Council responded by cancelling the contract so the Eureka Company removed all closet pans after midnight on Sunday 10 April 1892. This caused great

inconvenience to those residents who had installed the system, necessitating the council to obtain 120 kerosene tins from the Railway Department for issue as temporary pans.

The Criterion Hotel on the corner of Robertson and Bourke Streets was licenced on 7 April 1892. James Hughes was the first licensee.

Some residents took to the air when the Carrington Pigeon-Flying Club was formed, while eighteen others almost took a swim when returning home in an omnibus on 12 April. The condition of Denison Street Bridge was such that shortly after the incident the bridge was closed to all traffic except light buggies, horsemen and pedestrians. These limitations meant that buses had to travel via the Darvall Street Bridge where the Carrington approach went under water at Spring Tides. One of the bus proprietors at that time was Charles Pankhurst; another James Holmes.

The Hunter District Water Supply and Sewerage Board met for the first time in July 1892 and relieved council of its control of water supply. In the same month the Board gave residents till 23 August... 'to cause a proper pipe and stop-cock to be laid so as to supply water from the main pipe to such tenements and premises.' A list of streets where reticulation pipes had been laid included most of the streets at Carrington. Although the Board decided on a rate of ninepence in the pound, government ordered that it be raised to one shilling. Naturally there was an Indignation Meeting of ratepayers.

David Owen, butcher, alderman and previous mayor, was charged by the council's inspector of nuisances with having permitted four horses to stray in Young Street. Certainly no favouritism there; the council clerk even gave evidence for the prosecution. The charge was dismissed on a technicality.

The closeness of the community was demonstrated when 700 mourners attended the funeral of Oscar Pedersen and John Ford, coal trimmers, who fell to their deaths into the hold of a vessel at the Dyke.

Mr. John T. Meek was appointed Council Clerk and Nuisance Inspector in October 1892 to replace W.P.Rodgers who resigned following his appointment as

Assistant Cashier and District Clerk at the Water Board.

Council still was having nightsoil "nightmares". The new contractor gave notice of termination because the contract didn't pay. This followed shortly after a Supreme Court action instituted by the Eureka Sanitary Company had been settled out of court for £275. The company had claimed £3,000 compensation.

Flexing its muscle, Council instituted a temporary scheme until permanent arrangements could be made. It banned kerosene tins and boxes and made pans available at four shillings and sixpence each. Charge for removal of cesspit material was fivepence per cubic foot and for closet pans, ninepence per removal. Notice was given that council would prosecute anyone with an overflowing cesspit.

Although the public school had been functioning for 19 years, the playground still remained in a swampy condition and in wet weather, children frequently were kept home so they would not have to sit in class with wet feet. In November 1892, the Department of Public Instruction again deferred reclaiming low portions of the grounds because the estimated cost of £150 was considered too great to warrant work being done... 'at present'.

Francis Boland won the contract for major repairs to Denison Street Bridge. He agreed to permit pedestrian traffic when practicable, at the user's risk. Fortunately the few pedestrians who subsequently "went for a swim", survived. But pedestrians who used the Darvall Street Bridge also got wet. A local M.P., Mr. J.L.Fegan, was reported as saying he had to take his shoes and socks off on many occasions to wade through water from Wickham to Carrington. It did not need a very high tide to cover the road.

Early in January 1893, the property of Mr. C. Lawson in Denison Street caught fire. The Carrington and Wickham hose and reel brigades were quickly in attendance and brought the fire speedily under control before much damage was done. This was the first report I came across of the attendance of the Carrington brigade.

The three retiring aldermen, Butts, Mathieson and Winterbine, did not seek re-election at the 1893

municipal elections and Hugh Graham, James Doran and William Thomas became the new aldermen. Alderman Thornton was elected Mayor.

A new institute for Seamen's Mission was completed in February 1893. Located next to St. Thomas' Church in Young Street, the weatherboard structure, on stone foundations, measured 62 feet by 32 feet and was claimed to be capable of seating 500 people. It was built by George Cave of Carrington. A significant cost was the reclamation of the site.

Connection with Newcastle improved when the Denison Street Bridge re-opened to traffic in April. Despite many representations, the government would not provide a separate footway, claiming there was not sufficient pedestrian traffic.

Rev. R.M.Bowles became the new missionary of the Seamen's Bethal. Both the Seamen's Bethal and the Seamen's Institute attracted large numbers of seamen, although only a few yards apart. Their weekly concerts regularly clashed but both recorded good attendances. Many vessels were delayed in port long enough for the crews to become well known among locals and often such crews were given farewell concerts when about to sail.

Carrington Rugby Football Club was defeated 3-11 by Rosedale B. at Tighes Hill in May. Laing scored the try for Carrington.

The fire brigade, control of which had been taken over by council in 1891, was re-constituted in June 1893 with 15 members. L. Bernard was the new captain and his first and second lieutenants were R.Bell and James McVay. Geo. Cave was secretary.

Nightsoil problems eased when in June, James Holmes won a contract for removal of nightsoil to sea. The charges were eightpence per pan and sixpence per cubic foot for cesspits. A wharf at the end of William Street had been made available by the P.W.D. for shipment, which commenced in July 1893.

Despite the nightsoil problems which were concerning all municipalities, when the government began surveying the district in 1893 with a view to install sewerage, a municipal conference voted against it, claiming ratepayers already were taxed heavily enough.

Residents of Carrington had to wait another 40 years for this "luxury".

## Chapter 11

**RECLAMATION GAINS MOMENTUM**

Shoaling in the harbour, due to floods earlier in the year, forced the removal of the "Juno" from the Basin in June 1893 to assist in the clean up. A large area that residents had hoped would be reclaimed still remained underwater but no doubt this was due to the assistance Mr. Walsh, Resident Engineer Harbours and Rivers Department, had given council and residents. He had permitted the removal of a large quantity of the sand pumped up by "Juno", which allowed residents to reclaim a lot of private property cheaply and the council to carry out several works at a much less cost.

There were 430 dwellings on the island in August 1893 but over 50 were without tenants. The district was in a depressed state and there was much unemployment. Many miners and port workers elected to reside in other suburbs because of cheaper rentals.

Members of the fire brigade asked council to fill in a portion of land alongside the station so that they could get to the rear of the building without wading in water. This also would allow greater facilities for drying hoses after use. The brigade members had voluntarily nearly doubled the size of the station.

Council drained the low-lying portion of the recreation reserve during September and provided almost twice the area for recreation purposes. The cricket club quickly chose a wicket area.

Residents who formed a branch of the St. John Ambulance held their first lecture on 4 October 1893. Dr. Ludlow was the lecturer and branch executive officers were; President, The Mayor, Alderman Thornton; Vice President E.W.Bearby; Secretary Geo. Todd; Treasurer Alderman Graham. Entrance fee was two shillings and sixpence (2/6), subscription one shilling (1/-) per quarter. Bandages were supplied free.

A Gipsy camp by moonlight was held on Carrington Beach near the inner basin in October. It was attended by 90 ladies and gentlemen who indulged in various games and amusements.

Demand for coal weakened considerably in the second half of 1893 and led to retrenchments in the two local mines. Wickham Bullock Island Colliery cavilled out 60 miners but the remaining miners decided on a 15% levy each fortnight to support their unemployed mates. Other unemployed were not so lucky and a relief committee was formed. Council granted £50 and this was distributed by way of orders being issued on local storekeepers; 3/- to women and 1/- to each child. Butter at that time was tenpence (10d.) per pound, cheese 4d., sugar 3d. per pound and marmalade 3 tins for 11d. The council's foreman earnt two pounds ten shillings (£2.10.0) per week.

Council saw the light in November 1893 and replaced kerosene oil lamps with gas lighting in the council chambers. It also received approval to expend £100 from corporate funds towards the establishment of the School of Arts or a free public library within the municipality.

Kerbing some of the streets was commenced. It consisted of hardwood planks, eight inches by three inches, held in place by four-inch square hardwood posts. Later, six-inch by three-inch planks were used. Alderman Marsden had advocated stone kerbing but as very few streets were up to their proper level, the use of timber was considered more prudent.

Although council had forced many owners to fill in swamp areas containing stagnant water, the government was apathetic regarding large similar areas it still owned.

Three omnibus proprietors were providing services to Carrington by January 1894, each with two buses. They were J.C.Garrett, Francis Morley and Mrs Elizabeth Pankhurst.

Alderman Butts was elected mayor in 1894 and in March was presented with a mayoral robe donated by a ladies' committee comprising Mesdames Light, T.Duncan, D.Owen, T.Alexander, M.Elhone, R.Stoker, J.Burgess, C.White, and Misses M.Pendleton and Rooney. However, the sartorial splendour of the mayor had no affect conducive to the harmony of the next council meeting where, according to the *Newcastle Morning Herald* report, matters were extremely lively from start to finish and many charges were hurled across the table.

Alderman Barclay of Wickham donated a much needed alarm bell to the Carrington Fire Brigade in April 1894 and the top landing of the subsequent bell tower formed above the centre of the station roof was 34 feet above street level, which gave good vision for locating the direction of the fire.

William Arnott donated 60 bags of biscuits for those still needing assistance.

Council introduced the weekly collection of household rubbish on 11 May 1894, until further notice.

The coal trade started to improve and by August 1894 the cranes were almost constantly at work. Good progress was being made with the reclamation of the recreation reserve, where the government had established two ballast tips. Reclamation of the Roman Catholic school grounds to a depth of three feet was nearing completion and the school/church had been raised to this height to escape the damp.

Michael Callan, who held the contract for discharge of ballast, had replaced horse-power with steam and now "whipped" ballast out of the ships. Council had an agreement that once the ballast line extended 300 yards from the wharf, a labourer would be provided to receive at the tips and in this way was reclaiming the recreation reserve and the streets at a great saving.

Government carried out several long overdue works. One was the raising and widening of the road approach to the Darvall Street Bridge. Another was the filling and levelling of the land at the rear of the home of the public school principal, Mr. Halloran. The land had been swampy and contained stagnant water of an offensive nature. This work must have been influenced by the first visit to the school a few weeks later by the Minister for Public Education.

A third school was operating on the island; a private school conducted by Miss Scott at her private residence in Little Gipps (Mathieson) Street.

Council again was at loggerheads towards the end of 1894. This time it was over the payment of overtime. It had been resolved that once an employee had completed his 48 hours for the week, any further work should be offered to some of the many unemployed

ratepayers. However the mayor approved much overtime for persons claimed to be relatives and friends (including an alledged 20 hours for his own son) and aldermen refused to sign the wages cheque. After deductions had been made for overtime, the mayor signed the cheque under protest. The last four council meetings for the year lapsed for want of a quorum.

The "Juno" moved back into the Basin and commenced reclaiming land in front of the hydraulic powerhouse. Spoil again was made available to residents, at low cartage cost, for private reclamation.

At long last, the footbridge over the railway lines at the eastern end of Robertson Street was completed and largely availed of.

Although the road leading to the Darvall Street Bridge had been raised, it soon became apparent that the Cape Town ballast used was unsuitable and council refused to accept responsibility for future maintenance.

New Year of 1895 didn't bring any harmony to council. It was reported that the "pugnacious perversity" of the mayor had deadlocked council business. He was claimed to be so obstinate and cantankerous that the majority of the aldermen had decided it was useless to meet for any business. They did attend the last meeting before the annual elections; the first meeting in three months.

Alderman Owen became Mayor but at the handing-over meeting, four alderman refused to join in the vote of thanks to the retiring mayor.

During the term of the previous council, 3,600 tons of ballast had been tipped in the Market Reserve (Grahame Park); 5,830 tons in Darling Street; 5,405 tons in Little Bourke (Scott) Street and 15,237 tons in the recreation reserve.

One of the first duties for the new mayor was the distribution of another 98 parcels of biscuits donated by Mr. Arnott for the needy. The Mayor also intimated that his mayoral allowance of £15 would be distributed to the deserving poor.

Reclamation by the "Juno" was changing the island's topography at a great rate. The western cut at the

northern end of the Basin had been completed and early in 1895 the dredge was working southward on the western side of the Basin. By June, a large area from Cowper Street to just a little north of Smart Street had been reclaimed and the Harbours and Rivers Department offered to fill in the private land "in the great swamp" behind the Seamen's Bethel to the height of Young Street at one penny (1d.) per ton. This offer was quickly accepted and the area to-day is Connolly Park. While working in that area, the department agreed to complete the reclamation of St. Thomas' Church grounds and the School of Arts site free of charge because it was for the benefit of public institutions. One can understand the department's generosity. With an area of 90 acres, 80 acres of which were dry at low tide, dredging to a depth of 26 feet would provide at least 400 acres of material at an average spread of five feet.

Despite the introduction of new sanitary measures at Carrington in 1892, the public school students had to endure cesspits until the end of March 1895, when conversion to the pan system was announced.

Council approved the transfer of omnibus licences from Mrs. Pankhurst to Messrs T.Brett and W.E.Evans.

Shortage of funds in June 1895 forced council to suspend much of its works and lay-off employees so it was decided to seek from the government the largest endowment allowance made to municipal councils because of the large areas of government land still within the municipality and from which council received no revenue. Under The Municipalities Act of 1858, provision was made for the granting of government endowment to councils for a period of 15 years, on a sliding scale according to local revenue. For the first five years, the grant was pound for pound; for the second, half the revenue raised, and for the third, one quarter.

Ratepayers who were unable to pay arrears of rates were offered the opportunity to **hand-break** metal to the extent of the arrears. No doubt this would have included the 1,000 tons of granite which council procured in May and for which it determined a breaking rate of three shillings per cubic yard.

Some government works improved access to the island. A footway was added to the railway bridge across

Throsby Creek and a footpath constructed to connect with Young Street. Substantial improvements were made to the connection with Tighes Hill.

A Carrington division of the Political Labour League was formed in July 1895 at a meeting attended by 130 people.

The "Jupiter", a larger and more powerful dredge, arrived in Newcastle on 7 July to replace the "Juno". Reclamation behind the Seamen's Bethel commenced the following week.

William Cook, who had dairy premises, was instructed by council to provide a detached milk store and erect a new bail. No location was mentioned but I well remember a similar arrangement in Bourke Street, between Hargrave and Robertson Streets, owned by Annie Gamble.

A special meeting of council was called on 5 November 1895 to elect a new mayor. Alderman Owen had resigned because he was moving to Westralia due to the depressed state of N.S.W. Alderman Garrett became Mayor and inherited an almost empty treasury. Council was having difficulty collecting rates from the two collieries and their tardiness already had resulted in a sizeable loss of government endowment, which was paid only on rates collected.

A government grant of £40 was matched by council to provide relief work and a commencement was made to fill in the low-lying ground outside the northern and western boundaries of the public school. However a request for a moiety of the cost of asphaltting the footpath, and kerbing and guttering, was refused.

Another breakthrough for property owners was an agreement by the Department of Public Works to allow use of ballast for the reclamation of private properties at the rate of two pence (2d.) per ton.

Darling Street, between Hargrave and William Streets, had been reclaimed over its full width from the swamp five feet below the proper level and Carrington Street had been formed 20 feet wide from Darvall to Gipps Street. Parallel to the alignment of the Western Basin, this was earmarked to be the main road connection with Newcastle.

Many frustrating delays for pedestrians ceased in December 1895 with the opening of an overhead footbridge at the Young Street railway crossing.

Enrollments at the public school had reached 344 and the average attendance was 265. Government regulations required a student to be six years old before being enrolled at a public school and evidently Miss Scott's private school in Mathieson Street catered for younger children.

An interesting letter to the editor of the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on 11 December 1895 stated that the lowest tender for the working of the cranes for the year had been submitted by the Newcastle Crane Employees' Association but because the current contractor, Mr. Russell, had had over 30 years experience at Queens Wharf and the Dyke, the government allowed him to amend his tender and continue with the contract. It also revealed that the employees' association had been quietly accumulating funds for the past seven years in readiness to lease the cranes.

A storm on 22 December demolished the Primitive Methodist Church in Hargrave Street. Next day, representatives of all religious denominations met to devise means of extending practical sympathy and council gave approval for religious services to be held in the council chambers pending re-building of the church.

An outbreak of typhoid fever at Carrington ushered in 1896. Among those who died was Edward Flock, a coal trimmer, who left a widow and six children under the age of 13 years. A public meeting was quickly arranged to provide assistance to Mrs. Flock, who also lost her eldest child to the disease a fortnight later. The relief committee was able to present her with cash and goods to the value of £62-12-0, 'a highly pleasing result'.

The Primitive Methodist Church re-opened on 16 February. George Cave had been the contractor and the work was supervised by Mr. Nevill.

In 1895, Hetton and Wickham Bullock Island collieries had unsuccessfully appealed against their council rates assessment of four pence per ton. They appealed against the same assessment in 1896 and the rate was

reduced to two pence per ton, upsetting council's budget. The basis for these rates was WAYLEAVE, a charge for permission to convey minerals across a person's property.

An influx of deep-sea vessels in the early months of 1896 provided a large quantity of ballast and low-lying portions of the municipality were being filled rapidly. Stagnant water holes still existed adjacent to Bourke Street and a large area of swampland remained between Hargrave and William Streets near the council chambers. Reclamation by the "Jupiter" was proceeding apace and the Church of England and the Seamen's Bethel were high and dry. According to the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on 25 April 1896, "old salts" attending devine service formerly could almost fancy they were on the ocean as the tide battled and surged under the buildings.

The strong community compassion of the island again was demonstrated in April 1896 when 29 years old James Jackson was killed in a roof fall at Hetton Colliery, leaving a widow and three children under the age of seven. Within a month, Mrs. Jackson had received donations of £85.12.6 (approx. nine months wages) despite the fact that shortly after her husband's death, the district miners had begun a major strike.

One argument which occupied council and residents in 1896 was a proposal to divide the municipality into three wards, with the railway line in Cowper Street and Robertson Street being the divisional boundaries. A petition in this connection, signed by 186 electors, was gazetted on 12 May 1896 but a special meeting of council decided to protest to the Governor against granting the petitioners' prayer. Council was successful.

By the middle of June 1896, almost 100 vessels were detained in port because of the district coal miners strike. The vessel at the top of the list had been in port three months. Twice-weekly concerts at the Seamen's Bethel had large attendances but the strike was having a depressing affect on everyone.

All pits, except Lambton, resumed on 29 July but not before the Mayor of Newcastle presided over a mass meeting of 3,000 miners, at which it was resolved that the government should legislate for a Conciliation and Arbitration Commission for settlement of disputes.

August 1896 saw the commencement of the beautification plans for the recreation reserve. The first five Norfolk Island pines to form the outer line of trees along William Street and the first two Moreton Bay figs of the proposed line along Throsby Creek were among 30 trees planted by the mayor, aldermen and town clerk. The plans also proposed a bandstand, bowling green, garden plots and a cricket oval.

One of the ballast tips was reclaiming the swampy area around the Primitive Methodist church and it was stated that this should reduce the risk of the church being blown over a second time.

A "crush" in workings of the Wickham Bullock Island Colliery in September 1896, which halted work for many weeks, caused the Darvall Street bridge to develop a list of several inches in a southerly direction and Darvall Street, west of Denison Street, sank two feet and damaged the water main leading to the island. This compelled the Water Board to lay another main across the Denison Street bridge.

Members of the newly formed Carrington Lawn Tennis Club started to play on their new court adjacent to the council chambers during September. The club name was rather a misnomer because members had made the court with ashes and a covering of Melbourne ballast of the nature of clay. Most of the original membership were aldermen or ex-aldermen, with the mayor as president.

A big fire in Little Young Street destroyed large stables formerly used by Russell and Company to house all the horses working at the cranes. Earlier in 1896, the horses had been transferred to new stables closer to the Dyke. The fire also destroyed an adjoining house and under the influence of a strong southerly wind, spread to the frontage of the Prince of Wales (formerly Rampant Lion) Hotel. Fortunately, the local fire brigade had stationed a standpipe and hose at firemen F. Bell's residence in Young Street South as a precaution against the hose reel being blocked at the rail crossing at any time by shunting coal wagons. Because of this, Bell and two other firemen were at the fire before the alarm bell rung and were instrumental in saving the hotel.

## Chapter 12

**CRANE-BOYS CO-OPERATIVE**

December 1896 found the Crane Employees' Association ready to assume responsibility for coal loading at the Dyke on 1 January 1897. The association had registered as The Carrington Co-operative Coal Shipping Company Limited prior to signing the contract and all plant and horses were in readiness to start. Commodious stables were erected in close proximity to the boat harbour and the horses had received training at the Hetton Colliery sidings. Mr. F. Butler, president of the association, became manager of the company.

In April 1897, the "Ashley" arrived from South Australia with 1,000 tons of ores for the Sulphide Corporation. The cargo was discharged direct into rail trucks at the northern end of the Dyke.

Young Street, between St. Thomas' Church and the Seamen's Bethel, received a large quantity of sand from the Basin before the "Jupiter" was sent to the Macleay River. Reclamation from this source was thus temporarily abandoned but ships' ballast continued to arrive. Even here there was a change; the majority of vessels now were arriving with sand ballast and this was being used to reclaim the swamp area north of Hargrave Street. This included the swamp area near the council chambers and the Bourke Street swamp.

Shipments of livestock were increasing and causing delays to coal loading because the steamers involved were coaling at No.11 crane and then continuing to occupy the berth while loading livestock. It was decided to build new stockyards north of No.15 crane and to upgrade No.16 berth for the shipment of livestock. Large numbers of cattle and horses passed through the municipality at all hours of the day and night.

Denison Street bridge was proving too narrow for present and future requirements so council decided to press for a new bridge as soon as possible.

In July 1897, Henry Limeburner extended his "penny ferry service" to the Basin. He had obtained a permissive occupancy in the north-west corner and

within a month, bus patronage was down. There was a call for the extension of the Dyke ferry service to Hargrave Street for the benefit of the "northerners".

Twelve months after the "crush" in the colliery's workings, the Wickham Bullock Island Coal Co. forwarded council a cheque for restoration of the depression in Darvall Street to the street's former level and work began immediately. At the same time, the company sought further mining leases under Carrington, subject to larger pillars being left. Council considered this for six months and finally left it to the Minister for Mines to determine, subject to eight-yard pillars. The company responded by being first to pay rates in 1898.

November 1897 recorded another first for the municipality. Messrs J.T. & J. Toohey had purchased the Criterion Hotel and had effected considerable alterations and improvements. These included the provision of three large lamps below the balcony, which added much needed light to that part of the island, and the asphaltting of the footpath in front of the hotel; the first in the township.

During the same month, Peter Callen completed a special wharf at North Carrington and work began to erect a 30-ton crane to handle the large stone blocks from the Waratah quarry which were to form the northern breakwater at Stockton.

The jibs on cranes Nos.4,5,& 7 had been lengthened in order to load larger and higher-sided vessels and steamers were now able to load at the south end of the Dyke.

Again the crane employees secured the coal loading contract.

Construction of the post office and residence alongside St. Thomas' Church was nearing completion. Mr. R.L.Thompson had been granted the £1165 contract in June. Some residents were not impressed by the building. A letter to the Editor of the *Newcastle Morning Herald* suggested that the house for the postmaster was so small, it would suit the Japanese if they invaded.

The long stretch of Denison Street between the Denison Street Bridge and Smart Street remained narrow and had

water both sides. It was in a deplorable condition; unlit; one bus already had toppled over the edge and a pedestrian had been killed by a bus, but the government would not make funds available for remedial work despite the large areas of the island still belonging to the government.

The first passenger train to run to Carrington almost happened in December 1897. A highlight of the public school picnic to Toronto was to be a direct train service but although the guarantee for a Carrington departure had been given in writing by the district superintendent's office, the train was cancelled and the picnickers had to "bus it" to Honeysuckle station.

Despite the setback, the picnic was largely attended and a huge success.

A passenger train certainly ran to Carrington on 27 November 1967, when an airconditioned express conveyed a large number of guests from Sydney to the Eastern Basin wharf for the official commissioning of the Basin Coal Loader.

1897 ended on a sad note for the island. At 0900 hours on 17 December, James Rice, gatekeeper at the Young Street rail crossing, was struck by a tank engine and decapitated. Evidently there were four gates at the crossing and only one attendant, who also was responsible to manually signal train movements and it was during the latter operation that the accident occurred. Early in 1898, council decided to press for a signal box, together with interlocking gates, but at a subsequent inspection of the area by the railway commissioners, they advised that such a provision would involve considerable expense; too great to be undertaken at the present time.

It wasn't long before the newly elected council for 1898 degenerated into slanging matches. A stormy meeting on 4 March, at which Alderman Light made several defamatory remarks and was at the forefront, caused the Mayor, Alderman Garrett, to present the following Mayoral Minute to the meeting on 18 March:-

Owing to the disorderly conduct and offensive language so frequently indulged in by aldermen at meetings of this council in the past, the council has become a bye-word and reproach (sic) and has been brought into contempt. The authority of the chair has been repeatedly

defied, unprovoked insults have been hurled at colleagues because they have dared to express opinions contrary to those of the insulter, resulting in scenes of shameful disorder...that are a disgrace to any deliberative body of civilised men...

Early in March 1898, the Carrington Athletic Club was formed. Officials were; President, William Marsden; Secretary, Fred. McCullum; Treasurer, T. Clarke and Caretaker, J. Stiepowich. The committee comprised Messrs E. Clarke, H. McCormack, A. Smith, W. Roser and W. Anthony.

Despite council problems, confidence in the sound financial condition of the municipality was shown when the council's 5% debenture loan was oversubscribed in March. The previous loan had been 6%.

Business commenced in the new post office on 14 March. Council approved the usual timber kerbing for the west side of Young Street from Victoria Street to the Seamen's Bethel and the Postmaster General agreed to contribute to the asphaltting of the footpath in front of the post office.

Carrington Cricket Club contested the First Junior cricket final against Ironclads in March 1898. Played over three Saturdays, Carrington led by 20 runs on the first innings but collapsed to 64 runs in the second to lose by 146 runs.

A severe storm hit the Newcastle area on 6 May 1898 and at Carrington, quite a number of chimneys were blown down and properties seriously damaged. All low-lying land was submerged. The s.s. "Maitland", on the run from Sydney to Newcastle, was wrecked near Broken Bay with much loss of life, including Billy Pearce, son of Mr. George Pearce and brother-in-law of Alderman Geo. Marsden.

Residents of Carrington have been involved in many strikes over the years but the one on 29 May 1898 must be unique. Without any prior warning, the superintendent of St. Thomas' Sunday School was replaced by a person from Stockton, whereupon all teachers and pupils, well over 100, struck and went home. After a meeting between Bishop Stanton and parishioners, the energetic and well-liked

Superintendent John Elliott and his teachers resumed on 26 June.

A very popular sport in earlier days was quoits. In July 1898, a district quoits handicap, extending over several weeks, was held at the Oriental (formerly Walsh's Family) Hotel.

John Meek, council clerk for six years, succumbed to cancer in November, aged 40 years. His residence was opposite the council chambers. Mr.J.L.Lawson was appointed council clerk, clerk of works and inspector of nuisances.

## Chapter 13

**"THE BASIN"**

The Sulphide Corporation was expanding its operations at Cockle Creek and the regular discharge of ores and loading of smelter products at the Dyke caused a conflict with cattle shipments which had increased considerably due to the discovery of gold in Western Australia. Peter Callen was awarded a contract in November 1898 to erect a cattle-shipping wharf at the head of the Basin. It was proposed that new cattle yards would be provided near the hydraulic powerhouse. Livestock was brought to the ship's side by rail or road and Customs House statistics recorded that shipments for 1898 were; cattle 13,521; horses 1793; pigs 1462; sheep 48,438. Carrington must have been a busy suburb.

The Basin was receiving considerable attention. "Castor", the biggest sand pump in the colony, had arrived to help the "Juno" and a ladder dredge with the deepening and the sand was to be used to reclaim all the land between Young Street and Throsby Creek.

Hetton Colliery was working a new lease of 2,000 acres beyond Nobbys. Extending two and one quarter miles beyond the breakwater, it was claimed the underground haulage scheme was not excelled in this or any other district in the colonies.

A sensational end to 1898 was the issuing of a warrant for the arrest of Frank Butler, manager of the Carrington Co-operative Coal Shipping Company, whom it was claimed, had absconded with £500 of the company's funds. Butler was arrested in New Zealand and £200 in gold and currency had been found in Mrs. Butler's trunk. In March 1899 he pleaded guilty to fraud and was sentenced to four years gaol. During the trial, Butler informed the judge his wages were £11 per month.

Provision of additional coal loading facilities was progressed when tenders were called for...'about 600 feet of wharf on the eastern side of "The Basin", Bullock Island, Newcastle Harbour...' on 24 January 1899. Closing on 13 February, the acceptance of the tender of J.S.Gam of Marrickville was gazetted on 28 February.

There was a scarcity of dwelling houses in April and rent was six shillings per week.

"Juno" was reclaiming some streets with sand and council agreed to spread ballast placed on these streets by the government, a great saving. Land belonging to the Northumberland Building and Investment Company in Denison Street also was to be reclaimed.

Residents became indignant when government released plans for a new bridge to connect with Hunter Street West. Instead of a solid steel bridge joining as an extension of Union Street, government proposed a timber bridge adjacent to the original bridge. Despite deputations to the Minister for Works, and many Editorials in the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, tenders were called for a wooden bridge on cast iron piles and awarded to Shedden Brothers of Hamilton.

Peter Callen completed the Cattle Wharf in July 1899 but adjacent, Mr. Gam was behind with his contract, heavy rains having delayed the procurement of piles.

Messrs Sheddon Bros. did as much preparatory work as possible for the new bridge to Newcastle before closing the old one towards the end of January 1900. Once again, all traffic had to use the Darvall Street Bridge and buses were taking half an hour for the journey to Newcastle. Henry Limeburner's penny ferry, running to the north-west corner of the Basin, was completing the trip in ten minutes and proving such a boon to travellers that council sought a pathway over the sand to the ferry terminal, without success.

Breaking with tradition, aldermen elected Robert McCann to a second term as Mayor.

John Jack, one of the bus proprietors and former licensee of the Carrington Club Hotel, was found dead on the rail tracks on 3 March 1900 with both legs severed. He had returned from the city by ferry.

The public school library was formally opened in April 1900 with 160 volumes donated by scholars. During the formalities, the District Inspector stated that ten years ago the school was one of the most disorderly he had been in but now was one of the most orderly in the district.

The Eastern Basin Wharf was used by four vessels in May for the discharge of ballast. The ballast baskets were swung out on the yardarm and dropped where required behind the wharf.

Carrington 97 (Haynes 17) and 106 (West 36) defeated Stockton 120 (White 7 for 41) and 59 (White 6 for 28) in the Second Junior premiership cricket final.

A small reading room was provided on the School of Arts site in July 1900. It was open every night except Saturday.

August 1900 was a busy month for the island. A rail siding was run into the wharf at the head of The Basin, which because of increased trade, was to be allocated to the Sulphide Corporation, leaving livestock loading at the northern Dyke. Regular shipments of gold ore from West Australia were being discharged for smelting at Cockle Creek.

Without any formal ceremony, the new Denison Street Bridge opened to traffic on 20 August. It was a substantial structure. The cast iron piles, filled with concrete, supported nine spans of 30 feet and one of 35 feet, a total length of 305 feet. Approaches added another 500 feet. These had 12-inch stone facings which gave a fine appearance. Provision was made in the strength of the 24-foot wide carriageway for possible future extension of a tram service. To the west of the carriageway, a six-foot wide raised footway provided safety for pedestrians as well as shielding the water main. Total cost was £4,600.

Construction of a further 700 feet of wharfage at the Eastern Basin was awarded to Peter Callen, and J.S.Gam also won another contract for ballast jetties in The Basin.

Alexander McGregor, Jnr., opened for business in his new brick butcher shop in Young Street, next to the School of Arts site on 8 January 1901. Opposite, Alderman Murray was building two two-storied brick houses next to his blacksmiths shop and subsequently rented each of them for 15 shillings per week. These would be 110 and 112 Young Street.

After 23 years in charge of police at Carrington, Senior Constable O'Meara retired on 31 January and was

given a big send-off by residents. He was replaced by Senior Constable Quale, a man of great physique, from Merriwa. It was considered that he and Constables Turnbull and Harrington should keep rowdy and troublesome customers in order.

In anticipation of an expected union of the various Methodist factions, the Primitive Methodist and Wesleyan church choirs combined in March 1901.

Council approved enclosing an oval in the recreation reserve with a single rail fence and the spreading of suitable soil over an area of 80' x 20' in the centre, the basis of a subsequent perfect wicket.

Ballast of 800 tons of Rio granite stone earned the "Godiva" first use of the nearly completed ballast jetty at the Western Basin. Once rails were laid for the ballast trucks, this stone would be used to cover some of the drifting sand on land reclaimed by the "Juno", which would help overcome a nuisance to which residents had quietly submitted for some time.

Temporary mooring accommodation was provided at the Eastern Basin where six dolphins had been completed south of the continuous wharf.

Mr. George Friend became a bus proprietor in April 1901 when Hannah Jack's licences were transferred to him. Council now was requiring the omnibus proprietors to run every 7½ minutes on Saturday evenings between 6.30pm and 9.30pm.

By May, most of the land behind the Seamen's Institute had been reclaimed to the level of the main road and a great deal of reclamation had occurred south of Cowper Street. Many houses on the island had to be raised because of the reclamation. The "Juno" was filling in around the Wickham Bullock Island Colliery. In the recreation reserve, ballast was being received through two tips to fill in south of the oval, while in the middle of the island, the Scottish Australian Mining Company was being asked to attend to the swampy area still remaining within its holding before the next hot weather.

Alderman James Morison died suddenly on 27 September 1901. He had served on all but three councils since incorporation, had one term as mayor and had given many years of service to the municipality.

On 3 October 1901, there was a subsidence in Hargrave Street and a burst water main flooded the street. A gas main also was broken and the street sank 16 inches. Many houses were affected by minor inconveniences such as jammed windows and doors but the council chambers suffered serious cracking. Subsidence damage to the chambers, Young and Hargrave Streets was estimated to be £350 and Wickham Bullock Island Coal Company gave council a cheque for this amount within a fortnight of the assessment. Once again the subsidence had occurred in workings with only six-yard pillars.

Fortunately the damage had not extended to the corner of Hargrave and Bourke Streets, where Mr. Percy Taylor recently had built the fine residence which still occupies the site.

Two days after the subsidence, *Government Gazette* No.833 advised that 8¾ acres of Crown Land north of Hargrave Street which had been offered for auction several years earlier, was temporarily reserved and exempted from after-auction sale. No reason was given and this area (from memory) still was vacant when I left Carrington in 1946. A large section still remains vacant.

Subsidences occurred again on 9 and 10 February 1902. Broken mains flooded the corner of Young and Hargrave Streets and some houses were damaged. Further settlement caused considerable damage to the council chambers and the nearby tennis court became a total wreck.

Some good news early in 1902 was the government announcement that it was going to establish the Carrington Harbours and Rivers Engineering Works at the Dyke End, where all repairs to government tugs, dredges and punts would be carried out. Estimated cost was £6,000.

All six cranes at the Eastern Basin had been tested by April. Although these cranes were hailed as travelling cranes, a former driver, Arch Weavers, said such travel was limited to about 15 feet when the crane was connected to hydraulic power. It was possible to disconnect them and move them by electric motor to another connection point further along the

wharf, thus eliminating the necessity to move the vessel.

A new wing, built by Charles Baker of Hamilton, was added to the public school and opened on 23 April 1902. There were now 411 students enrolled.

CHAPTER 14THE TRAMWAY SAGA

Laying of rails for extension of the Newcastle district tramway service to Carrington commenced in April 1902. The planned route was across Denison Street Bridge, then via Denison, Smart, Young, Robertson and Bourke Streets to William Street. By early June, only a section between Darvall and Victoria Streets remained unfinished. It was proposed that a high-level bridge, with a gradient of one in twenty, would span the railway at Cowper Street, eliminating the level crossing at which there were frequent long delays. Weighing of coal wagons at a nearby weighbridge periodically blocked the crossing and upwards of 200 trains or light engines passed over the crossing daily.<sup>1</sup>

Council and residents strongly opposed the bridge, (which would have been similar to, but longer than, the Donald Street Bridge at Hamilton: gradient 1:16.7) on aesthetic and economic grounds.

Finally the Minister for Works advised the local member that it was either an overhead bridge or no tramway and work on the line ceased. The lines were to remain unused for 10 years.

Development of the South Maitland coalfields was giving much work to Newcastle foundaries, including Morison and Bearby, and large quantities of coal would soon be arriving at the port from that area. Carrington and Wickham Councils decided to co-operate to induce the railway commissioners to branch northern coal at West Islington and haul it to the Dyke via North Carrington thus obviating the blockage of the level crossings at Beaumont, Albert, Hannell and Young Streets. In July 1902, the commissioners advised councils that consideration was being given to the re-routing of coal through North Carrington and this would involve very large expenditure.

Water holes and swamps were fast disappearing, with private properties being reclaimed as well as government land, but Bourke Street still needed much filling on the west side north of Hargrave Street and

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<sup>1</sup>NH 26 June 1902 p6.

for continuation through to Cowper Street. Because the Works Department was preparing to connect to Bourke Street for this purpose, the Department of Lands did not think it necessary to resume land for the extension of Little Gipps Street. A start also was being made with reclamation of the mangrove swamp south of Darvall Street on the west side of Denison Street.

As the tram tracks had been laid to approved street levels, they were in some cases between 4 and 16 inches above the then existing road levels, causing much public inconvenience. By September 1902, the council had spent more money in 8 months on the roads than for the two previous years and it had none left. Workmen were dismissed. After some heated meetings, council decided to borrow £300 @ 5%. Alderman Rodgers was insulted and walked out, vowing never to return and his subsequent letter of resignation was accepted with regret.

A large fire at Morison and Bearby on the evening of 7 January 1903 destroyed the two-storied wooden pattern shop and patterns spanning 27 years. Seven other brigades turned out to help Carrington and they concentrated on saving the adjacent workshops and on several occasions, the stables at the All Nations Hotel. The hotel, within a few yards of the foundry, was evacuated. Although the hotel adjoined the police station, two-thirds of the stock which had been removed from the bar, was pilfered.

At 7pm on 28 January 1903, a function was held at the corner of Young and Victoria Streets, to mark the lighting of the first street lights by the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Light. Fifty gas lamps had been erected in the principal streets by the Gas Company as part of a 5 year contract for lighting the municipality. Earlier, three lamps had been erected on the Denison Street Bridge.

Another function of great importance was the formal opening of the School of Arts on 23 February 1903 by Mrs. Fegan, wife of the local member. The foundation stone had been laid by the Minister for Education, Mr. Perry, on 15 December 1902. The wooden building was 60 feet by 40 feet, with walls 18 feet high; a long way from the elaborate plans prepared by architect Peter Bennett in 1896, which proposed a two-storied building with a brick frontage and a 10 feet by 40

feet colonnade. The recently purchased piano was used for the first time by Miss Ivy Bertram. The width of the stage was admired and the report stated that when the proposed further depth of 24 feet was added to the stage, it would be well fitted for theatrical purposes.

There must have been some red faces in the port on 27 March 1903. The "Oonah" became the first steamer to enter The Basin and its arrival was greeted with considerable enthusiasm by the population and blasts from the steam trains. After berthing at No.3 crane, it was found the cranes were not connected to the pressure pipes; they had not been handed over to the Railway Department and permission had not been obtained from Sydney to use them. The vessel moved to 12 Dyke next day.

The cranes were handed over to the Railway Department of 30 April 1903 and the "Edenmore" and "Wasdale" were booked to load coal stiffening next day. Draught of vessels entering The Basin was limited to 20 feet at high water, the entrance channel being only 180 feet wide, with rock sides, but further widening and deepening was continuing.

Following steady progress with the part loading of sailing vessels, the "Victoria" became the first steamer to load coal at the Eastern Basin when it took aboard 1100 tons of bunkers. Previously the cranes had worked only during daylight but "Victoria" loaded throughout the night using her own lights. Provision of electric lighting at the Eastern Basin was in progress.

Mr. Harry Hughes, Captain of the Carrington Fire Brigade, died on 14 May 1903 after a short illness. He was given a fireman's funeral and the cortege, the largest to leave Carrington, was led by the Stockton Band. Residents quickly organised assistance for Mrs. Hughes who had four children, the youngest just three months old.

Mr. Murray was building two two-storied shops, with dwellings combined, next to his other premises in Young Street and opposite the School of Arts.

The School of Arts building was proving a popular venue for socials, concerts and Miss Cooper's Dramatic Company, which performed regularly before large

audiences. A government subsidy cleared the new hall and internal fittings of all debt. Cooks Hill Primary School handed over a wooden school building and this was re-erected on the School of Arts site for use as a reading and recreation room.

An interesting insight into conditions pertaining in 1903 was a dispute between management and miners at Hetton Colliery. Evidently management already had conceded to give the miners a ride "in" to the coal face at the start of a shift but they walked "out" at completion. Mr. Mathieson, the manager, advised that if certain work was carried out, he might give their request for a "ride out" a trial but if he found that bringing the miners out was an inconvenience or that it would retard the output of coal, he would discontinue it without giving notice. The miners decided that they would walk both ways but within a month rescinded the motion. One miner objected to having to walk four miles each shift.

Council commenced restoring Hargrave Street in August 1903. The extent of the settlement after the subsidence was such that up to 3 feet 9 inches of material was necessary in places to restore the street to its original level.

Night soil disposal again became a problem and council terminated the contract and commenced its own weekly sanitary service in October 1903. Garbage and the night soil were buried in the Reserve. In my younger days, the sanitary depot was located between the oval and Throsby Creek and the prepared trenches would greet you when you went to the Reserve to play sport. The connection to the sewer in 1936/37 brought an end to this problem and also brought an end to the bath tub in front of the warm kitchen stove in winter. In its place came the cold enamel bath in the unheated bathroom at the end of the back verandah. It also meant that the large, heavy, cast-iron boiler which sat permanently on the end of the fuel stove and was a ready source of hot water, had to be carried to the bath. But I must admit that my grandmother did not complain about the new laundry kindly provided by the Water Board to replace the old shed at the bottom of the yard which was directly in the path of the sewer trench. Located close to the kitchen and next to the bathroom, the fuel copper became the source of hot water when there was a general family bath session.

Mr. Thomas Duncan of Bourke Street, a resident of Carrington for 27 years, died early in October. He was reported as being the first engine driver at the hydraulic powerhouse and lifted the first wagon of coal loaded at the Dyke.

Despite his differences with council, in November 1903 Mr. J.S. Rodgers dedicated land at the eastern end of Howden Street to enable connection with Bourke Street and told council to 'get cracking'.

Early in 1904, reclamation south of Darvall Street had been completed around the fan shaft of WBICC Colliery and was continuing towards Denison Street Bridge. The work had blocked a natural water outlet into Throsby Creek causing council to lay two new drains; one into Throsby Creek and one into The Basin at a cost of £230, towards which the government contributed £100. Darvall Street also suffered, one report claiming the street had been "completely destroyed" by drifting sand.

Morris Light, draper, 231 Hunter Street West, was elected to the Newcastle Borough Council as representative for the Macquarie Ward. He did not contest the position of Mayor of Carrington but remained an alderman of Carrington Council.

The *Newcastle Morning Herald* advised on 6 May 1904 that the thickness of cover over coal workings under the sea had been set at a minimum of 120 feet. Cover at Hetton workings, which were beyond the outer end of the northern breakwater, was 228 feet.

The Wickham Bullock Island Colliery once employed 400 hands but by late May, the remaining 110 were working out their notices before the mine shut down. Discovery of an incipient fire in December 1903 forced the company to seal and abandon the northern workings and protracted negotiations with the government had been unsuccessful in obtaining an extension of its lease to mine between the Dyke and the Eastern Basin. The closure meant a big reduction in rates for the council.

Water from the baths in the Criterion Hotel was discharged into the gutter and water continually was lying near the corner of Robertson and Bourke Streets. The previous year, council had run drainage pipes from a sump at this corner into the Hetton swamp and

suggested that the hotel connect into the sump. Mr. Messenger had suggested a concrete gutter, to which he was prepared to pay half, but this was turned down by council because it would create a precedent. Council did accept a further offer from Mr. Messenger in 1906 that he supply all the material for a concrete gutter in front of his hotel and council supply the labour.

In August 1904, almost 31 years after the first public school building opened, work began to raise the school playground.

At the same time, Carrington Cricket Club was seeking assistance from the council to lay down a wicket in the reserve oval. Council was about to build a change shed, paint the railings and provide seating.

Another pastime which was popular was the card game cribbage. The Carrington School of Arts team of G. Corbett, R. Neil, E. Neil, J. Devon, W. Lewis, M. Hoolahan, J. Drummond, W. Goff, W. Haynes. R. Quayle, G. Brooks and J. Bromley defeated Junction in the final of the Union of Institutes tournament in October 1904.

"The Pick of the Island" read the advertisement in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on 3 January 1905 when announcing the auction of 33 sites on portion of the Scottish-Australian Mining Company's Estate west of Young Street. All the sites were "high and dry", but smaller than in the original subdivision by Thomas Adam. The company had provided a street called Forbes Street, but no provision had been made for extension of Little Denison and Denison Streets through the subdivision. In 1904 the company had applied for indefeasible title for its holding on Carrington, which meant these sites would have Torrens Title.

On the other side of Young Street, the company had been served with a Notice under the Health Act to reclaim the swamp area still remaining on its property and this was finally carried out.

The retiring Mayor, Alexander Thornton, was defeated at the council elections in February 1905 in one of the heaviest polls in years and failed to turn up to hand over office to the newly elected Mayor, Alderman J. Doran.

Plague again broke out in Newcastle. Carrington Council instigated a clean-up campaign to have all

rubbish removed and yards cleaned, with threat of prosecution for an untidy yard. Disinfectant and rat poison was dispensed to householders. All rats caught were incinerated and within two weeks, 4000 rats had been incinerated in the Newcastle district. This did not prevent four local councils, including Carrington, from receiving a "rap over the knuckles" in the *Government Gazette* for not making By-laws for the preservation of Public Health and having the By-laws...for better prevention of the spread of Plague by Rats; for regulating the construction and maintenance of Stables, Produce Stores, &c.,&c.; and for storage and collection of Home Refuse and Garbage...gazetted on their behalf.

On 10 June 1905, the Cosmopolitan Hotel opened for business on the corner of Young and Darvall Streets. Containing 35 rooms, it was outside the Local Option vote. At every government election, voters could vote for (a) retaining the number of licenced premises within each electorate (b) reducing the number or (c) seek additional premises. At one election, only one voter on Carrington exercised his option and he voted for the status quo.

Morison and Bearby were engaged in building five large boilers, each 30 feet long and 8 feet in diameter, for electric generating plant at Seaham and Abermain collieries, reported as being the biggest boiler contract undertaken in the district. A short time later, the firm made a ventilating fan 30 feet in diameter, for Abermain. This was claimed to be capable of delivering 250,000 cubic feet of air per minute.

Carrington Fire Brigade was in financial difficulties and a local committee was set up to help out. Evidently council could not legally donate funds. Fire Underwriters agreed to contribute only threepence (3d.) per £100 (.0125%) of insurance effected within the municipality. The firemen received nothing for call-outs.

Newcastle Ferries Company advised residents of Carrington in September 1905 that it was running a ferry to The Basin every hour, the single fare twopence. Weekly rates were available: children (up to 12) sixpence; ladies one shilling; workmen (to and from work) one shilling and sixpence; gentlemen (as often as required) one shilling and sixpence.

Monthly and family tickets also were available for considerably less. The population was now 3000.

Miss Bernhard drew council's attention to the condition of Hargrave Street and the footpath in front of her new two-storied residence and store on the corner of Little Bourke (Scott) Street. Later she was to lay down a clay tennis court next to the building and I enjoyed many games there. The store still operates.

Council had been loaned a Remington typewriter for a month's trial and decided in September 1905 to buy it for £24; a charge against the sanitary account.

For many years, council had been agitating for repairs and alterations to the police station. Apparently there were two cells, situated between the sleeping apartments of the officer's family and it was claimed that the cells held more prisoners than any others in the district, mainly drunken sailors. At one stage, council was considering condemning the building because of its dilapidated state. In October 1905, Mr. Myers was proceeding with repairs and additions to cost £590.

One might say that the tramway saga ended in 1905 when council was informed that completion of the tramway was deferred until the scheme to remodel Newcastle Harbour was decided. The local Works Department engineer had stated that the tram would never run down Denison Street because it was imperative that the Denison Street Bridge be removed. Now a new fight began for the retention of the bridge or provision of a permanent swing bridge in line with Union Street.

Hetton Colliery had a new powerhouse in which an electric lighting and pumping plant had been installed. An inspection party in November 1905 travelled underground as far as Nobbys and cables extended the whole way for both lighting and power. Noyes Brothers had been the contractor.

A successful Carrington Regatta was held within The Basin on December 30. Sculling was very popular at that time and there were races for under 18's upwards; Carrington residents only; coal trimmers, crane employees and wharf labourers; allcomers, ladies (two ladies pulling one scull each with coxswain) and men, plus sailing races. The American ship Alexander

Gibson was flagship and the boys of Cooks Hill Public School Band played selections on board.

## Chapter 15

### **NO LONGER AN ISLAND**

The Carrington Co-operative Coal Shipping Company which had held the contract for the shipment of coal for eight years, handed over to Joseph Hestelow on 2 January 1906. Mr. Charlie Jarman, manager of the Co-op Co., had advised that his members would engage with the new contractor provided all were employed. Reports indicated that work commenced with few problems but many new starters.

Throughout 1905, there were many reports of proposals for remodelling the port and re-routing of coal trains. Included were several proposals for a second basin in Throsby Creek. Most would have required the removal of the reclamation material west of Denison Street, so the sand being dredged from The Basin in January 1906 was being taken to sea and dumped.

The house provided for the headmaster of the public school was removed in March 1906 and the space was added to the playing area of the school grounds.

Council announced that sanitary charges would be reduced from 1 July, the second reduction in six months.

Fund raising began for a new, and larger, Roman Catholic church.

Drivers at Hetton were seeking an increase in wages from two shillings and ninepence to three shillings and sixpence per day. The drivers were generally teenagers and some 18 to 20 year olds had been driving for four or five years. They had to pay three

shillings per fortnight for tallow and one shilling and ninepence to the accident and doctor's fund. Because of the dampness in which they worked, boots were a heavy item of expense, while sundry purchases such as lamps, wicks, etc., which had to be made from time to time, is reported to have left them with an average of eight shillings per week.

Many other classifications of workers joined in the demand for increases. Mr. Mathieson said NO and would blow the start whistle on Monday and all those who did not go down would be served with a summons. He was not worried about the men not working; much work needed doing at the colliery, which would take some time.

Mr. Hopkin Jones, son of Mr. Morgan Jones, licensee of the Carrington Club Hotel, passed the senior singing examination of the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Coal exports during 1905 reached a record 3,461,438 tons and demand continued in 1906, putting great pressure on the railway for additional sidings at Carrington. There was congestion in the port and vessels were lying two and three abreast. Extra removals to allow the vessel "in turn" to move to its loading berth was adding to costs. In August 1906, the Department of Railways blocked off Cowper Street North, 120 feet west of Young Street, to extend siding accommodation. Owners of properties affected were advised that the land would be resumed but the department neglected to advise council of its intentions.

The government also had purchased the Caledonian Coal Company's coal line to Port Waratah as part of a plan to bring coal to the port through the north end of the island and approval to proceed with the re-arrangement was announced in September 1906. This involved reclaiming the northern part of Throsby Creek and North Carrington to make provision for the storage of 5000 coal wagons. Cranes Nos 12 to 15, with lifting capacity of only 9 tons, were to be replaced with superior plant.

Carrington Co-operative Coal Shipping Company won back the contract for leasing and working the cranes for 1907. When the company lost the contract for 1906, its horses were put out to graze and other plant was

retained. There was pressure for the contract to have a term of three years.

Coal exports for 1906 reached almost four million tons and the Eastern Basin extension, which was used for the first time on 21 January 1907, would help boost these shipments. The contract for the 700 feet extension had been completed by J.S.Gam in November 1906 and now, for the first time, all six cranes could be worked. Because steamships were getting bigger, and arriving in greater numbers (of the 50 vessels which arrived in January to load coal for overseas, 34 were steamers), it was proposed to work cranes 1&2 and 5&6 as pairs and the first vessels under were "Victoria" (1&2) and "Gracchus" (5&6). The remainder of the Eastern Basin frontage was reserved for a graving dock (which we almost got in the 1970's). A seventh hydraulic crane was added in 1914 and commenced loading the "Kwanto Maru" on 19 October. Cranes Nos 1 to 5 operated until 1965 when they were taken out of service to make way for construction of the present Eastern Basin wharf; Nos 6 and 7 ceased operating on 31 July 1967, the day before coal storage began for the Basin Loader.

Council decided in January 1907 to request police not to prosecute people for swimming in The Basin if they were properly clothed. It was pointed out that bathing was carried out all day at Newcastle Beach, where people passed to and fro. Police subsequently received instructions not to interfere with bathers properly clad.

Approval was given in March 1907 for Little Denison (Garrett) Street to be made above tidal waters between Hargrave and Robertson Streets.

Not so good news for those residents who held permissive occupancies on Crown Land at North Carrington and had erected dwellings thereon. Council was advised that rates were recoverable from these tenants.

*Government Gazette* No.160 dated 24 December 1907 announced J.S.Gam the successful tenderer for seven dolphins at the Western Basin. These were to be waiting dolphins and not for ballast discharge. The ballast jetties at North Carrington were destined for idleness also because the new coal lines would run close to them. Government had decided that it was not

its responsibility to provide ballast jetties and in future much of the ballast would have to be lightered to sea and dumped, unless of course it should be suitable for road repairs, in which case it would have to be discharged at a wharf. It was stated that this new system prevailed in most ports of the world.

Another of the problems associated with the long, unlighted stretch of Denison Street from the bridge to Smart Street was the safety of pedestrians. In August 1907, two women were attacked on this stretch by an assailant who had hidden in the tall weeds growing beside the road. Fortunately two men were within 200 yards of them, heard their screams and went to their assistance.

At the government elections in September, the Local Option vote to determine the licencing of liquor outlets in the Wickham Electorate returned a majority for the combined Reduction/No Licences options against the status quo vote. There were nine polling places in the electorate but the one at Carrington was the only one to return a vote to retain the number of licences. As a result of the overall vote, a Local Option Court was held in 1908 and decided that ten hotels in the electorate were to close: two of these were at Carrington, the "All Nations" and the "Prince of Wales", both to close on 10 September 1909.

The residents ended their year with the annual regatta in The Basin.

Fencing of the reserve was completed in January 1908 and council decided to open the area for grazing purposes, charging one shilling per animal per week. Omnibus licences were granted to W. Britt, Geo Friend and J.C.Garrett and drivers licences to W. Gilchrist, G. Friend, W. Pankhurst, J.C.Garrett Snr, J.C.Garrett Jnr, K. Garrett, E. Pritchard, E. Hooley, S.Knight, A. Davis and E. Collins.

The Local Government Act of 1906 replaced the Municipalities Act and provided for a council elected for a term of three years, the mayor to be elected annually from and by the aldermen. The whole of the council retired on 31 January 1908 and the triennial period commenced on 1 February. Only the required number of candidates nominated for the nine positions on the new council and were declared elected. One was my grandfather, Edward (Ted) Booth.

The new council granted grazing rights in the reserve to the Carrington Coal Shipping Company for the tender price of £35 for 12 months.

Haulage of coal to the cranes through Tighes Hill commenced on 13 April 1908 when the new coal-storage sidings at Port Waratah came into full use. During 1907, the dredge "Castor" had discharged 682,000 tons of sand in the northern section of Throsby Creek and on the low-lying land at North Carrington helping to reclaim the site.<sup>1</sup> Trains would now run in and out through the new yards.

**Carrington no longer was an island.**

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<sup>1</sup>Newcastle Chamber of Commerce Annual Report 31 March 1908.

## Chapter 16

### TO BE OR NOT TO BE

Although the Municipality of Carrington did not end until 31 March 1938, when Greater Newcastle came into being, it went very close to disappearing in 1908. Various schemes were being considered for the development of the port and residents were faced with the prospect of large-scale resumptions irrespective of the final outcome. Because of the uncertainty, James Lawson, Town Clerk, prepared a proposal for the government to resume the whole of Carrington and lease the properties back to the residents. He estimated the total cost of resumption would be a quarter of a million pounds and the government would recoup the cost in 40 years. A government officer was sent to Newcastle to check Lawson's estimates and differed only slightly with his figures, so it was no surprise to council later in the year to receive a copy of proposed harbour improvements which included resumption of Carrington.

As early as 1891, most of Section 17 south of Darvall Street and east of Young Street was resumed for "Certain Works of Harbour Improvements" and in the same year, an area south of Murray Terrace was "Reserved for coal storage". In 1892, another area north of Murray Terrace was reserved for the same purpose and further resumptions in Cowper Street North took place in August 1906.

But the big spectre hanging over the residents was the proposal for a second, and much larger, inner basin in Throsby Creek. One suggestion was that the whole of Carrington south of Cowper Street be removed and finger jetties built; another provided for a strip of land only 500 feet wide between the two basins; another took the Throsby Creek basin up past the council chambers, which meant the only access to Carrington would have been via the William (Elizabeth) Street bridge. This last concept was still part of port planning after World War II and even as late as the 1970's the Maritime Services Board would be asked

if it had any immediate plans for the area whenever there was to be a change of ownership of property west of Young Street. The proposed eastern wharf line was just west of Garrett Street and ran through the centre of Carrington Bowling Club. But residents north of Cowper Street should be able to rest easy now that a large area bordering Throsby Creek was "Compulsorily Acquired" by the Honeysuckle Development Corporation on 6 May 1993 in accordance with the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991.

Murray Terrace and the properties east of Booth Street were resumed in March 1909 "for the purpose of extending the railway siding accommodation", and Murray Terrace was quickly occupied by the Department of Railways. This move was resisted by council and it obtained an injunction. The Railway Commissioner's appeal to the High Court was upheld, leaving council with a big legal bill.

Again the question of total resumption of Carrington was suggested by the editor of the *Newcastle Morning Herald* as being the most equitable way to overcome the uncertainty of further resumptions. He claimed the sale of the island was a mistake in the first place.

At a public meeting called to oppose the second basin, it was suggested that future development should be in the south arm of the Hunter River.

While numerous reports talked of the residents' grievances due to the big drop in property values; the almost cessation of building operations and owners loth to make improvements, council carried on with its responsibilities and port development affecting the suburb continued.

The School of Arts was flourishing; trees and shrubs had been planted and a fountain built in front of the building. Council was using expensive Teralba gravel to repair the streets and approved to have the telephone connected to the council chambers to facilitate the work of the town clerk. Darling Street was formed from Hargrave Street to Mr. Mathieson's property. Mr. Mathieson, a son of Alexander Mathieson and a superintendent at Morison and Bearby, had a large home which was located halfway between Hargrave and Robertson Streets. A large swamp prevented any further extention of the street for thirty years.

Life went on normally for the public school pupils, who in October 1908, enjoyed a picnic to Tomago. They were conveyed from the Dyke in four vessels.

Construction of the controversial McMyler Hoist in 1908 saw access to the Dyke cut at William and Hargrave Streets by a large sand embankment built to provide gravity-feed rail sidings for the hoist. The hoist was a large steel structure built in line with the Dyke wharf and the sturdy concrete foundations still remain. It was reputed to have a loading capacity of 500 tons per hour and be able to handle 40-ton coal wagons; unfortunately the only wagons in use at the time were privately owned by the collieries and carried about 10 tons and these were put through the hoist two at a time. The first trial of the hoist was on 4 January 1909 and there were the usual "teething troubles" and it was soon apparent that the shape of the private wagons did not fit the cradle satisfactorily.

Within six weeks there was a call to pull down the unsightly embankment and sell the hoist, which had been branded "a white elephant". The hoist and embankment took up 3400 feet of water frontage, including 700 feet of the main wharf. In August 1909, a Royal Commission found that the McMyler Hoist was an unsuitable apparatus for coal-loading at Newcastle, but to secure some return on the outlay of its cost, an endeavour should be made to utilise the appliance when avoidance of breakage of coal was not an important factor. Subsequently, the hoist was in constant use loading interstate coal and remained in service until February 1916. I witnessed its spectacular demolition on 11 May 1933. The three other hoists which had been purchased were never erected but the bits and pieces which were dumped on vacant ground on the south-east corner of Hargrave and Darling Streets made a great playground for us kids.

The municipality would have experienced great sorrow early in 1910. On 26 January, 15 year old Alfred Clulow, who lived with his parents in Gipps Street, went for a swim in the harbour. He dived off No. 2 Dolphin at the northern end of the Dyke and was immediately attacked by a shark. Mr. Ambrose Rose and two boys, George and William Smith, who had been fishing nearby, waded in and helped Clulow to land. He had suffered horrendous injuries and died shortly after admission to hospital.

An overhead bridge was erected from the Dyke to Cowper Street in 1910. This was recommended by the coroner in October 1909, following another fatality at the dangerous rail crossing. The approaches to the bridge were graded so as to allow small loads to be taken to and from the wharf.

Once again, the Department of Works agreed to fill a portion of the public school ground that went under water in wet weather.

A fire gutted the billiard room at the School of Arts at 3am on 28 January 1911. The library and reading room, with their contents, were badly damaged by fire and water. Civilians assisted with the hose and reel until all brigade members could attend because there was great fear of the fire extending to the main hall and the terrace houses in Little Dennison (Thornton) Street.

Originally intended as a market site, the area that is now Grahame Park was re-notified as a public reserve and recreation ground in March 1911 and council was given a grant of £30 to level and improve the area.

The Cowper Street rail bridge, no longer required for coal haulage, was re-decked to make it available for the laying of tram tracks. As an alternative to Denison Street, the aldermen attempted to have the tram service run via Darvall Street Bridge to make it more convenient for residents living at the south end of the town but that bridge also was earmarked for removal, which left the former rail bridge the only option. The old tram lines, which had laid unused for so many years, were taken up south of Cowper Street, overhauled and tested and re-laid along Cowper Street so as to connect with the Mayfield service at the corner of Hannell and Albert Streets Wickham. Originally promised for Christmas 1911, the steam tram service did not commence until 23 September 1912.

Final settlement in August 1912 between the government and BHP for the establishment of steelworks at Newcastle, meant the northern-most section of Carrington was included in the company's area.

Renovations to the Roman Catholic church and convent were carried out and following a successful childrens bazaar, all debt had been cleared and a substantial credit remained in church funds.

Council assessed certain wharf properties for rating purposes and six out of seven appeals against the assessments were dismissed, thus giving council £750 per annum more rates.

Government gave its final answer to the residents' fight for retention of the Denison Street Bridge by passing a Bill in December 1912 giving authority for its removal. The Bill provided ... 'Any right-of-way over the Carrington Bridge and its approaches is extinguished and the Minister for Public Works may remove in such manner as he may think proper the said bridge and approaches... No person shall have any right to compensation in respect to the extinguishing of such right or the removal of the said bridge.' As land owners had contributed to the cost of the original bridge, the editor of the *Newcastle Morning Herald* considered the act of the government could be likened only to highway robbery.

Operation of the cranes by the "crane boys' co-operative" ceased in December 1912 when the Commissioner for Railways decided to assume this responsibility. As a result, a new Award in January 1913 gave crane drivers eleven shillings and sixpence (11/6d) per shift; horse drivers 10/6d; grooms 10/6d and hookers-on 10/1½d.

Various alternatives were available to the residents for the Anniversary (Australia) Day week-end in 1913. The pupils of the Methodist Sunday School proceeded to the Botanical Gardens Reserve, Waratah, for their annual picnic. They were conveyed from the Dyke by the ferry "Thistle" for what would be their last visit because the reserve was included in the area granted to BHP. Coaltrimmers held a picnic at Toronto. Others had the choice of either an excursion to Port Stephens on the TSS "Hunter" or a river excursion to Raymond Terrace and Morpeth on the steamer "Garnet".

Kerbing and repairs to the footpath in Gipps Street between Forbes and Robertson was effected early in 1913. Because of the increased price of timber, the mayor found that the kerbing could be done cheaper using concrete and council approved his action; the first time this kind of work had been done at council expense. Cost for the 717 feet was £41-17-2, or one shilling and two pence (1/2) per foot.

Carrington Bridge, Denison Street, was closed for public traffic on and after 1 March 1913. Because one water main crossed this bridge and another crossed the Darvall Street Bridge, it was decided to lay a new main across Cowper Street Bridge.

Council had, over the years, provided drainage sumps at most corners to take surface water. Early in 1913, council found that sumps about which complaints had been received, were those connected by drains from various dwellings, so it was decided to have the drains disconnected and compel the dwellings to substitute an absorption trench.

Town Clerk J. L. Lawson resigned in March 1913 when he was appointed secretary of the Abattoirs Board. At the same meeting, it was decided to kerb Young Street with concrete, from Cowper to Victoria Street.

By June 1913, the Denison Street Bridge had been removed and the bucket dredge "Hunter" had cut a new channel through the former northern approach. The tram service was providing excellent means of access and the demand for rental properties far exceeded the supply but the high cost of labour and materials had militated against private and speculative building.

Another bright occasion for the town was the official switching on of electric street lighting on 1 November 1913. The Mayor of Newcastle congratulated Carrington on being the first of the suburban councils to adopt electric street lighting. He must have forgotten Lambton's unfortunate experience years earlier, generating its own power.

By far the largest resumption of land at Carrington was notified on page 7807 of *Government Gazette* No.206 of 31 December 1913. The area included all the remaining land east of Little Young (Lott) Street; all remaining land south of Rouse Street and east of Young Street and three-fifths of the land east of Little Denison (Wilson) Street south of Darvall Street. Also included was Smart Street east of Little Denison Street, Carrington Street and Gipps Street south of Cowper Street. All told, 42 houses and three stores were involved plus the workshops of Mr. Rodgers, engineer, and Mr. G. Tudor, plumber and gasfitter. Intention of this resumption had been conveyed to council, and presumably residents, in August 1911.

Government started to remove the buildings in 1914. Some were sold and removed to other parts of the municipality and to adjacent suburbs. They realised very fair prices because of the prevailing high cost of building materials and it was conceded that compensation for resumptions had been fair and equitable; only the council lost out because of the reduction in the number of rateable properties.

A new thoroughfare was added to the town by the forming, making, metalling and binding of Forbes Street over its full length.

The start of World War I in 1914 was to have a significant affect on the plans for Carrington. Plans had been based on a continuation of the increasing coal trade, which in 1913 reached a record of 5,236,621 tons. Because of the War and many factors afterwards, it was 1968/69 before the coal tonnage out of Newcastle exceeded that figure.

At the end of 1914, students at the public school were preparing for the public schools' patriotic display at the showground. The school was going to contribute a squad for dumbbell exercises and flag drills and 50 students were to take part in maypole dances. There were 157 boys and 169 girls enrolled at the school but more accommodation was required for the infant section. It was reported that on 17 November there were 104 children in one small classroom where there was desk space for 94. Class numbers must have been high even in my time at the school. We had a single class until 5th class, when we were divided into two classes, each of at least 30 pupils.

Morison and Bearby was employing 240 and being kept very busy with orders from the collieries and also some very heavy castings for the steel works.

To speed up the placing of coal trucks alongside the cranes, hydraulic-powered capstans were introduced at Nos. 12 & 13 Dyke to replace the horses.

Early in 1915, council adopted as a permanent policy, the use of concrete in preference to wood for all kerbing and guttering. While in the concrete mood, council decided to replace the wooden floor in the council chambers with one of concrete. Eighteen months earlier it had been necessary to replace the floor because of damage by white ants but despite

remedies to prevent further attack, the ants were back again.

By now, the wartime restrictions on coal exports was being felt. The defence authorities, through the Customs department, had placed restrictions on the export of coal to the west coast of South America, India and elsewhere. Chili had been Newcastle's best foreign customer. Fortunately the commencement of the BHP steel works increased local coal requirements, which gave some support to the coal industry, but in May 1915, Hetton Colliery closed down "for the time being".

The Western Basin Wharf, 1725 feet long, was completed in mid 1915. In a departure from previous practice, day labour had been used to build the wharf, which was claimed to be the strongest timber wharf in the world. Work had commenced erecting the first of the electric cranes and by September, a start had been made on the laying of the railway sidings. Ultimately, 24 sidings would service the six cranes.

In the early days of World War I, the people of Carrington entered heartily into the patriotic movement. The local branch of the Red Cross had many active workers making pyjamas, socks, shirts, sheets, pillow cases, bandages, etc., useful for soldiers' wear or hospital service. Girls in the sewing class at the public school donated the results of their work to the Red Cross. Workers at Morison and Bearby made weekly donations and a fund was inauguated to provide a gold medal to every Carrington recruit.

Hetton Colliery was shut down permanently and early in 1916 dismantling was in progress. Absence of trade and the heavy expense of maintaining the colliery in idleness, especially pumping, was to blame. Mr. Alex Mathieson supervised the dismantling of the vast structure he had been building up for upward of 30 years.

The first two electric cranes were tested in March 1916. These cranes had been designed by Percy Allen while District Engineer, Newcastle. To supply them with power, the Department of Railways had built a "temporary" generating station at the eastern end of the Newcastle railway yards (later Zaara Street power station)

The last of the major resumptions was notified in the *Government Gazette* on 24 March 1916. It involved all the land west of Fitzroy Street between Cowper Street South and Darvall Street and the foreshore soon was being reclaimed. This area was to be the site for the timber industry.

In May 1916, the Darvall Street Bridge was quickly demolished. In anticipation of its removal, a metalled road had been formed along Cowper Street to connect with Wickham via the Cowper Street Bridge.

It was claimed that the streets which had been included in the resumptions had cost council not less than £7000 to £8000 to form, make and macadamise and council had not been recompensed in any way.

But the Municipality of Carrington survived.

CHAPTER 17

Because of the slackness in coal exports, the Newcastle Chamber of Commerce suggested to the government that the electric cranes be used to load wheat but the Railway Commissioners were determined to centralise all exports at Sydney.

The first section of further coal-shipping wharves, having a frontage of 540 feet to the entrance to Wickham Basin, had been completed. This section of wharfage was to have had a high capacity belt loader but this never eventuated. Instead, almost 20 years later, it became the first wheat loading berth. (No.1 Silo Wharf)

In August 1916, 130 warm garments given by the students of the Public School, were packed and forwarded for the needy children of France. In the same month, the Industrial Arbitration Court set the Cost of Living minimum weekly wage at £2/15/6.

There were now between 300 and 400 coal trimmers; fewer by about 150 than in normal times.

The council's working foreman was granted a fortnight's holiday on full pay in November 1916, his first holiday in 20 years; the Town Clerk was granted a fortnight each year.

Late 1916 must have been a turning point in industrial relations. Miners were granted eight-hour shifts, bank to bank and the Carrington Coal and Coke Shipping Employees also received eight-hour shifts. Because members of the Union worked only casually but had to be at all times subject to the call of their employer (thereby preventing them from accepting work outside), Mr Deputy Justice Scholes ruled that their rates of pay should revert to that prior to the reduction of hours especially so when, for the convenience of the industry, their work is for eight hours without a break. (His Honor stated in an earlier hearing that the working of 12-hour shifts under the old system was inhuman, it was too much).

Late in December, Miss Eslick of Young Street, received a letter from a soldier in France thanking her for sending soap. He and all his mates had been alive with a vermin called "chats" but after washing their clothes with the

soap, they were free from them. He enclosed his address in the hope the lady would send more soap.

Work commenced in January 1917 to reclaim the swamp bounded by Young, William and Little Gipps (Mathieson) Streets. It had been covered with stagnant water and council, backed up by the Health Department, had threatened to take legal proceedings against the government, which owned the land. The dredge "Castor" was pumping spoil from the fairway channel, through pipes carried across about 300 feet of pontoons.

By April 1917, all six electric cranes were in commission.

Armstrong and Royce, as well as Earp Woodcock and Beveridge, were completing timber mills and joinery works west of Fitzroy Street between Cowper Street South and Darvall Street and both firms were building wharves along their Throsby Creek frontages.

The committee formed to provide a Roll of Honour for those who had enlisted, had £30 in hand towards its erection. There were 250 enlistments up to June 1917, of whom 12 had been killed in action.

The Soldiers' Farewell Committee was giving a farewell presentation to five more soldiers on the eve of their departure. I still treasure the kangaroo-skin wallet presented to me by a similar committee in 1941. Not to be outdone, the Girls' Patriotic Fund held a juvenile frolic to raise funds for comforts for soldiers of Carrington.

Morison and Bearby opened a new rolling mill and by January 1918 had completed rolling of the first 100 tons of bar iron. The whole plant had been designed and manufactured on the premises and the mill was driven by electric power supplied by Newcastle City Council - the only one so driven in the State. There were many interstate enquiries for the manufacture of special components for industries that had been dependent on overseas supplies.

A new up-date brick fire station, adjacent to the original structure, was opened on 25 March 1918. Provision had been made for accommodation of a motor engine in the future.

Glazed Waterproof Tile Co. commenced operating in Denison Street in mid 1918. Output was to be 2500 tiles per day.

All work was suspended on 12 November to celebrate the Armistice and 13 November was proclaimed a public holiday.

Hotels were compulsorely closed on both days under the Wartime Precautions Act

Regular "Welcome Home" functions for returning servicemen were held in the early months of 1919.

Special steam trams conveyed members of the Methodist Sunday School direct from Carrington to Speers Point for their annual picnic in March 1920.

During 1917, Mr. Hughes, Prime Minister, purchased 100,000 tons of northern coal to keep collieries working during a trade depression that marked the later years of W.W.1. The coal was stacked at the Dyke until late 1920, when an order was secured for a supply to New Lealand. By January 1921, about 7,000 tons remained.

Carrington Council was in a very sound financial position in February 1921. In 1920, rating of government lands came into force and rates from the Railway Commissioners and other departments for 1921 would amount to about £4,000, which was about half the total rates. Kerbing and guttering was being done to a much greater extent without any extra cost to the owners of the properties fronting it.

The Clyde Hotel closed in 1921 under instructions from the NSW Licenses Reduction Board. It was one of 23 hotels in the Newcastle area delicensed. Compensation paid to the Owner was £2470 and the Licensee received £1050, the highest compensation paid in the district.

Mr. E. R. Hain from Bolwarra was appointed Town Clerk in May 1921. Later in the year, the cottage next to the Council Chambers was completed and the rental offered to the Town Clerk.

Council decided to buy the Croasdale Estate, bounded by Howden, Young and Victoria Streets. It was claimed to be an eyesore in the principal street and required filling. To-day it is Jubilee Park. More roads were being tar-sealed. In hot weather the tar used to bubble and us kids would collect it with sticks and use it to seal the joins in our tin canoes.

The sawmill and timber yards of Earp, Woodcock, Beveridge and Co. were almost completely destroyed by fire on 7 February 1922.

Auction sale of the old Oriental Hotel (formerly Walsh's Family Hotel), "adjoining the handsome new Oriental Hotel", was notified on 23 January 1923. It was claimed it would make a "capital boarding house".

Uncle Tom's Cabin, with plantation melodies and dances, was presented at the School of Arts on 1 February 1923 by Lashwood and Roe, revue and vaudeville artists.

Council completed the numbering of buildings in April 1923. Enamelled street name-plates had been purchased earlier in 1921.

The tender of £475/16/- by C.E. Gaites for the erection of Memorial Gates, was accepted in May 1923. Earlier in the year, the Roll of Honour Memorial Committee had handed £210 to council towards erection of the gates.

A disastrous fire occurred on 10 May 1923, resulting in the almost total destruction of the sawmill and joinery works of Armstrong and Royce Ltd. Damage was estimated at between £45,000 and £50,000. Fortunately 12 horses were released from their stables before the stables, feed houses, three two-horse waggons, six one-horse carts and a motor lorry were destroyed. The re-erected buildings of Earp, Woodcock and Beveridge were in danger because of the direction of the wind but damage was restricted to scorching of the office building.

The Water Board and residents of the Upper Reserve ("Texas") came to an arrangement in August for extension of the water service to close proximity of their residences.

Also in August, the horse ambulance wagon placed at the Dyke under council control, was transferred to Lidcombe. The Newcastle district by this time had an up-to-date ambulance service.

Alderman G.J.H.Lott, a resident of 50 years, died in September 1923. He had been a member of the Improvement Committee before Incorporation and was very active in the School of Arts, being Vice President.

Major H.J.Connell, MP. unveiled the Memorial Gates on 23 February 1924. The Gates originally were located at the Robertson Street entrance to Grahame Park and the four trachyte slabs contain the names of 257 men who went to the Front from Carrington, 40 of whom were killed in action.

Carrington Parents and Citizens' Association advised the Minister for Education, in no uncertain terms, of the deplorable conditions at the Public School. A district member of Parliament is reported to have said that the school was in a worse state than any school he had seen. Accommodation was inadequate and the playground was in a deplorable condition. At times, water to a depth of six inches, surrounded the buildings, which were claimed to be cold, damp and generally unhealthy. Fifty children were accommodated in a low, ill-ventilated, closed weathershed with no seating provided and 45 children were crowded into a one-time storeroom with bad lighting and worse ventilation.

The bicycle track was pegged out on the Reserve in August. A local bicycle club, represented by W. Smithers, president, and A. Bower, secretary, had outlined this proposal to council earlier and the estimated cost was £289/5/-.

In September 1924, the Mission to Seamen secured, on advantageous terms, the former Clyde Hotel, to be used as a sailors' rest for... 'daytime reading, writing and waiting in.' It was not to compete with the evening activities of the Chelmsford Institute at Stockton.

St. Thomas' Church had been demolished and on Saturday 4 October, the Bishop of Newcastle laid and dedicated the foundation stone for the new church which was to be built on the same floor, which rested on stilts.

October 1924 also highlighted the tenacity of the local councillors. The street-lighting contract with Newcastle Council had expired in October 1923. Negotiations for a new contract had commenced in June 1923 but because Newcastle Council was then buying power from Zara Street cheaper than it could manufacture it, Carrington Council would sign a new agreement for only two years. Finally, on 9 October 1924, Carrington lights were switched off and residents had to endure two months of blackout before the dispute was settled with the aid of a conciliation committee and the lights shone again on 17 December 1924. The next week, Newcastle Council announced that charges for street lighting to all districts would be reduced by approximately 10% from 1 January 1925. Peace had been declared with honour to both sides.

Thirty building blocks, part of the Scottish Australian Mining Co's estate in Forbes Street, east of Young Street, were auctioned in May 1925. Council decided to purchase

two of these blocks to allow for the extension of Gipps Street to Forbes Street.

In anticipation of electification, the tramline from Cowper Street bridge was duplicated as far as St. Thomas' Church, where a staff box was located to indicate whether the single line to the terminus was clear.

By August 1925, the population had reached 3102 and the average rental was 17/11 p/wk. Council had purchased a concrete mixer and was ready to start concreting the footpath on either side of Young Street to a width of nine feet at council expense. Some residents bore the expense of extra cost where the whole of the footpath was covered.

Some residents at "Texas" received a shock in October 1925 when they were asked to bring residences to requirements of building ordinances. The residences were on Crown Land which could be required at short notice, many were occupied by widows in poor circumstances and council had not enforced ordinances. Council decided to ask Lands Department not to grant any more permissive occupancies and in January 1926 it was announced that there would be no further subdivision of Crown Lands on Carrington because of the expense of resumption when the whole of Carrington would ultimately be resumed for railway and port use.

At the council meeting on 10 March 1926, aldermen re-named the streets bearing the title "Little" after former aldermen, the names they bear today. The section of Gipp Street from Victoria Street to Cowper Street North became Hill Street and the "Little" streets south of Cowper Street were given separate names.

Grahame Park tennis court was opened on 22 May 1926. The court had been laid down by the council, which also provided materials for the club-house, built by voluntary labour under the leadership of Mr. T. Anderson. Mr. McCarthy was Club President and Mr. G. Watt, Club Captain. A second court was ready for play a month later.

The electric tram service commenced on Sunday 15 August.

Council was having trouble with the swamp on the corner of Robertson and Bourke Streets. Fish in the swamp were dying and the Lands Department refused to pay the cost of removal. Council claimed swamps were a menace to health and threatened to sue the government.

A program comprising a baby show, tug-of-war, cycling events, national dancing, boxing and other attractions was held on the Bethal green on 6 November in aid of the Cancer Research Fund and raised one-fifth over Carrington's designated amount.

Improvements to the public school were opened by Mr. J.M. Baddeley, Minister for Mines, Labour and Industry, on Saturday 7 November, 1926. The improvements included two new classrooms, staff room and entrance porch, constructed in brick. The existing school had been remodelled and formed into four classrooms, with an additional hat room; the flooring had been raised, gallery platforms removed and large new windows provided for modern lighting and cross-ventilation. Remodelling also had been carried out at the infants school, where the floors had been raised and additional windows provided. Lavatories had been built and adjoining sheds provided with wash basins and bubbler drinking fountains. School enrolment was 224 boys and 240 girls.

As 1926 came to a close, The Department of Railways was refusing to release its land in the proposed (Connolly) park area unless reimbursed with its full value, estimated at £800.

Early in 1927, Council decided to change from tar to bitumen for road sealing. It was stated that tar lost its binding qualities through sunshine and rain and although bitumen was initially dearer, its better wearing qualities made it eventually cheaper. It was also decided to purchase a motor truck to replace the horse and dray.

Mr. O'Halloran, Town Clerk, attended his last council meeting in June. He had been appointed President of Local Government Superannuation Board. Aldermen were advised that the extension of Gipps Street to Forbes Street was nearing completion.

Carrington Tennis Club was granted approval in July to instal electric lights above the courts in Grahame Park.

As many residents had paid to have the whole of the footpath in front of their properties in Young Street cemented, council decided to make it uniform and ratepayers would pay for the additional work over two years @ 5%.

Early in September 1927, trees had been planted in Hill, Gipps and Hargrave Streets. Mr. Miller became the new

Town Clerk from September 19.

Council advised the Newcastle Congregational Church late in February 1928 that the Seamen's Bethal site had reverted to the Crown.

An application for a factory in Denison Street was granted to the State Monier Pipe and Reinforced Concrete Works in June.

Following a Special Meeting of Council on 19 June 1928, Health Inspector Mr. E. McCarthy was retired by council and his duties transferred to the town clerk. As an act of grace, he was granted two weeks salary for each year of service.

Earlier in 1928, council had refused to renew the bus licence of Johns and Skinner to ply between Carrington and Newcastle. The proprietors took council to court and late in June, council was compelled to issue the licence in accordance with route, timetable and fares set out by order of the court. Johns and Skinner surrendered one licence in August and in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on December 1, they notified patrons that the service run by them would be withdrawn from that date.

At a council meeting on 26 June, 1928, aldermen carried a resolution that the Mayor call and Indignation Meeting to protest against the rumoured removal of Cowper Street bridge. The Mayor was the only alderman not in agreement and failed to do anything about it. Early in July, Alderman McLagan was appointed Deputy Mayor and was instructed to call the meeting. The meeting duly went ahead on July 20.

At the Indignation Meeting it was stated that the Mayor's absence was due to illness but a report in the *Newcastle Morning Herald* on November 29 stated he had changed his residence and he did not stand for re-election.

Use of the council's concrete mixer was granted to the local cricket club in September to lay a wicket in what became Connolly Park.

The Governor gave approval on 16 October 1928 for council to borrow £5,000 for roads and drainage work. Council immediately called for tenders and Concretors Ltd commenced the work on November 29 although the loan arranged with the Commonwealth Bank did not operate until January 1, 1929.

### THE DEPRESSION YEARS

In February 1929, council decided to take advantage of loans being offered by the government for permanent works. £10,000 with interest less than 6%. repayable over 20 years, would enable council to provide work for many unemployed. It was proposed to concrete the footpaths in every street: six feet wide in the major streets and full width in the narrower streets.

Residents at "Texas" had ignored requests by the Postal Department to provide letter boxes so in May, mail deliveries ceased until boxes were provided.

Construction of the cycling track at North Carrington was commenced in June 1929 as work for relief of unemployed and within a few weeks the embankment had been completed.

The flow-on from the continued lockout in the Maitland coalfields caused a large number of men to be out of work so in August council arranged another loan from the Commonwealth Bank of £10,000 @ 5.875%, repayable over 20 years. This way, council could employ local residents whereas a government loan would have meant recruiting from the employment office.

Council appointed Miss King, Assistant Town Clerk in September 1929.

Mr. Spencer, who had been showing pictures in the School of Arts for about 10 years, applied in October to erect a picture hall in Young Street. The Methodist Church was against a theatre next to their church but approval was given. Everyones Theatre was opened by the Mayor, Alderman McLagan, on Monday March 17, 1930.

A new Cowper Street Bridge, south of the original one, was underway in January 1930. Work was being spread among the unemployed; 137 men 2 days each. On April 4, *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* stated that 'in none of the suburbs of Newcastle have the effects of the stoppage of production at the large northern collieries been more severely felt than by Carrington. It is entirely dependent on the coal trade for its existence and the Railway Commissioners are the largest ratepayers in the municipality...Coal shipments when conditions are regular,

require the services of between 800 and 900 men. About 500 of these are trimmers, another 250 are crane employees... trimmers, instead of having three turns each week, are having one short working period in each fortnight, and only a proportion of the men have even that. The crane men, whose numbers have been reduced to 50, are faring a little better.'

After 65 weeks of dispute between coal owners and miners, all mines returned to work on 3 June, 1930 but some weeks later it was reported that coal loading was slack and things were as bad as they were before the dispute ended. Men were earning only sufficient money to keep them from being entitled to the dole.

In the meantime, Newcastle City Council made 100 tons of coal available and the Federal Government supplied military clothing for distribution at Carrington. Many were turned away.

Carrington 1st Grade Rugby Union side came 2nd in the Mullally Cup in 1930. The side comprised - J.Dawson, M.Francis. E.Miller, J.Towers, G.Winterbine, O.Perry, W.Jordan (replaced by -Daly), I.Jones, W.Bull, A.Jenkins, J.Hughes, R.Bradford, P.Haynes, C.Pearce, C.Elferston. The side went on to become premiers and winner of the Earp Shield. The club and Rugby League shared the Reserve Oval on alternative Saturday afternoons.

To complete a successful season for the Rugby Union Club, the Reserve Grade won the final and the Mark Reid Cup. Players were E.Cameron, W.Roser, J.Dawson, C.Pratt, J.Miller, D.Lewis, J.Turnbull, W.Matchett, J.Bamber, H.Nichols, J.Oliver, J.Nichols, R.Roser, W.Jenkins, H.Bamber.

In November 1930, the Minister for Local Government gave permission for council to refrain from levying a loan rate for £10,000 loan for years 1931, 1932 and 1933. Rates outstanding at the end of 1930 amounted to £2337.

Further military clothing was allotted for distribution in May 1931. *The Newcastle Morning Herald* hoped that the clothing was better than the previous lot which included coats with one sleeve and trousers with one leg. Council was to pay the cost of dyeing and freight.

Council received some relief in July when the Commonwealth Bank advised a rebate of 1% p.a. would be allowed on interest on council overdraft and loans.

Feelings must have been strained among the residents. A Letter to the Editor on 15 August 1931 stated that most unions had agreed to ration available work among members but not so the crane union. It claimed that about 100 members were being employed full time, plus overtime, but 50 had been retrenched and were on the dole.

Carrington First Grade R.U. team had another outstanding season in 1931, winning the premiership (Earp Shield) plus the Mullally and McCallum Cups. The only loss of the season was the Final but it went on to win the Grand Final 20-0. The Grand Final Team comprised:- P.Cameron, W.Matchett (who was injured and replaced by L.Sadler), J.Cameron, E.Cameron, H.Dawson, G.Lewis, O.Perry, J.Cullen, W.Jordan, R.Ball, C.Elferon, J.Towers, H.Nicholls, J.Jordan, I.Jones. Each member received a miniature cup.

The Reserve Grade side won the Reid Cup and the New Zealand Perpetual Forests Cup and the Final but was defeated 5-0 in the Grand Final.

The laying of sewer pipes commenced in early November 1931. Because of the water-logged condition of the ground in which the pipes were to be laid, the government decided to use concrete pipes 6ft. long instead of earthenware pipes 2ft. long. The pipes were made by State Monier Pipe Works' factory at Carrington. Council sought the employment of a large number of local.

Council employees were being rationed and working to a roster. The Health Inspector's allowance was taken from the Town Clerk and an over-award payment to the Works Overseer was removed.

1932 started badly for Carrington Council. The New Rating (Exemption) Act 1931 exempted Railway land from council rates. The Valuer General also revalued private properties and assessments were reduced by at least 15%. Council was faced with a shortage of about £5100 on its previous income from rates. More than half of the council staff was laid off and only essential services were being carried on. Despite these circumstances, council decided not to increase rates. Rates and sanitary fees outstanding at 31 December 1931 amounted to £3528/10/4.

The Department of Public Works began the reclamation of the two swamps facing Robertson Street. The work was conducted as relief work and the filling material came from the two ramps at the old McMyler Hoist and was transported by horse

and dray. Many an ice cream I bought from the sale of axle grease to the dray owners.

By February 1932, voluntary workers had constructed swimming baths behind the council chambers using mangrove sticks and were seeking provision of 400 feet of battens to improve them.

The Carrington Relief Committee had collected and distributed to necessitous cases £775 in the previous twelve months.

Lands Department agreed to reserve land which now constitutes Connolly Park and place it under council control. The baths behind the council chambers also were to be controlled by council.

Good news for council employees. Council was granted £3000 p,a. in lieu of rates on Crown lands and employees were rationed to work three weeks in five.

A council deputation to the Minister for Local Government in March 1932, regarding the Crown Lands Rating Exemption Act, was told that Carrington was too small for a municipality and he would soon bring down a Greater Newcastle Bill to absorb small municipalities.

Another Letter to Editor on 1 April 1932 castigated the cranemen's union for refusing to share work with the 50 retrenched members. The Executive Committee of the union recommended expulsion from the union of all members whilst unemployed. "No employers' organisation in Australia has ever attempted anything more contemptable than this." Those members working were having thirty shillings per fortnight deducted from their wages under the Public Servants' Salaries Act rehabilitation scheme, which would not apply if they were rationing work.

Members were preparing a third tennis court at Grahame Park. Recent night championships had attracted 400 entries.

Carrington Cricket Club also had success in April 1932. The A Grade team defeated Holmsville in the final and the B Grade team defeated St. Patricks in its final.

Carrington Council expressed emphatic support for the concept of a Greater Newcastle Council.

In June, council was granted £947 by the Commonwealth Relief Committee to dismantle William Street Bridge and erect a concrete box culvert in its place. Married men were to be engaged for one week; single men 3 days. All applicants had to be residents of Carrington. The culvert was completed in early September.

Mr. P. Connolly, M.L.A., advised council that by notice in Government Gazette, 13 May 1932, an area of 5 acres 2 roods was reserved for public recreation (Connolly Park). Ald. Coe moved a letter of appreciation be sent to Mr. Connolly, who had obtained the impossible.

Three public school pupils, Heather Johns, Norma Ross and Phyllis Loades were chosen to represent N.S.W. in an Interstate School Netball carnival at Brisbane in August 1932. Miss E. Christianson, who taught Class 5A and was coach of the school netball team, was chosen to be one of the team managers. Residents were thrilled at the selections and special functions were to be arranged to defray the girls' expenses.

At the same time, the Basic Wage dropped 12/6 per week for males and 6/6 per week for females. The new rates were to be Males £3/10/- (\$7) per week using the basis Food £1/4/-, Housing 18/-, Clothing 10/8, Miscellaneous 17/4, for man, wife and child under 14. Females were to receive £1/18/-.

Eastern Suburbs was now the local rugby league football team in the main Newcastle competition and 1932 proved a bumper year. At No.1 Sports Ground on 3 September, the reserve grade team, who were Minor Premiers, defeated Maitland United in the final 14-5, and thus won the John Bull Trophy. The team comprised S.Bell, G.Winterbine, G.Lewis, M.Elphick, H.Dawson, J.Knight, H.Scotman, R.Perry, J.Austin, O.Perry, W.Jordan, L.Davis and J.Daley.

A fortnight later, Easts defeated Cessnock 20-17 in the first grade Grand Final. Cessnock led 17-2 with 20 minutes to play but East staged a whirlwind finish. Team members were E.Cameron, M.Francis, R.Roser, R.Antcliffe, W.Matchett, Joe Montgomery (c), E.Rutherford, A.Pugh, N.Atkins, J.Wilson, J.Towers, M.Sanderson and A.Gardiner. The damp ground, the rain, and the strong wind which blew down the ground, did not detract in any way from the games brilliance and speed. My grandmother made me a rosette out of white ribbon and dyed it red, East's colour, with a warning that if it rained, I was to take it off. Unfortunately the rain coincided with Cessnock's big lead and I removed the rosette but proudly put it back later

when the rain ceased, which coincided with East's whirlwind finish. I received several abuses for my apparent lack of faith.

Council agreed to the wicket in Connolly Park being used by women cricketers on Sunday afternoons. It also approved a silver coin admission to Grahame Park for tennis night championships. I earned numerous small amounts acting as ball boy at these tournaments.

November 1932 found Carrington Council "on the brink". It had very little chance of carrying on unless something was done to give it an assured income. The loss in rates from land used by the Railway Commissioners meant that payments of loans and interest absorbed the major portion of rates collected from residents. When Alderman Bower was elected Mayor for 1933, the mayoral allowance was reduced from £80 to £52. Despite its problems, council accepted an offer from the Unemployment Relief Committee of £600; 50% Grant and 50% Loan @ 3% p.a., payable in 10 equal half-yearly instalments. This money was to be applied to stormwater drainage in Robertson and Victoria Streets.

A New Year's carnival at the cycling track saw Dick Tressider lower his own record for the flying lap to 15.4 seconds and the standing start to 18.4 seconds. A new Junior record of 16 seconds for a rolling start was set by H.McCormack. Miss Lillian Thorp, a Sydney amateur rider was introduced and recorded 21 seconds.

Alderman Coe was elected as a delegate to attend a concerence at Sydney in February 1933 re construction of wheat silos at Newcastle.

Council was still having woes. Workers' Compensation Insurance and Family Endowment Taxation for unemployment relief works had to be paid out of council funds. Alderman W.R.Pickett resigned from council and a request to the Minister to allow council to continue with eight alderman amd save the expense of a by-election was refused because he did not have the power to grant the request.

P.W.D began widening the vehicular section of Cowper Street Bridge in March 1933 following a special grant of £6000 to provide work for bridge carpenters and others. During reconstruction, the portion carrying tramlines remained open for single lane traffic.

Despite a complaint by Rev. W.Jenkins, council upheld the right for sport on Sunday in the Reserve and Parks, including cycling in the velodrome.

The 220 yards dirt velodrome was officially opened by the Mayor, Ald.A.Bower on 17 April 1933. There was a large attendance and a big program. J.Beath lowered the one lap flying start to 14.2 seconds. The cycling season concluded the following week. H.Rose won the J.H.Oldham Cup for the season point score.

Carrington defeated Holmesville by 9 wickets in the District A Grade Junior cricket final.

By May 1933, the sewerage pumping stations in the Carrington section and the reticulation had been practically completed but the HDW&S Board could not give council an indication when sewer could be connected to properties. This would not be available until the treatment works and pumping stations of the main sewerage amplification scheme were in working order.

A new Dennis-Tamini pumping motor fire engine was provided for the Carrington Fire Station in August 1933.

The Depression was still causing hardships for the locals. Council was advised by the Dept. of Local Government that in genuine cases of inability to pay rates, council could waive payment of interest in respect of rates levied in 1931, 1932, 1933. Council also supported a call for a substantial increase in rations for the unemployed.

A baby show in the School of Arts, organised by the committee for St. Xavier's annual ball, attracted babies from practically every district. The only Carrington winners were;- Margaret Robertson, 2nd in 3 to 6 months; Warren Mitchell, 1st, Joan Sadler 2nd in 18 months to 2 years; Marcia Hopkins, 2nd in 3 to 4 years.

Government announced in January 1934 that it had decided to erect wheat silos at Carrington. Land required for the terminal wheat elevator had been resumed by the government some years before and held by the PWD.

A record crowd attended a carnival at the cycling track at the end of April. All proceeds were donated to Newcastle Hospital (£18) and the Ambulance Service (£6). Horace Petherbridge, Empire Games representative appeared. Aldermen Bower and Rose won the official's pursuit over one minute defeating C.Neave and R.Taylor but Neave won the

official's half-mile handicap from Ald.Bower and R.Taylor. "Fines" at a mock court raised £6.

For the third consecutive year, government made a special grant of £3000 to council. The municipality was deteriorating. All roads were in need of repairs and grass was growing everywhere.

Carrington Branch of NSW Dole Workers' Association, President Mr.W.Loades, suggested tar sealing the cycle track and building new baths as emergency relief work. Council rejected this proposal because it was not in a position to finance its part of the scheme. Although the government provided wages plus 10%, council was liable for Workers Compensation Insurance, all supervision, equipment, tools and material, cost of horses, drays and motor lorries and could cause loss of employment to its employees. Staunch labour aldermen also were against working for less than the award wage.

Rates and fees outstanding at 31 December 1933 amounted to £9000.

Foundations for the wheat silos were well under way by July 1934. A forest of piles, only a few feet apart, were being sunk to provide a base for reinforced concrete foundations. Provision had been made to increase the accommodation if and when necessary.

In the same month, 15 tons of coal was provided for distribution among the unemployed. This would save some residents from knocking lumps of coal off the top of wagons on incoming coal trains as the loco changed from hauling to shunting position adjacent to the foundations of the McMyler Hoist, then collecting them later, a frequent duty for many.

The School of Arts buildings were in need of repairs so council donated amount of rates back to the organisation. Later in the year when Alderman H.N.Coe was elected Mayor unopposed, instead of the traditional drinking to the Mayor's health, the money also was donated to the School of Arts.

The local doctor, Dr.J.F.Collins, whose original surgery was in the two-storied building next to Everyones Theatre, had been particularly good to the unemployed and council felt that he should be subsidised for his charity. A fortnight later, the Minister for Health advised council that anyone in poor circumstances who could not attend the

nearest hospital for treatment, could receive medical attention from a medical practitioner, who was entitled to receive five shillings per visit.

In the meantime, the Carrington League Cycling Club (which had been formed only about three months), defeated the cream of the State to win the Dunlop inter-club priership of the League of Wheelmen which was run over 20 miles on the Homebush-Warwick Farm course on 4 August 1934. The team comprised H.Scotman (captain), J.Beath (vice-captain), E.Burns, J.Ramsay and C.Mills.

The win must have generated enthusiasm among cyclist and supporters because within six weeks, volunteers were reconstructing the cycle track at North Carrington. Between 50 and 60 men were working week-ends raising the outside of the track two feet and increasing the grading at the turns to about 35 degrees. The new track, now with a bitumen surface, which cost the club £118, was officially opened by Mayor Coe on 9 December 1934 in the presence of 2500 people. The club had hoped for a concrete surface but this was too expensive. Council had lent a lorry to cart materials and the assistance of the Overseer of Works.

Hubert Opperman, world's champion road cyclist, visited the track in February 1935 and presented Junior Club Champion, Jack Cairns and Senior Club Champion, Jim Beath, with sashes and cups. I was lucky enough to secure Opperman's autograph.

Approval was given to Miller Signs to build a safety fence around the top of the cycle track and paint advertising matter on the fence.

Lands Department began granting Permissive Occupancies on the Reserve ("Texas") in June 1935 without reference to the council. Two additional Sections had been subdivided to satisfy the urgent needs of the applicants who were about to be evicted from their residences.

Despite the tough times, fund-raising events were still held. On 29 June, a Pet Parade was held down Young Street from the Council Chambers to Connolly Park and there the public school A & B Grade played a fancy dress football match. The proceeds of the day went to purchase blazers for the school footballers.

Late in July, the P & C Association organised a wheelbarrow race from the Council Chambers to Lang (later Jubilee) Park. The first to be held in Newcastle, it was restricted

to female competitors who found the barrows very narrow and uncomfortable. At a "Mock Court" at the park, charges were many and humerous. Even the Mayor was charged with being a resident of the municipality.

To complete a busy month, the Church of England held a parish popular lady contest between Wickham and Carrington. Miss Heather Johns, Secretary, St. Thomas' Tennis Club, represented Carrington. The tennis court was behind the church and hall and parallel to Thornton Street. The contest raised £103/16/2.

At this time, the municipality had three butcher shops, licences having been granted to A. McGregor, A. Back and R.H.B. Robertson.

Council decided to support a move to have the age for receipt of the old age pension reduced from 65 to 60, claiming that those over 60 were not physically capable of relief work.

Early in October 1935, the Carrington League Cycling Club raised £24/10/- at two carnivals and donated the money towards council's quota for an infectious diseases hospital. Council already had raised £121/8/- towards its quota of £167/18/-.

In the same month, council received a further Grant of £1000 from the Local Government Department. The Department requested that the council make a greater effort to collect outstanding rates. Shortly afterwards, council decided on legal action to collect outstanding rates and sanitary fees.

A further government grant of £1000 was given in November. Council at the same time was pushing for a 40-hour week for its employees.

Attendances at the cycling track were dwindling according to reports in December 1935 and fewer riders were competing. There was mention that the spectators were not able to afford the 6d (5 cents) admission.

Alderman Coe was re-elected mayor, unopposed. He had been a member of council for 15 years. Later in the month, the Lands Department announced the reservation of two allotments in Denison Street, just south of Cowper Street, for public recreation purposes, to be called Coe Park. The small park still exists.

In January 1936, council decided to support the Dean of Newcastle to press for improvement in living conditions for the unemployed. Council was opposed to the "humpies" which were appearing on Permissive Occupancies on the Reserve.

By now, the wheat silos were well advanced and it was claimed that the building was the second highest building in Australia. Travel of the lift was greater than any other lift in Australia.

Diphtheria cases numbered 46 in 4 weeks in February but the epidemic was on the decline. The Government Medical Officer stated that the swamps were not to blame.

Swimming was on the council agenda. Swimming on the northern side of the William Street culvert again was banned. The earlier sign banning such activity, erected in 1934, had disappeared. There was a deep hole close to the culvert, which had been a popular spot. Bathing in the baths behind the Council Chambers was prohibited to all persons except females under the age of 14.

Residents still could not connect to the sewer; a new electric sub-station was required to relieve the drag on the Newcastle system.

Carrington won the NDCA Club Section A Grade Cricket Final in April 1936, defeating Blackalls by 180 runs. Blackalls collapsed in the first innings, scoring only 44 runs. J. "Squash" Dawson was the destroyer, claiming seven wickets for only six runs. Blackalls did not do much better in their second innings, recording only 59 runs. This time, Chris Dawson took 4/18 and Frank Irwin 4/15. J. Britt top scored for Carrington with 60 and was ably supported by J. Dawson, who scored 23 not out and 31.

Unemployed persons were still receiving distributions of clothing and footwear and council agreed to co-operate to make milk available daily to school children.

In June 1936, council adopted a 40-hour week for its employees with no reduction in wages. Council was still pressing the government to raise the present school and playground or provide a new school.

Newcastle rugby league team defeated England 21-16 at No.1 Sports Ground on 27 June. Len Dawson, who played for East and lived in Mathieson Street, was playing his first big

representative game and scored the winning try under the posts with only four minutes remaining. He later toured England and France with the 1938 Kangaroos.

A ladies cycling road race through the streets of Carrington took place on August 9. Council then prohibited races on thoroughfares on Sundays but re-affirmed its support for Sunday sport but only on sports and playgrounds.

Ill health caused the resignation of Mr. S.J.King, Town Clerk and he was succeeded by Mr.W.T.Jackson.

An application by Monier Industries to erect a factory at the corner of Bourke and Robertson Streets, was approved by council in December. The factory made concrete pipes and many domestic concrete paths were laid with surplus concrete from the factory, which was available free.

Council changed its opinion on the concept of a Greater Newcastle. A Draft of the Greater Newcastle Bill had been received in the district in October but now Carrington Council was opposed to it and was seeking a referendum.

George Lundberg, 16, was attacked by a shark on 12 December, 1936, while swimming off logs in Throsby Creek on the site of the present floating dock. This was a large sandy area and nearby timber mills stored imported logs there until required. Lundberge was dragged from the water by a mate, James Connors, 15, of Wilson Street, Carrington. Two other youths, Blanch and Johnson, assisted Connors to get the victim to a place of safety. They attempted to stem the flow of blood using pieces of string as a tourniquet but the victim died within 45 minutes of the attack.

A female shark, almost three metres long, was caught almost directly opposite the fatality spot three days later on a line set by well-known shark fishermen, the Ayerst brothers.

There was a renewed call for council to erect swimming baths at the site.

As 1936 drew to a close, government was asked to defer striking a sewerage rate at Carrington for 12 months, otherwise many residents would be paying the rate plus sanitary fees before connection to the sewer. Earlier in the year, council had carried a motion that each house had to have a bath installed before any connection to the sewer

and connections were slow because of a shortage of plumbers. Subsequently the rate was deferred till January 1938 on certain conditions but those already connected had to pay from January 1937.

Early in March 1937, the government granted £400 for improvements to Lang Park, Young Street, as part of the celebrations for the Golden Jubilee of the municipality on the condition that workmen must be engaged through the Department of Labour and Industry. It was not to be gazetted as unemployment relief work and full award rates and conditions were to apply. The local branch of the A.L.P. protested against the change of name from Lang Park to Jubilee Park.

Playground improvements at the public school had been effected but the school still was not connected to the sewer. However, many properties were being connected to the sewer, so council in its wisdom, decided not to fill the vacancy caused by the resignation of a sanitary carter.

Council still was receiving grants in lieu of loss of revenue caused by the Rating Exemption Act and the needy still were receiving distribution of coal.

Carrington's quota to acquire land at Blackbutt Lookout for a National Park was £50. The mayor stated the area should be preserved for future generations.

To celebrate the jubilee of the incorporation of the municipality on 28 March 1887, council had arranged numerous functions. It had been intended to make the proposed Jubilee Park ceremony, the unveiling of the Jubilee memorial containing the names of mayor and aldermen of the first and present councils, the feature of the jubilee but unfortunately, the government had not arranged for its grant to be placed in the bank in time for the park improvements to be carried out.

Despite this disappointment, celebrations got under way on the night of 31 March when the Jubilee Ball was held in the School of Arts. Next evening, nearly 80 long-term residents were entertained at a dinner sponsored by local business people. Those present with more than 60 years' residence were Mr. and Mrs. W. Merrilees, Mrs. J. Merrilees, Mr. G. Merrilees, Mr. and Mrs. D. McQueen, Mrs. G. Wilson, Mrs. E. Perry, Miss C. Gee, Mr. J. Muirhead and Mr. J. Ball; with more than 50 years, Mrs. A. Seivers, Mrs. E. Johnson, Mrs. M. Bowden, sen. Mr. A. Hetherington, Mrs. M. Rose, Mrs. F.L. McCullum, Mrs. E. Reed, Mrs. E. Guion, Mr. E. Reed

Mrs. T. Thompson, Mrs. I. Williams, Ald. J.H. Hughes, Mr. M. Palmer, Mrs. A. Hicks and Mr. John Gaynor. The following afternoon it was "Back-to-School" with a Community concert at night. The celebrations concluded on Saturday 3 April when former aldermen and Mayors and Presidents of the Newcastle districts councils were entertained at a dinner by the present council. Mr. R. McCann, 95, was the only surviving member of the first council.

Despite the nearness of a Greater Newcastle, council appointed a landscape gardener, who also was classed as a park ranger and sworn in as a special constable to combat vandalism.

State and Federal Governments were to be urged to give councils a proper share of petrol tax, to be devoted to road purposes.

While discussion of a suitable memorial for the Jubilee was taking place, Alderman Parker commented "With the advent of Greater Newcastle, I suppose this memorial may be regarded as a tombstone to the present Carrington Council."

At the same council meeting, it was decided to form garden plots down the centre of Young Street between Robertson and Hargrave Streets. Within days, residents were circulating a petition to ask council to reconsider this proposal and council subsequently rescinded its decision.

At the end of July 1937, council decided not to permit the erection of homes without sewerage facilities. It also considered plans and specifications of the proposed sewerage installation to council's office and cottage. Fifty children from the public school were immunised against diphtheria.

Carrington Cricket Club A Grade team won the McIntyre Cup for the third time and was considering a transfer to the City and Suburban competition. During the previous season, J."Squash" Dawson took 100 wickets @ 6.07 and topped the batting averages with 33.36 runs.

Armstrong & Royce, timber merchants, added to their plant in August in order to manufacture plywood for the furniture trade. At the same time, tenders were being called for extensive renovations and reconstruction of the Cross Keys Hotel (now Seven Seas).

To complete a busy August, 15 lots of Crown Land were auctioned; 11 lots within Section 49 (Bourke, Hargrave and Scott Streets) and four lots within Section 32 (two in Young Street and two in Thornton Street, the former Bethel site next to the post office). There was a large attendance and 12 of the 15 lots were sold. The sale realised £1061/1/6.

The last traces of Hetton Colliery were removed during November 1937. The dam behind the coaltrimmers' shed was being filled by PWD with sand from a dump adjacent to the wheat silos and the concrete foundation of the boiler-house was destroyed with gelignite.

Minister for Works, Mr.E.S.Spooner, officially opened Jubilee Park on 13 November and unveiled the marble tablet. This was the concluding function of the Golden Jubilee.

It was stated in December that more buildings had been erected during 1937 than for many years. There also had been a slight improvement in the collection of rates.

The Greater Newcastle Bill became law on 15 December 1937. Municipal elections fixed for later that week had to be cancelled.

Although completed in March 1937, the wheat silo did not receive its first wheat until December that year. The s.s."Somersby" began loading the first cargo of wheat, 8,000 tons, on 16 December 1937.

As a more promising year came to an end, council accepted a tender for connection of the Town Clerk's residence and the Council Chambers to the sewer.

FINALE

Council Minutes 12 January 1938 recorded that the Mayoral term would be extended until Greater Newcastle Council would function. The first election of aldermen for the Greater Newcastle Council was to be held on 5 March and the new council would function from 2 April 1938 within the meaning of the Greater Newcastle Act 1937.

Hunter District Water Board deferred levying sewerage rates for a further six months from 1 January. Alderman Parker, a member of the HDWB, was thanked for his efforts.

Jack Cairns, a well known local cyclist, agreed to pay £10 per annum, quarterly in advance, for rental of the cycling track in the Reserve on Sunday afternoons. Evidently the track had not been used for two years but he promoted a successful carnival on 27 February which was attended by a crowd which exceeded 1000.

Carrington P&C had been agitating for 18 months to have the school connected to the sewer. The report of two cases of infantile paralysis heightened their fear of a possible outbreak. The Roman Catholic School had been connected to the sewer since its extension to the municipality and the P&C could see no reason why the State should not do likewise. The Local Member had made repeated representations during the previous nine months.

Council was having trouble obtaining a quorum for its meetings. Some aldermen were working, others were campaigning for a seat on the Greater Newcastle Council.

**Carrington Municipal Council met for the last time on 23 March 1938.** It began as an ordinary meeting and ended as a social evening. Members of the Finance Committee met promptly at 7 o'clock, disposed of all business and then adjourned to the open council, where a record gallery had gathered, to transact the business of the evening. The agenda was brief. Each item was quickly dealt with, aldermen refraining from long speeches.

The Mayor and aldermen paid high tributes to the staff and employees, especially mentioning the Town Clerk (Mr. W. T. Jackson) and the Overseer of Works (Mr. H. O. V. Horton).

The council's auditor for the past 20 years (Mr. R. Burke), who travelled from Sydney, said the Town Clerk was one of the most capable in the State.

The Mayor submitted a review of Carrington's development and plans for its future progress in a report which was adopted. It stated:-

"Since this will be the last ordinary meeting of the council, I desire to take the opportunity to express my appreciation and best thanks to the aldermen and staff for their support during the time I have occupied the Mayoral chair.

"Carrington has made steady progress, notwithstanding the difficult times experienced in past years, due to the depression periods and the passing of the Rating Exemption Act, which dealt a heavy blow to the municipality. The loss occasioned by that Act meant that 78 per cent of the general rate was lost to the council. The various Governments in power since the operation of the Act have come to the rescue each year by making a grant to the council to assist its functioning. The major portion of the non-ratable lands within the area is most valuable, it being adjacent to the waterfront and wharves. It is my firm belief that had it not been owned or occupied by the Crown, the land would have been popular for residential purposes. When it is considered that roads of the area have to be maintained, efficient street lighting provided, it must be evident that no restrictions with respect to rating should be held by the Crown. The Rating Exemption Act, when passed, was considered to be a temporary measure only, but it is still on the Statute Book. Efforts have been made repeatedly for the repeal of this Act, and the Local Government Association is again asking for assistance in this regard.

"The municipality of Carrington, now that sewerage facilities are available, has every modern convenience; and further progress and development should be made. The members of council who contributed so largely in their efforts to have the sewerage extended to Carrington I thank on behalf of the residents.

"The reclamation of the swamps, which has been dealt with by council for many years, is now receiving attention by the Government, and much good work is being done. What were formerly swamps have been converted into valuable land, which will be of distinct advantage to both the Crown and residents. The swamp at the eastern end of Forbes-

street, almost in the centre of the municipality, still exists, and this fact should not be overlooked by the Greater City Council. However, I have not the slightest doubt that the Minister for Works and Local Government (Mr. E. S. Spooner) intends continuing this work.

"Another question that may be necessary for the Greater Newcastle Council to take up with the Government is the reclaiming of the eastern foreshore of Throsby Creek. When complete, this work should make available an additional 35 acres, suitable for industrial and residential sites. The time has also arrived when the bridge that spans Throsby Creek, between Wickham and Carrington, should be replaced with a more modern structure. This must be done so that the convenience of those using the port and suburb will be provided for.

"The Greater Newcastle Council will have to continue the efforts made to have further sales of Crown Land. Last year a very successful sale was held. Crown land admirably suited for residential purposes is that bounded by Young, William and Rodgers Streets."

Then aldermen, staff, employees, residents and representatives of public bodies, fraternised in the council chamber for the last time.

Alderman McLagan was congratulated on his election to Greater Newcastle Council as an East Ward alderman.

But the *coup de grace* was still to come.

When Mr. Spooner, Minister for Works and Local Government, opened Jubilee Park in November 1937, he made an inspection of the municipality. Mr. R. O. V. Horton, Overseer of Works, in anticipation, had a set of plans for the proposed improvements covered by council's application for a grant of £7000 and a loan of £5500. Mr. Spooner was impressed with the proposal, so much so that he took the plans with him. The application was approved by the Department of Works and Local Government and the necessary papers were signed by the Governor (Lord Wakehurst) on 23 March 1938. **This was the last loan and grant to be approved for a municipal council in the Newcastle District prior to the inauguration of Greater Newcastle and was passed on to the new council to implement.** The work was to be subject of departmental supervision and gazetted as unemployment relief work and award rates and conditions were to apply.

The proposed programme of expenditure was - Connolly Park improvements £7971, Grahame Park £800, road construction in Fitzroy, Tully and Thornton Streets £849, drainage in William Street £600. Sporting facilities suggested for Connolly Park were a bowling green of 6 rinks and club house, cricket oval with a turf wicket, football ground, dressing shed for cricketers and footballers with modern conveniences and dressing rooms and removal of the tennis courts at Grahame Park to Connolly Park. Such a transfer would make the installation of sewerage easier and less costly.

Greater Newcastle came into being on 2 April 1938.