

NEWCASTLE SURF LIFE-SAVING CLUB

75 Years of History



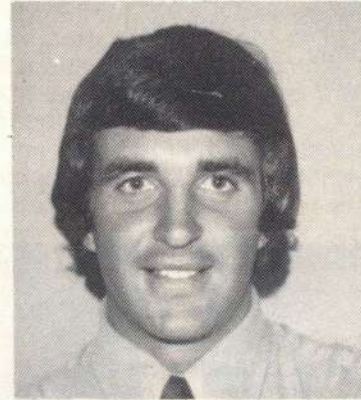
The Writer - John Jenkins

John is the current President of our club and has been associated with Newcastle Surf Club all his life. His father Jim, introduced him to the beach at a very early age, and he virtually grew up on Newcastle Beach.

John became a member of the Management Committee at 16 years of age in 1968, and since that date has served on our committee for 15 consecutive years. His first position on the committee was Sports Secretary which was followed by Vice Club Captain, Club Captain, Delegate to the Newcastle Branch, Treasurer and now the Presidency.

Competitively, John has competed at 17 consecutive State Titles, commencing his career as a cadet swimmer in the 1965-66 season. During these years he has competed at all levels in swimming, R & R and rowing.

With this background and interest in the club, John was the obvious choice to compile and write our 75 years of history.



John Jenkins

Introduction and Thank You

It is with much pleasure, I introduce to you our 75 years of history. Over this period our club has built up a very proud record of lifesaving and competitive achievements. I have tried to record this history, so that we and future members can reflect back on the fine performances and traditions of our club.

The task of putting down on paper the achievements of our members and our club is quite awesome. In this short time span of 75 years, the outstanding sportsmen, the heroic deeds of our members, the members who sacrificed their lives at war and the ordinary members who have devoted much of their time to lifesaving, all have created this history and tradition of which we can be very proud.

In compiling the records and stories for this book, I received a lot of assistance from many people. The early records of our club, are recorded very accurately in files kept at the Newcastle Library. I would like to thank Rosemary Fries for her assistance in locating these files and providing me with the very important information of our early days. Alf Sargeant, Bill Clarke and Royce Jackson provided much needed information. I would also like to thank Hector Scott, Jim Jenkins, "Totty" Young and Brian Arkell for their contributions.

I received photographs, newspaper clippings and stories from many other people, who I would like to thank.

Ray Wawszkowicz deserves a special vote of thanks for the many hours of work he put into producing this book.

Ray, with the blessing of his employers, The Newcastle Herald was responsible for the layout and typesetting of the script. A very big job, and I am sure that without Ray's co-



Our Beach-Newcastle 1974-Before The Big "Storm"

operation this book would not have been produced.

My final thank you on behalf of the club is extended to the Newcastle Herald for their valuable support in the production of this book. The Herald has provided us with an invaluable record of our history through their excellent reporting over 75 years. The Herald was at Newcastle Beach to witness our "formation day" and our first carnival, and they are still supporting us today.

Thank You.

PRESIDENTS

M.J. Moroney 1908-1918
 D.L. McDonald 1918-1919
 M.J. Moroney 1919-1929
 Dr. I. Morgan 1929-1931
 M. Cohen 1931-1948

D. Arkell 1948-1953
 G. Scott 1953-1956
 W. Clarke 1956-1957
 R. Abel 1957-1958
 R. Jackson 1958-1978

P. Percy 1978-1979
 J. Forbes 1979-1980
 J. Jenkins 1980-

Our Four Longest Serving Presidents



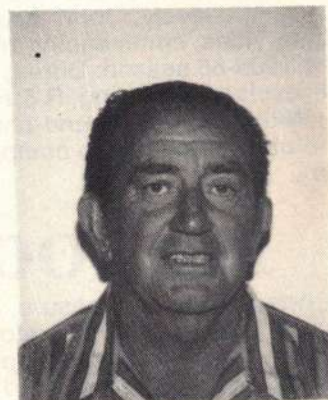
M. J. Moroney
 1908-1918, 1919-1929



M. Cohen
 1931-1948



D. Arkell
 1948-1953



R. Jackson
 1958-1978

LIFE MEMBERS

R. T. Abel
 G. Alsbury
 W. Clarke
 A. Cook
 V. Cronin
 E. Dobson
 W. Neave
 R. Jackson
 T. Hammerton
 J. Robertson

J. Johnson
 J. Keating
 H. Lawless
 W. Manning
 P. Montgomery
 A. McLeod
 R. Brydon
 J. Eason
 J. Riordon
 J. Straiton

A. Sargeant
 R. Sargeant
 G. Scott
 H. Scott
 C. Varley
 A. E. Young
 N. Dodds
 W. Readwin
 J. Jenkins (Snr.)

B. Wilson
 A. Mitchell
 J. Cann
 A. Mellon
 O. Griffiths
 N. Dodds
 J. Palmer
 J. Ruggero
 W. Harris

The Surf Bathing Association of N.S.W. (Later the S.L.S.A. of N.S.W.) examined the first squad for the surf bronze medallion on January 3rd, 1910. Number 1 bronze was awarded to S. Fulwood of Bondi Surf Bathers' Club.

Our first bronze Medallion Squad Examination at Newcastle 2nd March, 1913.

Bronze Medallion Number and Candidate.

143 E. E. Hough	149 E. E. Arkell	155 G. Sanderson	162 W. Neave
144 F. Gazzard	150 F. Sharman	156 P. Levy	163 S. Windon (Coogee)
145 W. J. Parry	151 H. Bay	157 R. Griffiths	164 C. Gillings
146 H. Boadle	152 L. Ford	158 O. Blackburn	165 A. Williams
147 C. Varley	153 R. Wilson	159 E. E. Sargeant	166 J. Palmer
148 M. Cohen	154 G. Preston	160 H. E. Miller	167 R. Walker

Instructors 8th March 1914

W. Morriss W. Neave

Our History

The last 75 years in the history of the world may account for a minute piece of time, however during this short period of time more technological change and change in life style took place than in any other period.

The Surf Life Saving movement was born in 1907 and has grown, adapted and developed with all these changes, to become a highly complex organisation, still serving the community on a voluntary basis.

The changing face of society and it's attitudes are reflected in the many historic records kept by our club. The formal menu & agenda for the 1923 "Annual Smoke Concert and Presentation of Trophies" with it's many toasts, to King & Country, patrol members and Newcastle City Council followed by appropriate responses contrasts vividly with the Presentation Nights of our time.

The Annual Photograph of Club Officials taken in 1917 depicts 22 serious gentlemen, attired in their best "Sunday Suit". Contrast this to our recent club photograph taken last Christmas.

Times certainly have changed, and it may be unfortunate that we no longer conduct carnival events such as the "Tug of War", the "Land Rush with Belt & Line", "Climbing the Greasy Pole", or the "Chopping of the Kaiser". These events, along-side an advertisement for Bill Gazzards Westminster Hotel "3d a Beer in the Saloon Bar" are all listed in the Programme of the Annual Patriotic Surf Carnival, Saturday 16th March 1918.

The 1908 Rule book clearly states that no member of the club will be allowed to appear on the balcony unless sufficiently clothed. While our "enlistment drive" book of 1918 clearly states that NOW is the time to join, however the Club is run by Australians for Australians and no person of enemy birth is eligible for membership. Harsh rules perhaps, however we must remember that Australia was still reeling from the effects of the Great War. (The Club proudly boasted that "187 of it's members have fought in this war.")

The "Annual Banquet and First Post-War Reunion", held at Way's Cafe on 14th May 1920, was certainly a well planned function.

The toast to the "King" was proudly given by the Chairman, Ald. R. Gibson Esq., Mayor of Newcastle and Club Patron.

The formal response was given by the Club's President, Ald. M.J. Moroney Esq. This was followed by a rather sumptuous meal featuring many of yester-year's gourmet delights - "Leather Jackets in Lifebelts", "Soles on Sea Boots", "Back & Breast Stroke", "Vegetable in Surfing Season", "Sand Salad served in the Shark Lookout" closely followed by "Mixed Fruits in One Piece Costumes."

The evening of course ended with a superb rendition of "God Save The King" struck up by the Iris Orchestra conducted by Mr George Richards. A fitting end to an evening, with the motto "A Good Time For All".

Newcastle man objects to bathing

Today there would not be many people who could well remember when bathing in the open sea was banned and the police were prompt to "run in" anybody who was seen so bathing. Our members of the earlier days of the club would certainly have known all about it.

It was a Newcastle man who brought about this restricted state of affairs in 1866, and the clamp of the law was maintained for the next 40 years. The man who set the wheels of the law in motion was Mr William Petherbridge, who had a house in Pacific Street, overlooking the beach. Mr Pether-

bridge, apparently did not like the idea of people "showing" themselves in the surf, right in front of his verandah windows. It was still a well established practice, that men surfed only before 8 a.m. and after 6 p.m. and the women only in the later daylight hours.

Mr Petherbridge acted on Saturday January 13th by taking out a summons against 2 surfers. Mr Wallace, solicitor for the defendents, said "that if the court were satisfied that the 2 bathers were bathing in a place of public resort at the time mentioned, he had to admit that the law had been infringed".

There is reason to believe that the magistrate, Mr Scott, was a keen surfer, but he made no comment in the momentous case, merely finding that the offence had been proved and fined the defendents 10 Shillings plus costs.

The next issue of the "Newcastle Chronicle" went on to say that "any person seeing another bathing in the sea could go straight away to the police court and bring all those who had been guilty of the crime of cleanliness to punishment." It went on to say that "we have no hesitation in declaring our conviction that the law in this instance is a bad one and so hard on the people of Newcastle that it should be repealed as soon as possible".

The law was not altered and the police received instructions to prevent bathing.

For the next 40 years anybody who bathed in the day time ran the risk of prosecution and surf bathing as a recreation went into eclipse.

"The big plunge"

One would-be surfer in 1902, a Mr William Gocher, decided to take the puritans, prudes and politicians "head on". Gocher, who edited a small local newspaper in Manly, tired of seeing his readers suffering the indignities of creeping to the beaches before dawn and creeping home again at first light, decided to announce in his newspaper that he would bathe at mid-day on the next Sunday, from Manly Beach. He carried out his threat on a number of occasions without any police action. An angry Gocher went to the Police Commissioner and asked him to clarify the situation. Gocher was told the police intended taking no action against daylight bathers, as long as they were suitably dressed. Gocher reported this in his newspaper and the rush to surf was on.

Lives lost on Newcastle Beach

Surfing was for the brave, the adventurous and the perils were many. An old advertisement "Rexona - the surfer's friend" makes no mention of sunburn to the back or stomach, as these parts were directly covered.

The rush to the surf was in one way a rush to tragedy. The surf was boisterous and ever-changing, with rips and currents to trap the unwary. In their voluminous costumes, bathers were a ready prey to the undertoes and dumping waves.

Between Christmas Day 1907 and New Years Day 1908, 3 lives were lost in Newcastle by drowning.

Newcastle citizens reacted quickly and Ald. M.J. Moroney was authorised to interview the Lord Mayor of Manly about life saving methods there.

On January 3rd 1908, a meeting of citizens in the Council Chambers was convened by Ald. Moroney to inaugurate a life saving club. Mr Andrew Cook moved the appropriate motion, which was seconded by Mr T.J. Walters and carried

with enthusiasm.

"However, although the Newcastle Club is content to quote the 3rd January, 1908, as the date on which it was actually (constitutionally) founded by resolutions carried at a public meeting of citizens convened for the purpose, it is necessary to record that the club was nominally formed in 1907. With line, belt and reel of substantial type, the Club's first rescue and resuscitation squad competed at North Steyne Beach (Sydney) and afterwards at Newcastle early in such year against Bondi, North Steyne, and Coogee, three of the Sydney clubs also solidly founded in 1907. It is recorded with pride that the Newcastle team (of six members at that stage) defeated the Sydney teams on one of such two occasions, as may be confirmed by a photograph still on the wall of the clubhouse. The first winning squad comprised Stan A. Staton (beltman and captain), R. Warren, Myer Cohen, T. Milner, J. Studdert and R. Seale."

First carnival

The first carnival was held on the beach on March 28, 1908. Success came quickly. The Newcastle Brigade Team, defeated the crack Bondi team in the rescue race with life lines, while in the surf race, J. Walker was 1st and Myer Cohen 2nd.

The title of the club at the outset, but very briefly, was Newcastle Surf and Life Saving Club, but almost at once the title was changed to Newcastle Surf Club and Life Saving Society. A further quick change in February 1908, varied the title to Newcastle Surf Club and Life Saving Brigade. At the Annual Meeting in 1922 the title Newcastle Surf Life Saving Club was adopted and still remains unchanged.

There were upwards of 70 members in 1907-08 season and the club members were allotted portion of the partially roofed "dressing sheds" a few yards from the two storied, very comfortable wooden clubhouse afterwards erected by the City Council in 1908 and officially opened on the 25th September 1908. The builders were Mr W. F. Gazzard and his son, Fred - both foundation members of the Club. Fred was afterwards (1917) the first professional lifesaver employed by the City Council on the City beach. Hiring of costumes and lockers to the public on the ground floor was carried out by the club

An Australian Surf Life Saving Carnival



from 1908-1919.

Such very comfortable clubhouse gave way in 1926-27 to the present clubhouse, a cement building of two floors built as a memorial to the 24 club members who gave their lives in the first World War of 1914-18, in which 187 club members served overseas (thought to be a record for surf clubs throughout Australia; probably the World, since at that time there was very little, if any organised surfing outside Australia.) The total cost of the new clubhouse was 3,219 pounds, five shillings and sixpence. Upwards of one third of the amount was contributed by the club.



An early patrol or R & R team. Life member Joe Palmer is kneeling at the right side of the photograph.

It may be interesting to note that our new club house and pavillion, was built at a cost of over \$1,000,000, of which \$44,000 was provided by our club.

It is worth mentioning that much of the early history of our club, especially in the 1920's and 30's was recorded by one of our past Life Members, Joe Palmer, in his booklet "Fifty Years of Vigilance and Service". I do not wish to duplicate the writings of Joe, however I feel that certain extracts of the booklet should be re-produced here to capture the feeling and atmosphere of those times. One particular

graphic account is his description of a fatal shark attack at our beach in 1925.

Shark attack

"As regards actual saving of life, apart from his prowess in competition, the name of the late Gordon Lees must occur to us all. His was the cool, calm courage on all occasions so very often demonstrated in the hundreds of his rescues, both as a club member and then from 1918 as one of the professional life savers employed by the City Council. It remained for the fatal shark attack on Jimmy Canning, in 1925, to demonstrate the cool but tremendous courage of Gordon. The shark had mutilated Jimmy some 250 yards from the beach, and it was dashing round in a circle of water discoloured with blood whilst club members rushed to the boat shed to launch the boat. Gordon was with them, but with a quiet remark, "this is too slow", he walked over to the surf reel, stepped into the belt and swam out to the spot. Jimmy (a grand junior member) had momentarily broken away from the shark. Before it attacked again (still a long way out) the lifesaver had him and signalled to the linesmen to pull them back to the beach. But Jimmy's life had ebbed away (he had only spoken a few words, "Catch hold of me, Gordon.") Gordon Lees, awarded the Albert Medal (actually regarded as a Civilian Victoria Cross) lived on for nine years afterwards. There were countless occasions in his 27 years as a club and council lifesaver on which he demonstrated his extraordinary courage. Yes, as regards the actual saving of life, "the name of Gordon Lees occurs," and I know that many other brave fellows among the many hundreds of members who have passed through the club portals in fifty years will agree that I should express it that way."

Bogey Hole drownings

Another rescue our club can be justly proud of took place near the Bogey Hole on March 7th, 1948. Two boys, Walter Barker 17, and David Robson 15, were washed from the rocks south of the Bogey Hole. Seven lifesavers from our club, Norman Karlson, Royce Jackson, Reg Gazzard, Bill Clarke, Philip Leayr, Jack Eason and Jim Jenkins recovered both bodies after struggling in heavy seas for more than 20 minutes.

The coroner, Mr A.G. Chiplin, in his findings stated "but for the bravery of the surf club members, the bodies might not have been recovered."

"Every one of the men who took part in the recovery of the bodies showed the greatest bravery, because in all the existing conditions each one might have been going to his own death" Mr Chiplin added.

James Jenkins and Norman Karlson were granted bronze medals and certificates as the principal figures of the many that took part.

The citation stated, *"that Jenkins by superb diving skill, recovered one body in about 20 feet of water at his first attempt. Karlson made several attempts before reaching his objective in a similar depth"*.

A memorial surf boat the "David-Walter" was handed over to our club on Sunday October 5, 1948, so named after the two tragic victims.

COMPETITION - OUR FINE AUSTRALIAN TITLE RECORD

Senior R. and R.

1919-20 Newcastle Third.
1920-21 Newcastle Third.
1921-22 Newcastle Third.
1922-23 Newcastle Third.
1928-29 Newcastle Third.
1930-31 Newcastle Third.

Junior Boat

Finished third in 1922-23 to Dee Why but were disqualified.

Reserve Boat

1976-77 Newcastle First.
1977-78 Newcastle Second.

Senior Surf Teams

1920-21 Newcastle Third.
1925-26 Newcastle Third.
1927-28 Newcastle Third.
1928-29 Newcastle Third.
1929-30 Newcastle Third.
1956-57 Newcastle First (G. Sargeant, B. Lawrence, R. Banwell, R. Banks.)
1960-61 Newcastle First (W. Chipchase, B. Lawrence, G. Sargeant, R. Banks).
1961-62 Newcastle Second.
1963-64 Newcastle Second.

Junior Surf Teams

1962-63 Newcastle Second.

March Past

1920-21 Newcastle First.
1921-22 Newcastle First.
1922-23 Newcastle First.
1923-24 Newcastle First.
1924-25 Newcastle Second.
1927-28 Newcastle Second.
1928-29 Newcastle Second.
1931-32 Newcastle Second.

Senior Belt

1954-55 John Bloomfield Third.
1963-64 Jeff Dawson Second.

Junior Belt

1930-31 T. Coleman Third.
1956-57 G. Sargeant First.
1961-62 J. Dawson First.
1962-63 J. Dawson Second.

Senior Surf

1935-36 B. Brownjohn Third.
1938-39 Restricted, R. Hancock Third.
1945-46 W. Clarke Third.
1963-64 J. Dawson First.
1964-65 J. Dawson First.
1965-66 J. Dawson Third.

Junior Surf

1924-25 J. Canning Third.
1931-32 B. Brownjohn Second, J. Rodgers Third.
1935-36 N. Smith Third.
1959-60 W. Chipchase Third.
1961-62 J. Dawson First.
1962-63 J. Dawson Second.

Cadet Surf

1978-79 J. Lawson Third.

Veterans

1975-76 J. Dawson Second.

Beach Sprint. Seniors

1924-25 W. Turner Third.
1953-54 Barry Arms First (Only one to finish).
1954-55 B. Arms First.

Beach Relay

1956-57 Newcastle First (J. Young, Brian Arms, Barry Arms, B. Arkell).
1959-60 Newcastle First (A. Hughes, Barry Arms, B. Arkell, J. Young).

Beach Flags. Senior.

1959-60 B. Coxhell Second.
(Won the original final but was 2nd in re-run).

Single Ski

1948-49 Les Lazarus First.
1950-51 Les Lazarus Third.
1952-53 Les Lazarus Third.

Double Ski

1950-51 L. Lazarus & R. Connelly First.
1951-52 L. Lazarus & R. Connelly First.
1952-53 L. Lazarus & R. Connelly Second.
1954-55 T. McKenna & J. McKenna First.

Open Surf (Non Championship). Formerly known as "Bronze Championship".

1947-48 W. Clarke First.
1954-55 W. Clarke Second.
1956-57 R. Banks First.
1959-60 B. Lawrence Third.
1960-61 R. Banks Third.
1961-62 W. Chipchase Third.

Junior Surf (Non Championship).

1955-56 R. Banks Second.
1961-62 J. Dawson First.

Our Greatest Competitor



The Jeff Dawson Record

1962 Australian Titles at Burnie Tasmania

First Junior Belt. First Junior Surf. First Junior Non Championship Surf Race.

State Titles.

First Junior Belt. First Junior Surf.

1963 Australian Titles at Warnambool, Victoria

Second Junior Surf. Second Junior Belt.

State Titles.

First Junior Belt. First Junior Surf.

1964 Australian Titles at Collaroy N.S.W.

First Senior Surf. Second Senior Belt.

State Titles.

Second Senior Belt. Second Senior Surf.

1965 Australian Titles at Scarborough W.A.

First Senior Surf.

1966 Australian Titles at Coolangatta.

Third Senior Surf.

State Titles.

First Senior Surf. Third Senior Belt.

1975 State Titles At Swansea Belmont.

Third over 24 years restricted Surf Race.

1976 Australian Titles Clifton Beach .

Second Over 30 years Surf Championship

This is only Jeff's individual record at Australian and State Title Championship level. Taking into account team event placings and his wins at Branch and Club level, his medal count goes on and on.

COMPETITION

I have, I believe, been able to list in total our fine record of successes at Australian Titles since records were kept. Joe Palmer in "Fifty Years Of Vigilance And Service" lists many great achievements of our earlier days. Here is an extract from Joe's writings: -

"Fred Gazzard is to be remembered as a grand belt swimmer for the Club, and as the first Newcastle Council lifesaver. Gordon Lees followed him and was joined by Bill Harris when the Council decided that two lifesavers were required. (Both were elected Life Members.) Bill Harris kept at it for 25 years, the longest term of service on any of the Newcastle beaches. Those who were posted to the Newcastle Beach were as a rule members of the Newcastle Club. One such is "Totty" Young, who, with Ben Gillett (a Nobbys stalwart) has patrolled the city beach for some ten years past. "Totty" is unique in more ways than one. The writer remembers him best as a freckled faced youngster of twelve when I returned to Newcastle from overseas in 1919 and formed a team of cadet club members. "Totty" and Jimmy Cook were the stars of a cadet team which caused a mild sensation on the beaches in Newcastle and Sydney we visited. Jimmy Cook won the Junior Championship of Australia in 1925. "Totty" was third, a Sydney boy came second. Jimmy's legs were always a good deal longer than "Totty's" and he won the wade out to the sand and the run to the finishing tape. Even when "Totty" was little more than 12, on one occasion, at least, I risked official displeasure by slipping him into a vacancy in a rescue squad - truly a case of blending age with youth for the late Myer Cohen was in the same squad. I cannot recall a more enthusiastic and tireless young man than "Totty" Young in the Surf Life Saving Movement. Indeed, that applies still, although he is not quite so young now. "Totty" does his "2,000" every morning in the baths when most people have not yet had breakfast. I held the watch on a recent occasion and was astounded at the finishing touch to note the splendid time he still records. "Totty" may truly be quoted as belonging to both the first 25 years and the second 25 years of the Newcastle Surf Club.



"Totty" Young at our Club's 60th Anniversary Dinner chatting with Royce Jackson, Jack Johnson, Jerry Beckley and Doctor Idris Morgan.

It may be thought that I am reluctant to compare the members of the first 25 years with those of the second 25 years as regards prowess in competition. As a matter of fact, I am, but have desired to compromise (if permitted to do so), by nominating a member who truly belongs to both - Douglas Arkell - in his prime in the water with or without belt and in events on the sand. Prior to his brave and successful battle with a shark it is this writer's opinion that he would have won a point score covering all water and beach events against all comers. Indeed, I remember receiving in London a clipping from a "Newcastle Morning Herald" in 1918, recording a surf carnival at Bondi, and there were still many first - class athletes available in the last year of the War, particularly among the younger members. In any case, Newcastle won the "R.&R" (Doug. drew a water position.) He won the alarm reel (belt race), was in the winning Newcastle surf relay team and from memory won the surf race. Out on the sand he won the beach sprint, was in the winning beach relay team and for good measure "saddled" up to win the pillow fight. That was shortly before he lost a leg in the fight with the shark but he won his long battle in Newcastle Hospital. A young man of tremendous ability and strength; indeed, having in mind his football ability and his speed - apart from other athletic prowess - it is the considered opinion of the writer that had it not been for his misfortune he may have been when he attained his majority, Australia's best all round athlete - the "Snowy Baker" of Newcastle."

Doug Arkell's battle with the monster

Doug Arkell's battle with the "monster shark" is an incredible story in itself. A good number of bathers were already in the surf when the surf club party of six entered the water apart from the others.

"We were not in the water more than two minutes" explained Arkell in hospital the following morning.

"And we had not got more than 30 yards out. The water was only up to my waist."

"All I saw" proceeded Arkell "was a black object in a breaker - the first breaker out from the beach."

"When I first saw him, he was a good 15 feet from me. Yet, though I turned at once, no sooner had I done so than I felt him grab my left leg. He shook me and pulled me back to the deep water."

Arkell felt something give way in the height of this horrible tug-o-war. He does not know exactly how his left hand became lacerated by the shark's teeth, but thinks that he

bunched his knuckles and punched the shark in the mouth.

"I was struggling with him for about 40 seconds. Then he seemed to let me go, and I tried to get in on my own, but couldn't. So I sang out to Harold Bay and the others, and they got me ashore and brought me here to the hospital."

"I'm satisfied now that when a shark comes at you, you can't get away. It was my opinion that the shark was at least 14 feet long. It was much thicker than your own body" he said.

Arkell did not lose consciousness, till the anaesthetic was administered at the hospital. The shark did not take his leg completely off, however it was necessary for the leg to be amputated.

Doug, within twelve months took part again in surf races in Newcastle and Sydney and furthermore, was occasionally a surf boat sweep at local carnivals.



Doug Arkell on patrol at Newcastle Beach after losing a leg during his battle with a shark.

Alf Sargeant, who coached many of our swimmers who won Australian and State Titles, was himself a very good competitor. An early newspaper reports:-

"The heavy seas have broken up the big sandbank some hundreds of yards from the main beach.

Alf Sargeant, one of Newcastle's board exponents, surprised members on Sunday by performing a difficult feat rarely seen in this district. It was the reverse back roll. If he can produce such perfect balance on Saturday, the Sydney men will have their work cut out to maintain their supremacy in the board exhibition."

Another newspaper report certainly showed Alf's versatility as a surfer:-

"Alf Sargeant of the Newcastle "A" rescue and resuscitation team is just coming into his own this season and by his performances last Saturday he might be hard to beat in the Club Championships. He finished 3rd in the board race, which takes a lot out of a swimmer, and then came out in the Open Surf and was leading to within a few yards of the beach to be eventually just beaten into 2nd place."

The Scott Brothers

The Scott brothers, George and Hector were great competitors for our club in the pre-war years. George was Club Champion for 2 years, and on big occasions, often demonstrated his class in the best company in Newcastle and Sydney. George was also a keen beach sprinter and teamed up with Neville Hughes, Ray Abel and Noel Burke to form a very good Beach Relay team.



**Branch R & R Champions 1935-36
George Scott, Noel Smith, Geoff Laidlaw, Hector Scott,
Rennie Hancock, Bruce Brownjohn.**

Hector Scott was a member of the first official Australian Surf Life Saving Team to tour overseas when he visited New Zealand in 1937 as a surf and belt swimmer. Hector was honoured a 2nd time when he was selected in the Australian Team that visited Honolulu in 1939. The Australian Team competed against the "professionals" from the "Fire Brigade and Police", who at that time were responsible for rescues in the surf. Hector proved his versatility, when he was selected as a swimmer and R. & R. man, and also ended up as a bowman in a surf boat race.



Hec Scott

Hec Scott was our first member to represent Australia in Surf Life Saving - New Zealand 1937 - and Honolulu in 1939.

During the war years 1943-44 Bill Clarke started his very successful surfing career, when he won the Newcastle Branch Junior and Senior Belt and Junior and Senior Surf races. Bill was a member of the Royal Australian Navy during these years, and to hold his swimming form, on several occasions, he dived overboard from the deck of a Corvette at sea, guarded from sharks by sailors on the decks armed with "Tommy" guns.

In the 1945-46 season Bill finished 3rd in the Australian Senior Surf race.

In 1948 Bill raced right away from his rivals to win the Open Surf race in towering seas at the Australian Surf Championships at Manly. (The Open Surf race in those days was limited to swimmers, who did not qualify for the Senior Surf Championship.)

Bill once again won the Branch Senior Surf title in 1945 and was second in 1953, 1954 and 1956. He won many other State & Branch medals in R. & R. and teams races, and capped a fine career when he was nominated captain of the N.S.W. State Surf team which competed at the Olympic Surf Carnival held at Torquay in 1956. Barry Lawrence was also a member of this team.

they gained second place in 1953.



Les Lazarus - Australian Single and Double Ski Champion, with his Doubles partner Bob Connelly.

Les weighed only 10½ stone, and proved that it was not all muscle that won ski titles. He was often referred to as the "One Man Carnival". At local carnivals, Les, competed in the March Past, R. & R., Belt Races, Open Surf, Surf Board, Surf Ski and beach events. To even start in all these events is a great achievement, but Les usually filled places in all of them, often winning 2 or 3 events.

With his success on the ski, swimming and board paddling (he won a Branch Title on the board) he would have been an ideal "Ironman" competitor had this event been run in those days. Les was undoubtedly the best "allrounder" our club has produced.



Senior R & R Branch Champions 1954

G. Christensen, R. McKim, R. Banwell, H. Black, W. Clarke, D. Kitchen, J. Cornelius and Instructor R. Connelly.

The early post-war years saw our club growing stronger in many events. A Newcastle Morning Herald report in 1947 claimed that:-

"Newcastle Surf Club has great hopes of winning this season's Branch R. & R. Championships. Newcastle's optimism is based on the drill standard already achieved by it's A grade team, training under former Australian Surf representative Hec Scott.

Much is expected of newcomers Doug Kitchen (last season's branch Junior Surf Champion), Les Lazarus, Ken Tempest and Norm Karlson. Les Iredale, Alex Jenkins and Bill Clarke complete a team of 7."

Australian Surf Ski Champion

These years also produced our only Australian Ski Champion, Les Lazarus. It was claimed that Les was the man who revolutionised ski riding in Australia when he came up with the brilliant idea of the narrow gutter ski.

Les won the Australian Single Ski title at Bondi in the 1948-49 season, and finished 3rd in 1951 and 1953. Les was State Champion for 6 years in a row - a record to this day. He and Bob Connelly teamed up to win the Australian Double Ski Championship for 2 years in 1951 and 1952 and



Tom and Jim McKenna - Australian Double Ski Champions 1954-55

Our craft successes did not finish with Les Lazarus and Bob Connelly, in 1954-55, the McKenna brothers, Tom & Jim won the Australian Double Ski Championship. At the 1955-56 State Titles at Freshwater, Les with a new partner John Martine, took out the Double Ski Championship.

Success on the beach

It was during the early 1950's that our club won its first Australian medal "on the beach" since W. Turner finished

3rd in the Senior Beach Sprint in 1925. Barry Arms won the Australian Senior Beach Sprint Title in 1954 and 1955. Barry Arms joined his brother Brian, John Young and Brian Arkell to win the Beach Relay at the Australian Titles in 1957. In 1960 our Beach Relay Team of Arthur Hughes, Barry Arms, Brian Arkell and John Young won the Australian Title for the second time. This same season, Barry Coxhell finished second in the Australian Senior Beach Flags contest after having won the original final which was re-run.



Australian Beach Relay Champions 1957

Brian Arkell, Brian Arms, Barry Arms, John Young.

Barry Arms, besides being a national Beach Sprint Champion, also won honours as a State Representative Hockey player. To win his first sprint title, Barry defeated Johnny Bliss, the Australian Rugby League winger and one of the nation's best-ever beach sprinters.

Swimming Stars

It was during the mid fifties that the club began to emerge as the strongest swimming club in Australia.

Bill Clarke, Bob Banwell and John Bloomfield, were the established "stars", who were joined by younger swimmers Barry Lawrence, Ross Banks, Graham Sargeant, Ernie Worrel and Ted Harvey.



Our swimming stars of the 1950's

Ross Banks, Bill Clarke, Bob Banwell and Barry Lawrence.

Bob Banwell gave the club a unique win when he spread-

eagled the field with a great win in the Open Surf Race at the Queen's Carnival at Bondi in February 1954. It was a special carnival to mark Queen Elizabeth's first visit to Australia and it was virtually an Australian Championship field.

The 1955-56 State Titles were held at Freshwater, and Barry Lawrence won the Junior Surf Race and Ernie Worrel finished 3rd in the Junior Belt Race. Our Junior and Senior R. & R. teams both finished second and Les Lazarus and John Martine won the Double Ski title.

1956 was the year of the Olympic Games in Melbourne and a special International Carnival was held at Torquay to coincide with the Games. Bill Clarke was nominated captain of the team with Barry Lawrence also gaining selection. The Newcastle Club R. & R. team qualified to compete at the Carnival, after having filled second place at the previous State Titles. The Newcastle Team Captain was John Bloomfield, who toured Hawaii and South Africa with Australia and was State Belt Champion three times. Other members of the team were Ernie Worrel, Ted Harvey, Hugh Black, Geoff Christiansen and Barry Lawrence and Bill Clarke, who were in the State Team.

The team finished fourth with a loss of 7.60 points. Barry Lawrence, after finishing fourth in the Junior Surf Race, drew the patient swim and finished second. Ted Harvey who had the belt, then swam strongly and Newcastle finished winning the swim. At this "prestige" carnival Ross Banks came 2nd in the Non-championship Junior Surf race.



Australian Senior Teams Champions 1957

Bob Banwell, Ross Banks, Alf Sargeant (Coach), Barry Lawrence and Graham Sargeant.

The 1957 State Titles were conducted at Coffs Harbour and Graham Sargeant won the Junior Belt Title and Ernie Worrel once again finished 3rd. Our local relay team won, and our senior surf team came second. Our senior surf team of Graham Sargeant, Barry Lawrence, Bob Banwell and Ross Banks went on to win the Australian Title in the same season at Bondi. Graham Sargeant at 6ft. tall and 14 stone was still a junior and he won the first Australian Junior Belt Title for our club.

Ross Banks won the Open Surf Non-Championship at Bondi this year, having already finished 2nd in the Non-Championship Junior race the previous season.

The strength of our club during this season at Branch level was certainly obvious. The following is an extract from the Newcastle Morning Herald, reporting on the 1957 Branch Titles:-

"The main feature of the carnival was the dominance of Newcastle Club in water events.

Sargeant who is the holder of the State Junior Surf Title, won the Junior Surf and Junior Belt Championship for the second successive year. The Senior Belt Championship saw Newcastle fill 1st and 2nd place. Lawrence, the holder of the title took a slight lead early and was well ahead at the buoys. Barr was in second place for most of the race but tired and gave way to Banwell.

Bob Banwell created a Northern Districts Record, when he won the Senior Surf Race for the fourth time. He won from the title holder Lawrence. Ross Banks finished 3rd and G. Seale 4th, all are from Newcastle Club.

The McKenna brothers won the double ski, and 2nd and 3rd placings were filled by Newcastle paddlers. The Newcastle A boat crew were also successful and the Newcastle Surf team had a perfect score when they finished 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th. The B surf team finished 3rd."

Not a bad record in the water, and the article didn't even mention that Barry Coxhell from our Club retained his Beach Sprint Title while our A beach relay team won the event for the 6th consecutive year.

In 1959, Warren Chipchase was selected to represent N.S.W. after some first class performances in cadet surf races. He clinched his State place by filling second place to Barry Rogers in the N.S.W. Junior Surf Championships at Wanda. Barry Lawrence was also selected as a member of this team.



Coach Alf Sargeant, congratulating three of his top swimmers, Warren Chipchase, Graham Sargeant and Barry Lawrence.

At the beginning of the 1959-60 season, our club was without the services of three top swimmers - Bob Banwell, Graham Sargeant and Barry Lawrence. Barry had to have his nose, broken whilst playing for South Newcastle's first grade Rugby League team, reset. Barry represented Newcastle at Rugby League as a lock forward and qualified as one of the city's outstanding sportsmen.

While our three top swimmers were out of action, Ross Banks certainly kept the flag flying, with four successive senior surf wins.

At the 1960 State Titles, at Crescent Head, Barry Lawrence returned to form, with a win in the Open Surf Race. Barry also finished 3rd in the Australian Open Non-Championship Surf Race this season.

Those titles were held in huge seas at Merewether and

Warren Chipchase finished a fine 3rd in the Junior Surf Race.

In 1961 our club was still dominating the water events. At the Branch Titles Graham Sargeant won the Senior Belt & Senior Surf and Warren Chipchase won the Junior Belt and Junior Surf. The Australian Titles this season were at Moana Beach in South Australia. Our Senior Surf team of Warren Chipchase, Barry Lawrence, Graham Sargeant and Ross Banks won the Australian Title for the second time. Ross Banks also finished 3rd in the Open Non-Championship Race.

Jeff Dawson - a Champion

Jeff Dawson's record speaks for itself, and he is unquestionably the greatest competitor our club has produced in our 75 year history.

In addition to his achievements listed earlier, as a junior in 1962, Jeff was selected to compete with the N.S.W. Surf Team at a carnival in Perth, to be held in conjunction with the Commonwealth Games. He also has the honour of winning the first ever Cadet Surf Race held in N.S.W. As a junior he teamed up with Dennis Holmes, John Sneddon and Jeff Sargeant to win the N.S.W. Junior Surf Teams Race. As well, this same team was placed 2nd in the Australian Junior Surf Teams Race.



In 1965, Jeff was involved in one of Newcastle's most
.....continued page 21

Unveiling World War II Memorial Plaque



Many of our club members served Australia during the two World Wars. Our honour roll which still hangs proudly in our club, lists those members who served our country and club during World War I.

This photograph shows the official unveiling of a memorial plaque dedicated to those members who sacrificed their lives during World War II.

Life member, Hec Scott, is on the right of the photograph, partially obscured. Hec served with distinction, in the R.A.A.F. during World War II, and still has close links with surfing and with the Air Force Club.

Next to him are life members Jim Jenkins and Alf Sergeant. Barry Mckie is next, standing by former Presidents Myer Cohen and Dr. Idris Morgan.

Newcastle Surf Club Team 1930's



Past President George Scott, is standing second from left, and his brother Hec, is sitting on the extreme right. Second from the right and sitting down is one of our beaches best known personalities - "Totty" Young. Bruce Brownjohn, sitting on the left, was one of our fine members, tragically killed during World War II.

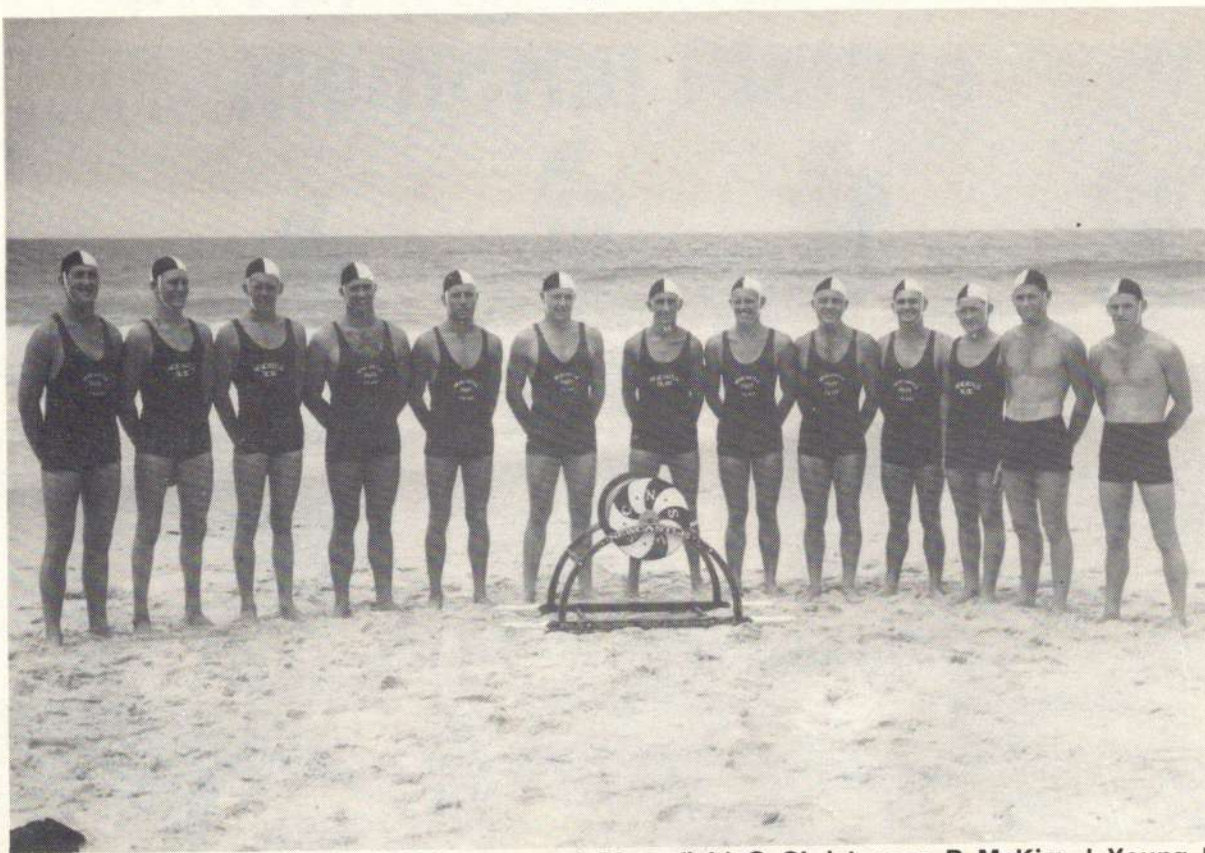


Off to a local carnival - 1930's.



R. & R. Display Pre-World War I

Newcastle Surf Club Representatives-Mid 1950's



From Left to right: J. Ashley, E. Worrell, B. Lawrence, J. Bloomfield, G. Christensen, R. McKim, J. Young, H. Black, W. Clarke, D. Kitchen, R. Banks, J. McKenna, T. McKenna.



G. Christensen, R. McKim, R. Stokes, R. Banwell, R. Connelly, J. Martine, H. Black, W. Clarke, D. Kitchen, J. Cornelius.

Burial of "Bob - the Beach Dog"



"Bob the Beach Dog" ready to be buried at sea. Present from left to right. Bob McCracken, Alf Sargeant, Rennie Hancock, J. Cook, Bill Harris, "Tacky" Walters, Eric McMichael and T. Hancock.

The Newcastle Morning Herald printed the following obituary on the death of Bob the Beach Dog:-

"For 10 years, Bill Harris, council lifesaver at Newcastle Beach, has had a constant companion - Bob the Beach Dog, who died yesterday morning. Each day Bill had fed him with the choicest cuts of meat. Nothing was too good for Bob. In return Bob gave Bill almost ceaseless companionship and lessened his task by chasing dogs which wandered onto the beach.

Bob was priveleged; he was the only dog allowed on the sand, and took care that this privelege was not shared. Sometimes Bill Harris had a day in Sydney. Bob waited patiently for his return and evening food.

Bob was a Newcastle identity and there will be many who will miss the friendly old fellow, who unwittingly, did a great deal for his fellow dogs by reason of his popularity. It meant money in popular dog competitions.

A butcher, whose premises are close to the beach, depended on Bob for the time at which to open his doors each morning. Bob never failed to arrive outside at the same time each day and never failed to receive a piece of meat. Mrs de Glorio has often set a tardy clock by Bob's arrival. Each

morning at 11 o'clock Bob trotted in for morning tea - never at 10.55a.m. or 11.05a.m. but on the stroke of 11. Bob was better known than the oldest resident people to live in that part of Newcastle known as the "sandhills".

He was known to thousands of people who frequent the beach, and it is doubtful if there has ever been a more popular dog, with grown ups and kiddies alike. One Newcastle firm realised his popularity so much that it used his picture on a calender.

Bill Harris will miss him. They have been "cobbers" from the day 10 years ago, when Bob wandered onto the beach and was immediately adopted. They understood each other. A glance from Bill was enough for Bob. He knew what it meant.

A friend of Bill's and Bob's told Bill that he intended to present him with a puppy to take Bob's place. "He will replace Bob perhaps, but he won't take Bob's place with me" said Bill.

Members of the Newcastle Surf Club, where Bob had his headquarters thought so highly of him that they flew the flags of the clubhouse at half mast yesterday and gave the "old fellow", as he was called, a sea funeral."

SURFBOATS — from



SPRAY

The "Spray" built of galvanised iron on a wooden frame, is seen here on our beach during the 1913-14 season. From the left, is the builder "Tacky" Walters, Bob Bell, Gordon Lees, Joe Palmer and Henry Samuels.



The JAYES

The launching of our first fibreglass boat, the "Warren Cridland", Co-sponsored by Jayes and A.F.T.A. Travel Insurance, took place at Newcastle Beach in October 1980. The crew, from the bow Udo Fries, Robert Gray, John Jenkins, Ray Wawszkowicz and sweep Warren Cridland.

IRON to FIBREGLASS

The NEWCASTLE

The first "double ender" our club owned was built by Swansea boat builder "Humphreys". Club member Jack Johnson is shown here steering a straight course, with Life Member and Past President George Scott, seated in the second bow seat.



The STOCK

Our A crew wins a heat on the way to the State Final in 1980. After finishing third, the crew was unfortunately disqualified. The crew from the bow Udo Fries, Robert Gray, John Jenkins, Ray Wawszkowicz and sweep Warren Cridland.



FROM SURFBOATS



The Newcastle A crew goes "down the mine" in a semi final of the the State Titles at North Narrabeen. From the top Warren Cridland, Mick Cooper, John Jenkins, about to abandon ship, Ray Wawszkowicz, partly obscured and Robert "Daffy Gray" somewhere below Ray Wawszkowicz.



The launching of the Stock 84. Among those present were Paul Percy and Warren "Wagga" Cridland, responsible for the build up in rowing strength within the club. Paul and Wagga, as well as John Jenkins were members of the first Newcastle crew to win an Australian Gold Medal Manfred Sonntag and David Burns who have won more State & Australian medals than any other rowers in the club's history. John Jenkins, Udo Fries, Robert Gray, Ray Wawszkowicz and Wagga were members of the first crew from the Newcastle Club to represent the Newcastle Branch.

to RUBBER DUCKS

Current Deputy President and Life Member, George "Podge" Alsbury, at the launching of the Jayes-sponsored I.R.B. The "Podge", our first I.R.B. was named after George in recognition for his service to our club over many years.



This sharp action photograph captures the concentration on the faces of our 1981 State Bronze medal winning B crew returning to shore during one of their local carnival appearances. A great deal of work instigated by sweep Mick Jennings and carried out by the crew consisting of Ken Toovey, Bob Taber, Dick Phillips and David Burns, saw continued and dramatic improvement pay off with their Bronze Medal win at Evans Head.



publicised sporting incidents. Having just won his second successive Australian Senior Surf Title, at Scarborough Beach in Western Australia, Jeff was omitted from the Australian Team to tour the U.S.A. One newspaper summed it up by saying:-

"The decision not to select Dawson to tour is one of the biggest blunders in Australian Surf Life Saving history." The story made many front page headlines, and the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Frank Purdue, even intervened, by contacting the American Surf Life Saving Association, in an attempt to have Jeff invited directly by that body. Unfortunately, all the protests and letters were futile, as he was never included in the team. A cartoon in the Newcastle Sun, summarised the feeling of Newcastle people at the time of his omission.

In 1964, The Newcastle Sun, nominated Jeff as their choice of Newcastle's Sportsman of the year. Among the major contenders for the title, were 3 Australian Representatives - Phil Hawthorne - Rugby Union, Graham Corling - Cricket, and Lyn Bell - Swimming, not a bad achievement for Newcastle and Jeff Dawson.

After Jeff's retirement from surfing, he did make a very successful comeback in the mid 70's, by being a member of our successful R. & R. team and winning many over 24 & 30 years surf races.

In fact Jeff finished 2nd in the over 30's Surf Race at the Australian Championships at Clifton Beach in 1976.

During the Jeff Dawson era of the 60's, our club produced many outstanding competitors. Warren Chipchase, who filled 3rd place in the Australian Junior Surf Race at Merewether Beach in 1960, won many local races and often put the pressure on Jeff Dawson, beating him on numerous occasions. Warren was selected to represent Australia on a tour to New Zealand, following his many successful surf wins. Warren finished 3rd in the Australian Non-Championship surf title in 1962. Dennis Holmes, John Sneddon, Jeff and Warren Sargeant, Bob Mason, Keith Read and John Groves were all excellent swimmers during this period, with many club and Branch Titles to their credit.

At Stockton Carnival in 1962, Jeff was hard pressed to retain his undefeated record. Clubmate John Sneddon, swam strongly and was almost level with Jeff as they approached the finishing line. Jeff caught a small wave just ahead of Sneddon to gain the extra ground and run up the beach to win. Dennis Holmes was 3rd.

The "Golden Years"

The competitive strength of our club during these times can be gauged by the result gained at the Branch, State and National Titles during the 1962 season.

At the Australian Titles held at Burnie in Tasmania, our club finished 2nd in the overall points score, after having won the aggregate points score at the State Titles held a few weeks earlier. At Branch level during this season our club members filled the first three places in the Senior Surf at the Branch Titles, with Graham Sargeant finishing 1st, Warren Chipchase 2nd and Ross Banks 3rd. Our 2 Senior Teams filled 1st and 2nd place in this event, while our Junior A team won the Junior Teams Title. Jeff Dawson won the Junior Surf and Junior Belt, and to completely scoop the pool in all swimming events, Jeff Sargeant won the Cadet Branch Title.

Our club continued this domination of the swimming events in the branch for quite a few years. In 1964, at the Australian Titles at Collaroy and the State Titles at Swansea Belmont our Senior Surf Team of Jeff Dawson, Dennis Holmes, Graham Sargeant and Warren Chipchase finished in 2nd position. Graham Sargeant, 7 years earlier had been a member of the successful Senior Teams which won the

1956-57 Australian Titles and he and Warren Chipchase were also members of the team that won in 1960-61.

The 1965-66 season was nearing the end of the "golden swimming era" for our club. Jeff Dawson won the State Surf this season and finished in 3rd position at the Australian Titles. Reports at the time stated that "Jeff Dawson clearly showed he is still the best surf swimmer in Australia, after giving away a big lead crossing a shallow bank, he went to the front shortly after turning the buoys and holding the lead only to be beaten in the run up the beach. Truly a wonderful effort in conditions that did not suit him."



**Branch and Club Champions 1966
Senior Jeff Dawson, Cadet Gary Jones, Junior Keith Read
with Club President Royce Jackson.**

Keith Read finished 3rd in the Non-Championship Junior Surf Race and at the Newcastle Branch Championships we once again took all the major swimming events. Jeff Dawson won the Senior Belt and Surf, Keith Read won the Junior Surf and Belt and Gary Jones took out the Cadet Surf Race Championship.

Lean Times

After the 1965-66 season, nearly all of our successful swimmers of the early 60's had retired from competition and the club went through some very lean times.

Keith Read and Gary Jones kept our flag flying at local carnivals with many wins and placings in the Junior and Senior events. Former Merewether Surf Club member and coach Doug Read, encouraged a young group of swimmers to join his son Keith and Gary Jones at Newcastle Beach for swimming training. Bruce Read, John Jenkins, Stephen Bland and Richard Cleaver were among the young swimmers who were swimming under Doug's coaching and gaining valuable experience at local carnivals. Gary gained selection in the Newcastle Branch team, to partner Australian Surf Champion Scott Derwin in the Surf Teams Race at the Inter-Branch Carnival at Maroubra in 1968.

By this time Barry Lawrence was looked upon as a veteran, however he started to compete in the new event, "the iron man". Barry won many iron man starts in the Newcastle area, and occasionally was still finishing in the placings in the Open Surf Race. At one carnival both Barry and Warren Chipchase defeated the Australian Champion Scott Derwin.

In 1967 a touring South African Surf Team competed at our carnival. One of the highlights of the day was "veteran swimmer" Ross Banks' win in the Open Surf Race ahead of a South African swimmer in 2nd place and Gary Jones in

3rd position.

Our only success during the 1968 season, was Gary Jones' 2nd place in the N.S.W. Junior Non-Championship Surf race.



Gary Jones, a winner at many local carnivals, crossing the finishing line at Merewether Beach.

At the beginning of the 1968-69 season A Junior R. & R. team was formed under the instruction of Gordon McNaughton. The team trained consistently throughout the season gaining 2nd place at the Branch Championships and were unlucky not to perform better at the State Titles at Corrimal. Richie Cleaver gained a 3rd place in the State Junior Non-Championship Surf Race.

Bruce Read took over from his brother Keith and Gary Jones as our most prominent swimmer of 1970. Bruce won many Surf Races and Junior Belt Races this season and was rewarded with a place in the Newcastle Branch Team.

Boat Rowing - renewed interest

The 1969-70 season saw the re-birth of interest in boat rowing at our club. John Martine had many successes at local carnivals with his crews during the 50's and 60's, however our surf boats had been lying idle for a few years. Boat captain of the time, Tim Duval had tried to start many crews without much success. A new boat "May Day II" was purchased by the club in October 1969, to stimulate interest in boat rowing. Warren Cridland, who had been an active member of our club in the early 60's expressed interest in forming a junior boat crew. Paul Percy, a very keen member of our club teamed up with Warren in an attempt to form a crew. At this time our competitive strength had hit "rock bottom" and it was this meeting of Paul and Warren that started the re-emergence of Newcastle as a competitive force, not only in boats, but as a club overall.

In this first season, our junior crew of Warren, Paul, John Jenkins, Brian McCarthy and Peter Lawrence rowed their way into the State Final. It was the members of this crew that formed the nucleus of the boat crews for quite a few seasons.

Also during this season our club saw a spark of interest in the beach events. We had 2 successful Junior Beach Relay Teams competing and at the Branch Championships the two teams were equal 1st and both teams qualified for the

semi finals of the State Championship. Bruce Read came 2nd in the Branch Junior Sprint and Peter Howlett came 3rd in the Senior event.

The 1970-71 season saw our club at one of its lowest levels both competitively and patrol-wise. The only hope seemed to rest with the two boat crews.

The 1971 season saw the introduction of the "Stella Capper Carnival", in which each club had to choose a squad of 15 members to compete in every event on the programme. Our A boat crew, being the only starters from our club were not allowed to compete, as we could not muster a full complement of 15 competitors.

After the great successes of the 50's and 60's, it was a bitter disappointment to the club in dropping to this standard after having been one of Australia's premier clubs.



The launching of the May Day III

Our boat crews formed the basis of our competitive strength in the early 70's.

For the next few seasons the club relied on the two senior boat crews to "fly" the competition flag at carnivals. Our only success during the early 70's was our first place in the Stella Capper Carnival in 1972. This of course is a handicapped carnival, however, our win certainly did help lift the morale of those members who competed on the day.

At the 1972 Branch Championships our club only gained 2 placings, a 3rd in the A Boat Race and a 1st to that ever-green swimmer Barry Lawrence in the first ever Over 30 Years Surf Race.

Iron Man

The 1973 season saw a new member David Quinlivan, make his mark very soon after gaining his Bronze Medallion. David came 2nd in the Branch Iron Man Championship and went on to reach the final of the State - a great effort in his first year of competitive surfing. Ross Banks won the Branch Over 30 Years Surf Race and Dennis Holmes won the Over 24 Years.

In 1974 our new Junior Boat Crew of "Wagga" Cridland, Gary Bernasconi, Paul Hunt, Robert Gray and Manfred Sonntag broke the long drought between State medals. It was at Tathra, where Wagga steered the May Day II across the line for 3rd place in the Junior Boat Championship.

Emergence of R. & R. team

This year also saw the re-emergence of the senior R. & R. team. John Forbes, who had many years of R. & R. experience, joined our club from Sydney. He talked a few of the "older faces" out of retirement and formed a very good

squad. The team of John Forbes (coach), Trevor Wilson, Bruce Read, Jeff Dawson, David Quinlivan and Dennis Holmes competed successfully throughout the season and went on to qualify for the final at the State Titles.

On the swimming side, Jeff Dawson returned to competition and was placed 3rd at the State Titles in the Over 24 Years Surf Race. David Quinlivan once again reached the final of the State Iron Man. David was rewarded by his selection in the Newcastle Branch Team this season.

The 1974-75 season saw John Forbes and Trevor Wilson stand down from the R. & R. side. With John still as coach, the new team was David Quinlivan, John Jenkins, Bruce Read, Dennis Holmes, Jeff Dawson and Neil Milne.

Success at State Titles

The State Titles in 1975 were switched from Redhead to Swansea Belmont, due to heavy seas.



The State Junior Gold Medallists from left, David Burns, Gary Bernasconi, Manfred Sonntag, Robert Gray and sweep "Wagga" Cridland.

The R. & R. team qualified for the final and took out the Bronze Medal. Our junior boat crew (with one change from the previous season, David Burns in place of Paul Hunt.) created boat history for our club when they crossed the line in first place to win the State Junior Boat Race. Our club had won many medals in swimming, skis and on the beach, but this was our first major boat win.

Our newly formed Junior R. & R. team also qualified for the final and were placed 4th.

Neil Milne proved to be an exceptional "junior" this season when he competed in both Senior and Junior R. & R. teams, as well as establishing himself in craft events. At the Branch Titles, Neil came 2nd in the Junior Malibu Board and Junior Iron Man, 3rd in the Junior Belt race, and was a member of both R. & R. teams that finished 2nd.

This season our club undertook it's first overseas tour. Eighteen members of the club toured the North Island of New Zealand and competed with much success. Neil Milne and David Quinlivan excelled themselves, particularly in the number of events in which they competed.

In the 1976 season, Jeff Dawson once again was our most successful competitor. He won the Over 30 Years Surf Race at the State Championships and finished 2nd at the Australian. Dennis Holmes, another club stalwart finished in 3rd place in the Over 30 Years Surf Race at the State.



Senior R. & R. Branch Champions and State Finalists. John Forbes (Coach), Neil Milne, Jeff Dawson, Bruce Read, John Jenkins, Dennis Holmes and David Quinlivan.

David Quinlivan won the Branch Iron Man Championship and our R. & R. team won the Branch Title for the first time in many years.

Australian Champions

Early in the 1976/77 season a new "B" boat crew was formed, consisting of 2 established rowers, Paul Percy and John Jenkins and newcomers Michael Fitzgerald (who had just returned from the Australian Rugby Union Team's tour of Great Britain) and Ray Wawszkowicz. This crew went on to win the 1977 Branch Title.

The 1977 Australian Championships were held in a raging surf at Bancoora, Victoria. It was on this weekend in boisterous seas that Wagga Cridland really showed how to handle a surf. He steered the A crew through to the semi-finals and the B crew to the club's first ever Australian gold medal in boats. Due to representative commitments with the Newcastle Ruby League team, Ray Wawszkowicz was unable to compete at the Australian and former junior rower Paul Hunt took his place.



Australian Champions - and we're all from Newcastle. The Reserve Grade Boat Final of 1977 resulted in Newcastle 1st, Swansea Belmont 2nd and Caves Beach 3rd. Newcastle's winning crew, kneeling down:-Warren Cridland, Paul Hunt, John Jenkins, Michael Fitzgerald and Paul Percy.

The Reserve Grade boat crew went very close to defending it's title at the Australian Championships in 1978. A completely new crew of Warren Cridland, Mick Cooper, Udo Fries, Gary Bernasconi and Manfred Sonntag were beaten into second place.

David Quinlivan represented our Branch on 5 occasions, one of these being on a tour to New Zealand, in which two other club members Neil Milne and Jeff Dawson also toured. David won the Branch Iron Man on two occasions, the Single Ski Championship in 1978 and the Branch Over 24 Years Surf Race. He was a very versatile competitor, and certainly with Barry Lawrence and Les Lazarus, one of our best "all rounders".

Our boat crews dominate

Our boat crews continued to dominate the Newcastle Branch during these years. In 1977-78 our A crew reached the semi finals of the Australian for the first time in our club's history.

Again in 1979, Wagga displayed his best form by sweeping 3 crews to the semi finals of the State Championships at North Narrabeen. The "B" crew went on to take the Gold Medal by a "country mile". The winning crew consisted of Paul Percy, Udo Fries, Garry Bernasconi and Manfred Sonntag.

During the later seasons of the 1970's our club was very well served by many fine swimmers. David Quinlivan, Jeff Dawson, Neil Milne, Robbie Williams, Greg Stewart, John Hair, Jeff Mullen, and Dennis Holmes all played a major part in keeping our club as one of the most competitive in the branch.

This season our A boat crew of "Wagga" Cridland, Paul Percy, John Jenkins, Ray Wawszkowicz and Robert Gray, scored another first in being the first crew from our club selected to represent the Newcastle Branch.

At the Branch Titles in 1980, our 3 crews made a clean sweep of the Gold Medals when Wagga swept the Juniors, Reserves and A's to victory.

Disqualification - sinks crew

The State Titles were held at Swansea Belmont and once again the boats were facing a fair sized surf. Our A crew reached the State Final, only to be disqualified in rather unfortunate circumstances, after finishing 3rd. Our Junior crew reached the semi-finals of the State Titles and were a little unlucky not to reach the final.

The Lawson brothers are winners

The 1979-80 season saw our club's younger swimmers starting to make their mark at local carnivals. John Lawson was the swimmer who emerged as our top contender. John gained 3rd place in the Australian Cadet Surf Race Championship in 1979 and in his first carnival as a Junior won the Junior Surf and Junior Belt Races. He beat club-mate David Conway into 2nd place in both events. John's younger brother Neil, won the Cadet Surf Race at the same carnival.

At the opening carnival of the 1980-81 season held at Nobbys Beach, John won 5 events. He registered 1st place in each of the Junior and Open Surf Races, the Junior Belt, and was a member of our Open and Junior Surf Teams.

The Lawson brothers have dominated and continue to dominate our local branch carnivals. At the Caves carnival in 1981 John won the Open and Junior Surf, the Junior Belt and Junior Surf Teams Races. He elected to rest from the Open Belt, which was won by brother Neil on his first attempt at the race.



John Lawson 3rd Australian Cadet Surf Championships 1979, Junior and Senior Club Champion 1980-81-82.

I believe John has created club history by holding both the Junior and Open Club Championship Titles for 3 successive seasons. John is currently the Newcastle Branch Open and Junior Surf Champion and has been Newcastle Branch representative on 5 occasions.

Females set record for our club

On the subject of records, in 1980, 13 year old Ann Bender created Surf Life Saving history when she became the first female competitor in Australia to win an Open Surf event. Ann won the Cadet Surf Race at the Forster Carnival and repeated her win at the first Carnival of the season in the Newcastle Branch at Nobbys. Our other young cadet swimmers, Kim Eastham, finished 3rd. Another of our females Sandy Calton, was the first girl in Australia to win an "open" Womens Surf Race.

We were one of the first clubs in Australia and certainly the first in the Newcastle Branch to have an all female Bronze Medallion squad qualify and pass their examinations.

Another excellent female competitor to come from our ranks is Sharon Bucklee, who has joined up with three of our male members to form a very good Junior Surf Team. Sharon is one of the few female competitors who has stayed with surfing, and she has certainly proved her worth on many occasions.

Tracey Halson, was another young lady to qualify for her medallion and she has chosen the administrative side to assist our club.

Boat crews continued success

The strength of our boat crews has continued into the 1980's.

On the local scene our B boat crew has won the Branch Title for the past 6 years with the A crew having recorded 3 wins and 2 seconds from the past five Branch Titles. Our second sweep, Mick Jennings joined our ranks in 1981, and took his B boat crew to a 3rd placing in the State Titles at Evans Head. Mick has certainly been a great asset to our club, and much credit goes to him for the recent form of our B boat crew.

Last season, our new look junior crew of Warren Cridland, Greg Wood, Brad Dorn, Bob Jenkins and Stephen Cowperthwaite had a very successful record. They scored some early wins in Sydney and went on to finish 3rd at the State Junior Boat Final. They were considered very unlucky not to finish in a place at the Australian Championships at Moana in South Australia. They finished in a very creditable 4th position.

Our A crew of this past season of Warren Cridland, Robert Gray, John Jenkins, Robert Taber and Udo Fries qualified for the Final of the State-wide Mayne Nickless Champion of Champions Boat Race. Rowing against the top crews in the State, our crew finished a very creditable 4th position in the straight out final.

Successful rowers

Over the past 12 seasons our club has been served by many dedicated and successful rowers. David Burns and Manny Sonntag although not among the "big men" have certainly built up a very impressive record. Between them they have won 2 Australian medals, 6 State medals and countless Branch medals. David has been a member of our successful B crew for 5 consecutive wins at the Branch Titles. Robert Gray is probably our most dedicated rower, and his record of having won a Branch Title, rowing in every position of the boat speaks for his versatility as a rower. Paul Percy, is the rower more responsible than anyone else, for the success of our boat crews. Paul's faith in our club's ability to become a force in rowing during the early 70's, has certainly paid off.

Other members who have served our club well in the A boat competition over the past few years include Brian McCarthy, Peter Lawrence, Mick Cooper, Ray Wawszakowicz, Udo Fries and Bob Taber. The strength of our A crew has been due to a large degree to the competition from our B boat crew rowers.

Our B ranks have seen many fine rowers and include Wayne Mason, Rod Gray, Steve Allanson, Gary Bernasconi, Dick Phillips, Michael Fitzgerald, Ken Toovey, Manfred Sonntag, David Burns and more recently our young rowers who have graduated from the junior ranks, Walter Sonntag, Darren McPhail, Mick Blinco, Greg Woods and Stephen "The Lurch" Cowperthwaite.

With these rowers and the development of our established "juniors" Brad Dorn and Robert Jenkins, I am sure we are set to continue our domination in boats in the Newcastle area.

It has been a very formidable task to list all our competitive achievements during our 75 year history. I make no apologies for concentrating on the last 25 year period as Joe Palmer's history of our first fifty years lists most of our earlier achievements and accurate records of these years

are very difficult to find and verify.

The display of photographs in our new club house, provides us with a graphic history of our club's achievements.

They say a picture says a thousand words, so we are very lucky to have such a fine display of club records on display.



Successful Juniors

3rd State Junior Boat Final 1982

4th Australian Junior Boat Final 1982

Stephen Cowperthwaite, Brad Dorn, Robert Jenkins, Greg Wood and Warren Cridland

"That Big Surf Carnival"

This was the way in which everyone referred to our Annual Carnival. There is no doubt about it, our beach always seems to "turn on" a big sea for our annual carnival! In the early years it was not only the size of the surf that was big, but the spectators always turned up in large numbers.

In November 1934, our annual carnival was organised in conjunction with the Newcastle Tourist Bureau, as part of the celebrations during Jubilee Week. The Duke of Gloucester was visiting the carnival to coincide with the celebrations, and so dense was the crowd that the hessian screens and barriers were trampled down. Hundreds of spectators surged into the area without paying. As a result, the financial return was not up to expectations.

In 1948 our total income for the year was 846 Pounds, over half of this amount was received from the proceeds of our carnival.

The Newcastle Morning Herald gave a graphic description of the 1948 carnival, the following day:-

"For thrills and spills, Newcastle Surf Carnival must go down as the carnival of the century.

Yesterdays beach parade looked like a page from a novel to see bronzed, powerfully built, skilled lifesavers working frantically but with method to pull from the sea a group of competitors who were being dashed in the angry surf like flotsam and jetsam.

7,000 spectators stood like sentinels on all vantage points to watch the thrilling drama that took over 30 minutes to conclude.

When the ski race started it was soon noticed that competitors and skis were being battered to and fro.

In sheer desperation the Coogee boat was rushed on a truck to Nobbys so that it could rescue the distressed from the seas.

But the power of the surf reel and lines held and all rescues were made from the beach

When veteran surfer Ben Gillett landed the last man the crowd roared it's approval.

Dozens of spectators rushed forward and placed donations in the hands of officials as a gesture.

Officers of the day said it is the roughest surf carnival we have ever seen."

In 1955, more than 20,000 people from above the ocean baths, round to King Edward Park watched our annual carnival.

Big, strong waves, caused many boats to crash, and John Bloomfield, the Newcastle Club Captain and Brian Browne of Coogee, were the only two to finish in the Belt Race. The belt teams had to join a second reel onto each line and both beltmen used 550 yards of line.

Bloomfield and Browne hurled themselves through huge breakers into the unbroken swell, then battled north, swimming parallel to the beach. Bloomfield reached the buoys after 11 minutes and Browne after 14.

The Newcastle Morning Herald reported on the 14th January 1956.

"A southern rip and big seas helped provide thrills at the Newcastle Surf Club's annual carnival on Saturday.

The carnival drew about 12,000 people who watched

events from the esplanade and surf club rooms."

The large crowds may not be present these days, however "that big surf" still appears regularly at our carnivals. A Newcastle Morning Herald report in February 1981, following our carnival was headed:-

"Brave Men Battle Surf"

"At the Branch Carnival at Newcastle Beach on Saturday crews had to battle against huge seas. Crews had to negotiate more than 200m of white boiling surf, and getting in was just as treacherous. Boats were dumped, swamped and spread across the face of the waves too powerful for the strongest of crews to control"

A photograph of The Newcastle A boat crew "looking over" a wave testifies to the size of the surf this day.



Newcastle A Crew-taking off on a "big one" at the Newcastle Carnival in 1981.

I am sure that Newcastle Beach will always produce many memories for those who attend our annual carnivals and witness "that big surf".

A highlight of our carnival from the mid 50's to the late 60's was the Newcastle Beach Girl Contest. It became the leading event of its kind in the Newcastle District and the holder of the title was a celebrity in the city.

It attracted huge crowds to the carnivals and for many years held the crowds which would have otherwise fallen away because fewer and fewer Sydney Clubs were coming to our carnivals owing to the growing programme of carnivals in the Sydney area.

It was run in conjunction with The Newcastle Show with Jantzen and Jayes providing the sponsorship. Jim Straiton, Jim Jenkins and the late Billy Robins were the principal organisers.

Like all good things it eventually ran its course as "beauty contests" and the like lost their appeal - but there were some beautiful girls!

Surf Boats On Our Beach

Surf boats have played a very colourful part on our beach since the very first days.

The first link with the present surf boats seems to have been the famous "butcher" boats that raced out of the port to sailing vessels to compete for trade,.

The Newcastle Morning Herald reported the following story in it's Monday morning issue of January 13, 1908:-

"The thousands of people who assembled in the vicinity of the Newcastle Beach on Saturday, to witness the official opening of the recently formed surf club were totally unprepared for at least one item, which did not find a place on the programme."

The story went on to tell that the pilot whaleboat which was giving a display of her "breaker-shooting qualities" overturned in a "reasonable" size surf.

Realising the seriousness of the position, the rocket brigade made many unsuccessful attempts to fire a rocket with line attached to the boat in distress. The huge breakers dashed over them with considerable force and frequently, they were all lost to view in the big seas. Serious as the position was, there were hundreds of onlookers who thought it was part of the afternoon's performance.

The crew was eventually rescued by a "butcher" boat

manned by G. & A. McInnes and J. Walmsley.

This seems to have been the first "surf boat" rescue in the district, and the members of the "butcher boat" crew Messrs. G.&A. McInnes and J. Walmsley were awarded the first three life memberships of our club.

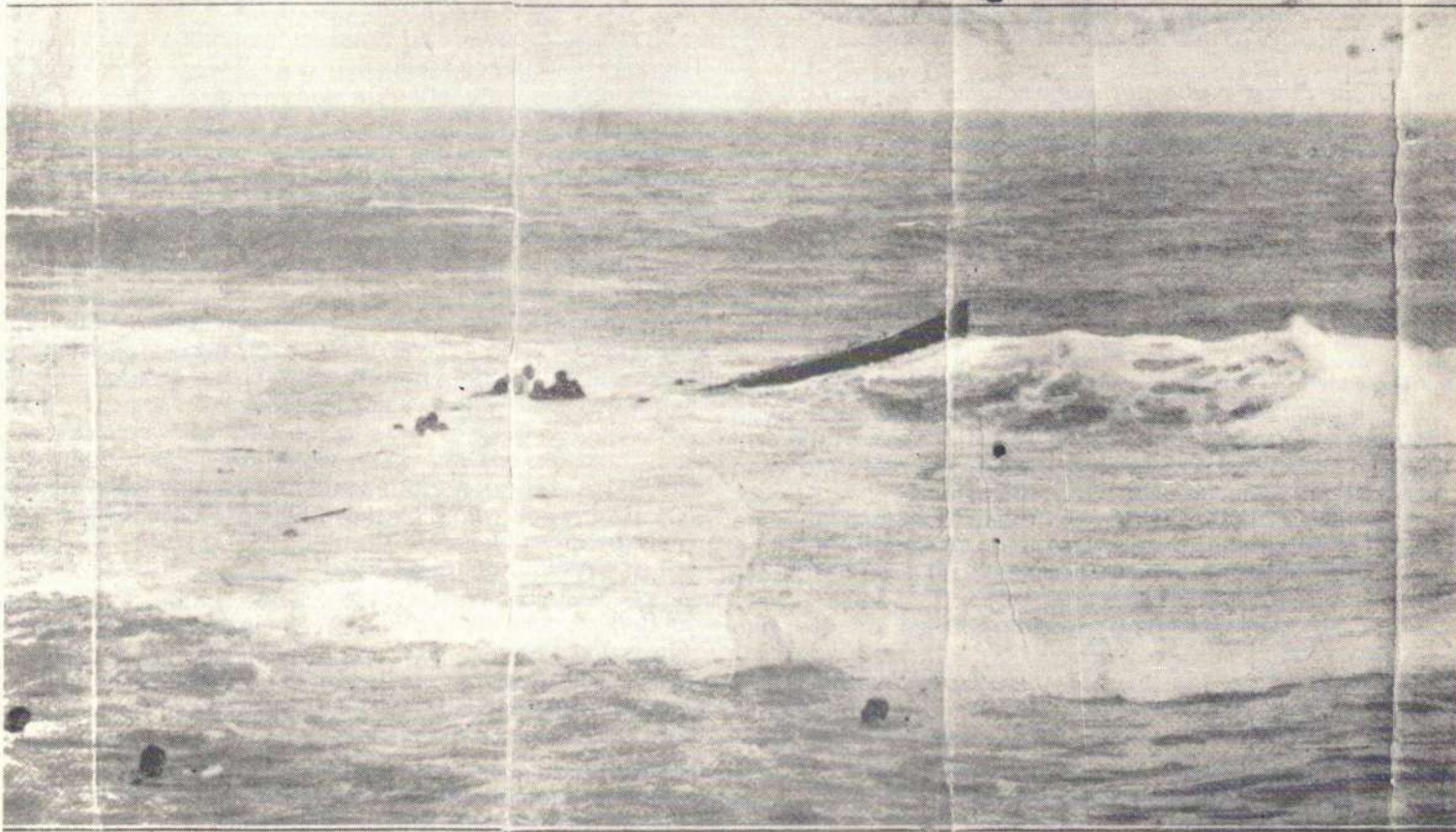
In the early days of our club's carnivals, Mr Alfred Stevens owned a frail, flat-bottomed boat in which he, Mr D. McHattie and Joe Palmer used to lay the buoys for races.

A canoe called "Tom Thumb"

This was followed by a canoe called the "Tom Thumb". It was built of galvanised iron on a stout wooden frame, and had 2 airtight tanks fore and aft. In 1912 it was used by Joe Palmer and his crew for the famous "submarine explosion". The crew made their way out through a big surf with an oil drum filled mainly with gelignite, with a light cable trailing behind them back to the plunger on the beach. A terrific explosion followed - the only one of its kind and not likely to be repeated,.

"The Spray" which followed was built by "Tacky" Walter in 1913. It was of similar construction to the "Tom Thumb", but with a crew of five. Walters, who was a plumber often had to hurry to the clubhouse after they had ridden a wave to the beach to get his soldering iron before they could put

SENSATIONAL INCIDENT AT THE NEWCASTLE SURF DEMONSTRATION.



to sea again.

The evolution of the surfboat gained impetus in 1919, when the late Bill York of Maryville, built the first wooden boat for the Newcastle Club. It was the "Spray II" and was succeeded in 1920 by the first boat built in Sydney. This was built by Bill Holmes for 85 Pounds.

The Holmes boat was considered to be the forerunner of the standard "double ender" adopted by the Surf Life Saving Association.

In later years, the Towns brothers of Dempsey Island (now part of Kooragang Island) took the lead in Australian surf boat building.

First win

In 1925, a Newcastle Surf Club crew with Gordon Lees, Joe Ruggero, Alex McLeod, Addie Lindsay and Joe Palmer won the Newcastle Carnival Race for the first time against visiting boats.

Following the retirement of the Towns brothers, the club purchased their first "double ended" Humphreys boat called "Newcastle". The "Newcastle" ended its days with a broken back on "King Rock" while being swept by Bruce "Needles" Chisolm.

The "David-Walter" A Memorial Boat.



This surfboat was donated to our club by the parents and friends of the victims of the Bogey Hole drownings.

Jack Eason, Norm Dodd, Jim Jenkins, Doug Gray and Norm Karlson.

This boat earlier in its career at a Newcastle Carnival was caught by a giant wave and swept into the canoe pool, the crew being picked up by the pilot steamer "Birubi". The sweep at the time was Jack Eason.

The "David-Walter" was unique in two aspects. Firstly it was designed specifically as a patrol and rescue boat, with no intention of being used for racing. It was also unique because it was given to the club in appreciation of a specific rescue attempt.

The boat was named after David Robson 15 and Walter

Barker 17, both of Georgetown, both of whom were drowned near the Bogey Hole on March 7, 1948. The parents, relatives and friends of the boys donated the surf boat to the Newcastle Surf Club in appreciation of the efforts made by club members to rescue the boys. In view of the circumstances all concerned believed the boat should be donated to rescue and patrol work.

The David Walter was a double ender and had a much wider beam than any other surf boat - it was great for riding waves and laying buoys but was certainly not a speedster. It was launched in October 1948 and at the end of its useful life was sold to fishermen at Hexham, and may even be still serving as a fishing boat.

"Tuck Sterns"-a new innovation

Our first "tuck" stern boat was built by Ian Humphreys at Swansea and was named the "Rundle" boat. Funds to purchase this boat were obtained from the well known menswear store of Rundles, as well as monies raised by exhibiting some large sharks in the boat shed over the Australia Day weekend. The sharks were later washed and sold to a well known fish cafe (Yuk!)

The next "tuck stern" boat purchased was the first moulded ply boat for the club built by Bill Barnett in Sydney, and was called the Ron Wright. The boat was eventually given to a club in Cornwall England and has ended its days in a British museum.

Once again funds were obtained from a donation by Ron Wright who also ran with the club's help a series of Sunday night concerts in his motor showroom which assisted with the purchase of the boat, oars and jackets. The boat had a rather chequered career with a Nobbys crew winning a State Title in it.

The Newcastle Workers Club then purchased for us a series of boats called May Day I, II and III. All were built by Bill Barnett. Number I was built to new stringent regulations and unfortunately was a "barge". With II & III success was sometimes with us.

The "Royce Jackson"

Our next surfboat, the "Royce Jackson" was built in Queensland by Claude Boyd and launched in 1976. The "Royce Jackson" was the first surfboat to achieve major success in competition.

The club's Reserve Boat crew won the Australian Title in 1977 and finished 2nd in 1978.

The "Stock 84" surfboat, also a Boyd boat was launched in October 1978. This surfboat also met with many successes and has been recently re-furbished and should see many more years of service.

Our current surfboat the Jayes sponsored "Wagga Cridland", is our first fibreglass boat. Launched in 1980, it was built by Sydney boat builder Bill Clymer.

A fibreglass constructed boat is certainly a break with tradition.

If we cast our minds back to when the "plank double ended" boats ruled the waves, there were many sceptics when the first tucked stern boats appeared in 1945. Many laughed, but it wasn't long before all crews rowed in tucked stern boats.

The most recent changes to surfboat design includes the large scale use of fibreglass and the use of electric pumps to clear excess water from the boats. (Newcastle was the first club in our region to install an electric pump).

The modern racing boat has evolved originally from essentially a piece of rescue equipment to the point today where it is the most expensive piece of equipment in every

surf club, which requires efficient and skilled members to man it.

As with all sports in the modern era, preparation is becoming more essential. Gone are the days when it was sufficient to have a casual row once or twice a week and then front up to win a race on Saturday. When the present day rower "hits his straps" after Christmas he trains four or five nights a week. This training not only includes rowing but running, exercising and weights. As with preparation, equipment is becoming more sophisticated and streamlined in continuing efforts to achieve higher degrees of performance.

Is fibreglass the answer? Only time will tell, but, it wasn't long ago that all surf skis were constructed of ply. Today every ski is fibreglass.

BOATING 20 MILES INLAND

Newcastle surfboats played a prominent part in the two largest Maitland floods in living memory - June 1949 and February 1955.

As the flood waters rose rapidly during the cold winter of 1949 there was no State Emergency Services and a call went out for assistance - and every surf club in Newcastle responded magnificently. Club members dropped their pens and tools and within a few hours surf boats were in High Street, Wallis Creek and the surrounding flood plains, helping the police and army in a massive rescue operation.

Jim Jenkins, recalls some of the details of these disastrous floods:-

"The damage was appalling but the spirit of the victims was amazing - and we who were there to help were really moved by their attitude. The boats rescued many people from rooftops, verandahs and isolated ground in the first day or two. In the following days we supplied isolated houses with food and even carried feed for the cattle.

The cold winter wasn't the best time of the year to be out in such weather but it was a great experience and none of us would have missed it for quids.

The 1955 flood was an even greater disaster and once again the surfboats came to the rescue carrying out similar duties as in 1949. There were several hair raising experiences including rowing into some live power lines during the night and witnessing the terrible crashing of a helicopter into power lines resulting in the death of two airmen.

On each occasion there were light hearted moments, particularly regarding the methods used and the circumstance under which we were able to get a drink. We found one hotel where the beer taps were only one inch above flood level and it was a real work of art filling a glass. We also sampled jail life one evening when we slept in cells at Maitland Police Station."

A plaque from the City of Maitland hangs in the Club showing their appreciation of the club's contribution.

Of course there are many other stories that our "boaties" could tell you of years gone by. For the sake of brevity and wishing to seek the truth (not that boaties would exaggerate), I have included a few articles which were reported in the Newcastle Morning Herald.

The Newcastle Morning Herald of February 8th, 1947 reports:-

"Roy Dykes, crew member of the Newcastle senior boat crew proved himself the ironman among local boatmen. Dykes had the plaster removed from his arm so he could row at

the Newcastle carnival,

Dykes had a similar misfortune earlier in the season when he was gashed with a wool hook at work. He rowed then with the calf of one leg heavily bandaged.

Newcastle has a particularly robust crew and is given a good chance if the seas are lively, despite the entry of 42 crews in the senior event.

Four members, Ted Little, Charlie Montgomery, Ernie Eyre and Dykes have won fame as Rugby League players. The other is club treasurer Norm Dodd.

Little, the boat captain and sweep is the biggest boatman in the district, he stands 6 feet 5 inches and weighs 16 stone."

SHARK!

Another 1947 Newcastle Morning Herald report gives a somewhat humorous account of our boat crew's encounter with a shark:-

"A shark swam within 10 feet of a capsized Newcastle Club surfboat.

The crew of the boat, had not seen the shark before their boat had capsized. Three members of the crew made a 150 yard dash for the beach.

The remaining two returned to the swamped boat, and beat the water with oars to frighten the shark away.

Wright, with Charles Montgomery and Bill Clarke, swam hard for the beach."

Crew members Doug Gray and William McFadden swam back to the boat. Gray said "it wasn't much protection because it was filled with water.

I've never seen men swim before like those fellows going for the beach. We saw a wave pass Bill Clarke but he caught up with it and it carried him to the beach."

On the subject of sharks, a newspaper article headed "Repellant Successful" reported that:-

No sharks were seen off Newcastle today when shark repellent was used for the first time at an Australian surf carnival.

Sharks were sighted off the beach on Friday and early today.

Planes from the Newcastle Aero Club patrolled the area while the carnival was in progress. They saw no sharks closer than a mile to the buoys.

Boats also patrolled the area. Bags containing repellent tablets were hung over the sides.

Newtown footballer C. Montgomery, who is a member of the Newcastle club's boat crew said no sharks were seen near the carnival area.

"On this one test the repellent seems to have been successful" he said.

"We may use it daily, and particularly at the weekends when big crowds are in the surf"

The club will ask the government to make supplies of the tablets available to surf clubs.

A photograph, accompanying the report showed Club Captain Alf Sargeant and crew member Jim Straitton affixing repellent to the sweep of the Newcastle boat.

Alf Sargeant will admit today that the "repellent" was little more than Aspirin, however it did provide a "bit of fun at the time".

A story from more recent times, was the last wave the May Day III (a Barnett boat) was to ride. Roy "Wacker" Walker, a veteran of many years (Roy swept Nobbys to an Australian Title win) was on the sweep oar. A fair size surf was running at our beach and Roy, never one to wait for the "next one", rode the May Day III to it's death on the northern end of the beach.

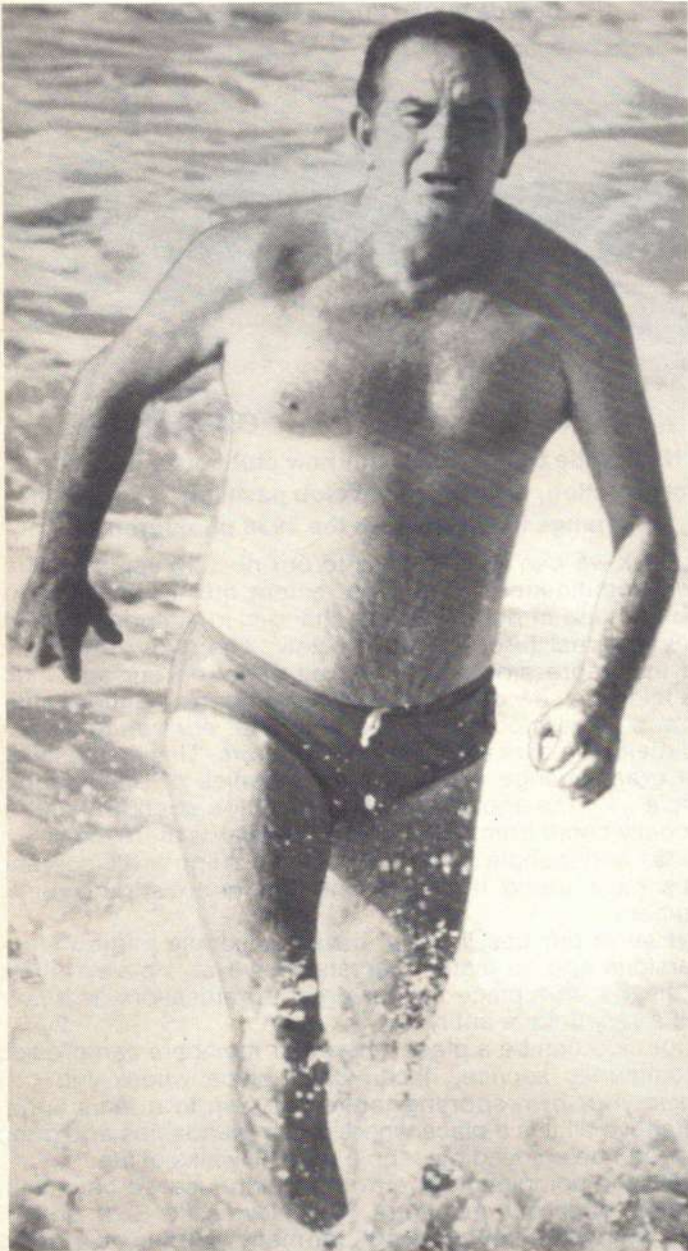
A "burning of the boat" Bar-B-Q was held at Horsehoe Beach to say farewell to May Day III.

Administration

Our club's very existence has been due to many fine and dedicated officials, serving our club for the past 75 years. I think the fact that we have had only 12 Presidents during this time reflects on the service and dedication that these men have given to our club.

Joe Palmer himself, one of our longest serving members, listed the achievements of our officials during our first 50 years, so I will endeavour to focus on the last 25 years.

Ray Abel has been one of our most capable administrators, and after having served his term as President, Ray held the dual position of Secretary/Treasurer for many years. Ray also served on our Committee as Deputy President and Vice President.



Royce Jackson

Our next President, Royce Jackson, is probably the most

dedicated Lifesaver our club has produced. Royce has been a member of our club for 42 years and as a competitor was a member of our A Grade R & R side. He was elected Club Captain in 1946 and in 1958 he became Club President for a record term of 20 years. Royce stepped down in 1978 to take over the leadership of the Newcastle Branch, a position he still holds. Royce has been selected in three overseas tours - to New Zealand in 1975 with our own club team, to California in 1978 as a member of an Australian S.L.S.A. delegation and to Europe in 1980 with the N.S.W. Surf Team.

In the past 25 years, Royce has certainly been our greatest worker, and he must be given much of the credit for the fund raising and planning for our new clubhouse. Without Royce's continued persistence and meetings with Council, our new club would not even have reached the drawing boards. It is to Royce's credit that he still conducts 2 raffles each week in his continual effort to raise funds for the club.

A Beach Hotel Legend

Jack Sullivan our Club Treasurer throughout the early 1970's was a great worker and his "raffle selling techniques" are still legendary on the corner of King and Watt Streets, where the old Beach Hotel used to stand.

Bob Brydon, another Life Member, has given outstanding service to Surf Life Saving. He has held the position of Chief Instructor, he has been President of the Newcastle Branch and was elected to Australia's top Life Saving position of Superintendent in 1957.

George Alsbury our current Deputy President, has been a tireless worker for many seasons. George is the man who "gets things done". Gear inspections, Club inspections or Annual Carnival day, George is always first on the beach to organise and lend a hand in the work. George has served on the Committee for many seasons, and has been an officer of the Newcastle Branch for many years. George is another of our members who is still actively involved in the fund raising of our club.

Brian Wilson, one of our past Secretaries and Carnival Organisers, is still serving our club as an active member, as I.R.B. Captain. Brian "clocks up" many hours of patrol work each summer manning his "rubber duckie".

Sponsorship - a major role

Fund raising and sponsorship plays a very important role these days in the successful running of our club. Life Member, Jim Jenkins apart from being actively involved in the club has made many valuable contributions. Our first I.R.B. was sponsored by Jayes Travel, and our current surfboat was partially sponsored by Jayes. Our new display of photographs in our clubhouse was another project that Jayes kindly donated money towards. Our current Club Patron Don Owen should be thanked for the help he has given to us over the years.

Trevor Bunn, has been the man responsible for most of our life saving awards during the past 10-12 seasons. Trevor's eagerness to continually improve our resuscitation and patrol efficiency has been a very valuable asset to our club. His encouragement of our young members and assistance to our Life Saving Instructors has played a major role in the success of our club in recent years.

Two of our more recent Presidents, Paul Percy and John Forbes, were also very good competitors. Paul along with

Warren Cridland was responsible for the revival of surf-boat rowing in our club and John Forbes was a member and coach of our successful R. & R. teams during the 70's.

We are very fortunate in having 3 Life Members who serve our club 52 weeks a year, rain hail or shine. Allan Mellon, "Puddy" Griffiths and Jim Straiton have been "manning" our kitchen for many years, providing our members with that much needed service on Sunday mornings.

Trevor Wilson, Jeff Dawson and Peter Walmsley have all held positions on our Committee and served our club well for many years. Trevor and club member Ron Cogle, are always willing to make donations for our sporting events and social days. Eric Dobson, is always on hand for the duty of returning officer at the Annual General Meeting.

Our current committee is also lucky to have the service of many hard workers. Our current Secretary, Julie Gray, carries out her duties in a very efficient manner, and in a time when paper work is increasing by the month, we are very fortunate in having such an enthusiastic worker.



Newcastle Beach 1939

This photograph was taken before the high-level development of Newcastle Hospital. Note the long timber skis and boards in use during these times.



Club Stalwarts. Brian Arkell, Past Presidents Doug Arkell and Ray Abel, Jack Preston and past Australian Superintendent Bob Brydon.

Our new Social Secretary, Peg Jackson is a tireless worker and has already raised thousands of dollars towards our new clubhouse. Peg, along with her Ladies Committee have organised food stalls, social evenings, bowls galas and many other raffles to assist in our fund raising drive. Iris Lawrence is another lady who has given our club great service, and as a one "woman" operation she raised many dollars through the raffles and many other fund raising ventures.

Harry Lawson, Udo Fries, Mick Blinko and Stephen Cowperthwaite, are all willing workers and their assistance at our club raffle is very valuable. Our current Boat Captain, Mr Robert "Daffy" Gray, is one of our hardest workers and his enthusiasm is relayed to many of our younger members.

The coaching and training of our club members in life-saving techniques and competition is very important and very demanding. Our club has been fortunate to have the services of Trevor Bunn in life-saving, John Forbes in R. & R., Alf Sargeant and Doug Read in swimming, and Warren Cridland in rowing. Our club owes a great deal to these men and it is hoped the good work these men have done will be continued by our future members.



Newcastle Beach 1982. Our new clubhouse is under construction, next to our old club pavillion. Contrast the change in skyline with the 1938 photograph

I think we can look forward to our next 25 years with renewed confidence. To a great extent the fortunes of our club go hand in hand with the changes in attitudes and the many external forces in our society. The two World Wars and the Depression had a marked effect on our surf club. The mid 60's saw our younger people becoming more affluent and more mobile. For the first time, our young people had their own cars and their own freedom. This has resulted in a great change in the leisure activities of our younger people - the age group which our club strength has traditionally come from. With the trend towards more individual sports, and people "doing their own thing", all sporting clubs have found it harder and harder to attract young members.

Never in our past history, have the people had so many diversions and so many interests. However, I believe there will always be a place for our great organisation, as it is in itself a very unique entity.

Our club can be a place where our members can provide a community service, it can be a place where you can pursue your own sporting interest or join in a team sport, and above all it is a place where many friendships and good times can be enjoyed by people from all walks of life.

With the completion of our new clubhouse we have a lot more to offer our members. The Newcastle East end of town, which has been "dying" for many years is now being revitalised and this should help our club enormously.

I am sure we can look forward to another 75 years of life-saving on Newcastle Beach.

The Newcastle
HERALD



wishes to thank

The Newcastle Surf-Lifesaving Club
for service to the community