

PORT CHATTER



WINTER 2022
JUNE

MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS UNIT

'Volunteers Saving Lives on the Water'





MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT

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VOLUNTEERS SAVING LIVES ON THE WATER

UNIT APPOINTMENTS - JUNE 2022

<p>Patrons: Kate Washington MP, State Member Port Stephens Meryl Swanson MP, Federal Member Paterson Stephen Bromhead LLM MP, State Member Myall Lakes The Hon. Dr David Gillespie MP, Federal Member Lyne</p>		<p>Community Relations Community Relations Officer: Lisa Lodding Public Relations/Social Media: Stephen Barrett Editor - Port Chatter/Wavelength: Penelope Highland Assistant Editor: Geoff Williams Fund Raising Officer: Peter Young Social Media (Facebook): Murray O'Dea Social Committee: Lisa Lodding Webmaster: Rob Guyder Donation Boxes: Angela Tilling</p>	
<p>Unit Commander: Ben van der Wijngaart Welfare / Liaison: Ross Debenham Assistant: Helen Peterson Protocol Officer: Harold Gibson</p>		<p>Corporate Services Administration Officer: Sue Freeman Assistant: Krystyna Winslow Clerical Assistance: Erica Smith WH&S Officer: Riko Eguchi Honours/Awards: Krystyna Winslow Providore: Glenyce Lumsden & Bloss Cleary Unit Meeting Supply: Bloss Cleary Data / Stats: Maureen Wheatley Supply: Margaret & Andrew Morrison Membership: Deb Venables. Erica Smith</p>	
<p>Deputy Unit Commander:: Colin Couper Emergency Services Liaison Officer: Colin Couper Data Management/Network/Comms: Lee Ryman, Brian Richardson, Howard Faulks</p>		<p>Facilities Facilities Officer: John Reid Property Officer: Vacant Asst PO/Projects: Vacant Maintenance: Steve Chauncy, Harold Gibson, Trevor Jarmain, Paul Sullivan, John Woodbridge, Alan Woodward Security: John Smith Electrical Services: Doug Craike Cleaning Contractor: Mel White Cottage Manager: Vacant Curator: Bronwen McLeod Historian: Paul Farnhill Cottage Rosters: Alan Woodward Wedding Co-ordinator: Bloss Cleary Team: Lynn Gibson, Harold Gibson, John Smith Tours: Harold Gibson Tea Rooms Liaison: John Reid</p>	
<p>Operations Operations Officer: Laurie Nolan Assistant Operations Officer: Anthony Batchler Communications Centre Manager: Nigel Eves Assistant Manager: Dee Gilliland Rosters Manager: John Lee Assistant: Vacant On Call Watch Officer: Neil Fraser, Frank Van Druten, Graeme Abberton, Stephen Harris, Tony O'Donnell, Colin Couper, Laurie Nolan, Ben van der Wijngaart Duty Callout Officers: Neil Fraser, Peter Dentrinos, Frank Van Druten, Tony O'Donnell Graeme Abberton, Julian Lyddy-Meaney,</p>		<p>Contributions: are most welcome from all members. They should be accompanied by the author's name, address and phone number, and can be emailed to the editor at editor.portstephens@marinerescuensw.com.au Contributions are subject to review by the Executive Committee prior to publishing.</p>	
<p>Radio Club Manager: Elizabeth Francis Boats Manager: Mark Kelly Assistant Manager: Vacant Ashes Scattering Coordinator: Harold Gibson Chief Engineer: Bill Haskell R.F.S. Liaison: Lower Hunter: Ross Debenham Hunter Valley: Colin Couper Coxswains: Sue Freeman, Robert Johnson, Laurie Nolan, Brian Bibbing, Iain Blackadder, Mick Duggan, Ray McLeod (MR Master)</p>			
<p>Unit Training Unit Training Officer: Ray McLeod Assistant Training Officer: Peter Dentrinos Training Systems Officer: Angela O'Dea, Jennifer Dunn Rescue Vessels Training Officer: Brian Bibbing Course Presenters: Paul Buckley, Neil Fraser, Ray McLeod, Trevor Moxham, Ben van der Wijngaart First Aid Presenters: Peter Dentrinos, Lisa Lodding</p>			
<p>Finance Treasurer: Adrian Hill Assistant: Vacant Grants Officer: John Reid Gift Shop Manager: Sandra Scheuber Gift Shop Bookkeeper: Denise Olsen</p>			

OUR PRIMARY FOCUS

Saving lives at sea on open and closed waters in and around Port Stephens

MARINE RESCUE NSW – PORT STEPHENS UNIT SERVICES PROVIDED



Category One Marine Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre (SARCC). Located at the former Inner Light and now Heritage Site at Nelson Head, 32°42.632 S; 152°09.667 E (overlooking Shoal Bay and looking out through the entrance to Port Stephens). Accredited by the State Rescue Board.

Communications Centre, Nelson Head - VMR217. Operated by trained and qualified volunteers, 24 hours a day; 7 days a week; 365 days a year. Monitoring 27MHz, and VHF marine frequencies, emergency and calling channels. Open during each day to the visiting public.

Apart from radio coverage generally to the local boating community, the Communications Centre offers:

- Emergency support to vessels in trouble
- Emergency and routine after hours communications for Rural Fire Service operating in the Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley districts
- A Marine Radio Safety (MRS) service – Boat Register
- A checkpoint and radio coverage for recreational vessels transiting up and down the coastline adjacent to Port Stephens.
- Weather readings and local conditions observations and
- Current Bureau of Meteorology weather forecasts and tidal information. (These can be obtained by contacting the Comms Centre by phone or radio and are also offered in regular radio skeds).

Accredited Rescue Vessels Available on a 24 hr call-out basis, subject to Police tasking. (See 'Rescue Vessels' page).

Weather recording facility Accredited by the Bureau of Meteorology. Regular reports on local conditions are electronically communicated to the Bureau, as well as to Radio, TV and Print media outlets in the local area.

Nelson Head Reserve and Heritage Inner Light Cottage. The Nelson Bay Unit of Marine Rescue NSW is responsible to the State Government for upkeep of this heritage precinct, through its 'Nelson Head Lighthouse and Rescue Station Reserve Trust Management Sub-committee' (which includes a representative of the Port Stephens Historical Society).

A small museum is operated by volunteers and is open to the public, 7 days a week from 10am to 4pm.

A portion of the building is leased to a private operator for morning/afternoon teas/coffee and lunches.

Wedding Ceremonies. Bookings can be made to hold these in the grounds (see Lighthouse Weddings page).

Below the Comms Centre, on the ground floor, is a tourist Gift Shop operated by Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Without profits from the Gift Shop, together with support from the local community, clubs and businesses, the Unit would find it very difficult, if not near impossible, to operate.

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UNIT COMMANDER

UNIT COMMANDER



Remembering Barney

International Meteorological Day on 23 March was a very appropriate occasion to formally open the new Barney Pinney Weather Station at Nelson Head. Long- delayed by COVID issues, the completion of the installation of a state-of-the-art weather monitoring system adjacent to

the Stephenson Screen and atop the main flagpole was much welcomed.

Thanks to the hard work of project officer Will Scott and our IT Specialist Lee Ryman we now have accurate

reading of wind, rain, temperatures and relative humidity on our base systems and constantly fed to our website.

Its dedication to our dear and much missed friend Barney Pinney, who passed over the bar in December 2020 was



highly appropriate. Barney was a long-term member of Marine Rescue as a Coxswain and Watch Officer who taught navigation and meteorology to many of our members for many years.

It was a delight to have his son Craig with his wife Lucy Pinney there for the unveiling. Regrettably Barney's widow Merrill, who contributed substantially to the cost of the project, was away helping family with the floods aftermath.

The plaque will be a permanent reminder of Barney's part in our mission of 'saving lives at sea'.

Commemorating the First Light at Nelson Head

1 April 2022 saw another commemoration – the 150th anniversary of the lighting of the first (inner) light at Nelson Head. It was a poignant reminder of the rich history we have in Nelson Bay.

Very appropriately the great-great grandson of the first lighthouse keeper, William Glover, Geoff Glover, lit the commemorative lantern at the lighthouse cottage. It



was extinguished by the grandson of the last lighthouse keeper (Jerry Jones), Heath Jones who could recall playing in the cottage as a small child.

We at Marine Rescue Port Stephens are proud to maintain their tradition of helping save lives at sea.

Farewell to the RFS – Focus on the Gift Shop

A sad forthcoming change this Winter will be the cessation of the after-hours service Marine Rescue Port Stephens has provided for many years to the Hunter Valley and Lower Hunter RFS in May and August, respectively.

Regular readers of Port Chatter will be aware that all 000 calls for fire response in these districts are managed by our Communications Centre from 4:30 pm until 8:30 am every day. Our watch keepers take these calls and despatch and manage the communications with RFS fire appliances during these times.

No doubt Colin Couper, the Deputy Unit Commander, who has been our liaison officer with the RFS will have more to recount on this.

But aside from being sad to lose this support to the RFS as they move to a centralised callout system, it will also see us losing a major source of regular income from this service.

Marine Rescue Port Stephens has an annual operating budget of around \$170,000, largely to operate our boats. All the work is done by volunteers. The State Government provides about \$30,000 of this and the rest we must raise ourselves. That's a lot of sausage sandwiches at Bunnings!

Why am I telling you this? Well, the other major source of our income has been the Gift Shop at our Base, but as many of the volunteers get to be of an age, the numbers are dwindling, and our recruitment drives have not picked up enough to replace them.

So here is my pitch...I'm looking for volunteers to join our Unit and work in the Gift Shop – even one or two morning or afternoon shifts a month would be a big help. So if you have some time and you are interested, please call the Base on 02 4981 3585.

Ben van der Wijngaart



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DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER.... AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

DEPUTY UNIT COMMANDER

Its probably good to get the disappointing news out of the way first but two visitors to the Tearooms recently left their \$10k electric mountain bikes chained to the outer rope of the carpark while they took advantage of the fine food to match the fine view. When they returned, the bikes were gone.

Thanks to our strategically located CCTV cameras, we were able to supply the police with footage of the lowlife and his deed. We have this system as security for our overnight operators and while we may be inclined to think that CCTV everywhere imposes on our privacy, used this way it can assist in crime prevention or at least the recovery of stolen items.

Patrons who bring their bikes up the hill are encouraged to use the more secure bike rack provided in the car park for that purpose.

As Emergency Services Liaison Officer (ESLO) I attended a meeting organised by Port Stephens Council for the area's Beach Stakeholders at Birubi SLSC. It was an opportunity to make a presentation about the service we offer the community and also to gain knowledge of how other organisations, volunteer plus Council and State employees, administer and serve the public on our wonderful coastline.

On the IT front, a new version of our proprietary MRNSW vessel tracking system, called Seahawk 2, is going through rigid testing before being introduced to the 45 Units throughout the State. It has been tailored as a result of input from the users in the Units via Zoom workshops and feedback from the IT Steering Committee, of which Howard Faulks represents Marine Rescue Port Stephens. With an upgraded Marine Rescue mobile app also being incorporated into the new system, the ability for the boating public to logon / logoff and most

importantly, for Units to be able to track their day out or voyage through our waterways, will be greatly enhanced.

I'm sure there will be a report of the fantastic effort our training has provided our rescue personnel for the MAYDAY that occurred near Fingal Island on 7 May. By visiting the Base at our After Action Review, the skipper has ensured that we appreciate his thankfulness for what he has written as "owing my life to you". Its why we do it and why we get such satisfaction when it all goes so right. A father returning to his family.

We have quite a number of irons in the fire with a new rescue vessel, new Comms Centre planned and a challenge to fill the overnight shifts with the RFS moving to a central CAD system. We have provided many hours overnight as RFS Firecom. We will miss them, as apart from filling the night shifts in a very constructive way, we were able to appreciate what these fellow volunteers give up by getting out of bed at 2 o'clock in the morning to assist someone trapped in a motor vehicle accident, a house on fire or just a cat stuck down a drain.

Finally, thanks to the Unit members for having enough confidence in me to allow another two years as the DUC.

Colin Couper





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OPERATIONS

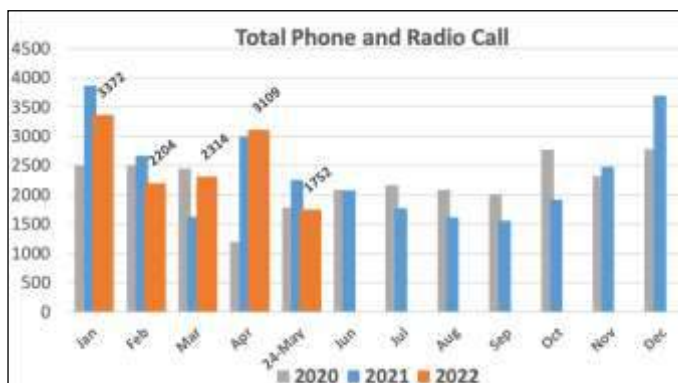
OPERATIONS OFFICER

With the approach of winter, there has been significantly less activity on the waterways of Port Stephens. There has been fairly constant bad weather over recent months, mainly in the form of rain, rain and more rain.... But the offshore conditions have also been rough much of the time. Naturally there has been the normal boating traffic of hardy fishermen braving the weather, and many of them will tell you that the fish bite better in the rain (not sure about that!!!).

There were some fairly decent catches in the recent Trailer Boat Fishing Tournament, despite being restricted to inshore waters due to the very rough and dangerous conditions forecast for outside waters. Needless to say, the number of competing boats was significantly down on past years, and fortunately none of them needed assistance from Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

With the onset of winter and the resultant boat lay-ups, now could be a good time to check everything in your boat to ensure that it has "weathered the storm" of frequent use over the warmer months. Before you put a tarpaulin over your pride and joy, it's a good idea to wash everything down with fresh water, and then spray a salt-dissolver and protection solution (such as "Salt-Away") on all moving parts and controls, to ensure that it will be in good working order when the next season arrives. While you're checking everything, make a list of the items that need attention or replacement so that you don't forget it before next using the boat.

The Watchkeepers and Radio Operators in our Communication Centre are always on hand 24/7, 365 days a year, to handle your enquiries or to arrange on-water assistance if needed. You can call us on VHF Ch 16 or 27.88 MHz, or by phoning 4981 3585, and our professional team will try to ensure that your day ends as well as it started. You can see from the below graph that



we receive (and make) many radio and phone calls, averaging about 3,000 calls a month, or 100 per day. This keeps the volunteers at Marine Rescue Port Stephens very busy, but what many people don't realise is that we also handle the Communications for Hunter Valley and Lower Hunter Valley RFS regions outside of normal business hours (16 hours a day).

Naturally, our Watch Keepers and Radio Operators in the

Marine Rescue Port Stephens base will have a bit less work to do over the next few months.... But rest assured that our Radio Base will continue to operate 24/7. Our 170 MRPS volunteers collectively put in about 3,000 hours per month, including manning the Comms Centre (1,600 hrs), the Rescue Vessels (500 hrs), the Gift Shop (400 hrs), the Cottage Museum (130 hrs), plus all the necessary management and property maintenance.

Why do we do all this? Principally... our mission is **"Safety of Life at Sea"** (SOLAS), and our motto is **"Volunteers doing our job professionally"**. We undertake many hours of training and experience to ensure that we uphold these values.

A good example of fulfilling our mission and displaying our professionalism can be found in a recent harrowing story of proud boat ownership, an unfortunate mishap, accidental loss of a vessel, potential loss of life, and a professional rescue effort to ensure *Safety of Life at Sea*. Read on....

Recently a local man decided to purchase a 35' Flybridge Cruiser so that he could enjoy some quality time with his young children on the beautiful Port Stephens waterways. The boat he chose was located in Sydney so required an off-shore trip of some 90 nautical miles (170 km) to bring it to Port Stephens. Being an older style displacement cruiser, the maximum speed was only 8 knots, so the trip was to take about 12-13 hours to complete.



The vessel was logged on with Marine Rescue, with a local ETA of 10pm. The Skipper had phoned our Communications Centre some hours previously, to ensure that his Logon had been received.

Unfortunately, due to tiredness and a navigation error, the Skipper had decided to turn in towards the Port Stephens entrance just a bit too early. It was already night time and he failed to realise that he was heading straight for the rocks at Shark Island where the Fingal Light is located. He struck rocks at one of the treacherous "bommies" just off the island, and immediately started taking water and sinking. The Skipper had been thrown off his feet by the collision, and suffered significant injury which caused him to go in and out of consciousness. His radios were useless because of the water in the cabin, however he

(Continued on page 11)



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OPERATIONS

(Continued from page 9)

had the sense to grab his phone and dial the last number that was in the phone memory – Marine Rescue Port Stephens.

At about 7:30pm on an otherwise quiet Saturday night, our Watchkeeper took the call, and the first thing he heard was “Mayday, Mayday, Mayday, I’ve hit the rocks and I’m sinking”. Now is the time when all of our training and experience kicks in, and the Watchkeeper very professionally obtained all the necessary information (where, what, who, why etc), despite the Skipper lapsing in and out of consciousness on account of his injuries. This took over 12 minutes, but while he was on the phone, our Watchkeeper also broadcast a “*Mayday Relay*” on VHF radio (requesting assistance from any nearby vessel), rang the Marine Area Command (Water Police) in Sydney, rang our Duty Call-Out Officer (to get the rescue boats going), and at the same time was giving instructions to the Skipper on how to activate his EPIRB, put on his lifejacket, display a V-Sheet, gather all the necessary survival equipment, and prepare to “abandon ship”.

The Skipper managed to activate his EPIRB, get all his gear together and, as the vessel was now sinking, launch his small “rubber ducky” tender. He started to row towards the only thing that he could see in the darkness – the Fingal Lighthouse. Fortunately, his efforts took him straight towards the *only* bit of sandy beach on the whole island (less than 10 metres wide) on a very rough and rocky shoreline, with waves



breaking and crashing onto the rocks all around him. Having made it to shore, the Skipper secured his tender to a log in case the tide came in and washed it away, and then collapsed in a heap on the sand.

Meanwhile, our Rescue Vessels were on the way to assist him – PS31 heading straight for the scene, and PS30 picking up a couple of Ambulance Paramedics and transporting them in case urgent medical attention was required. The Watchkeeper had obtained a Lat/Long

GPS position from the Rescue Control Centre in Canberra, transmitted by the activated EPIRB, and after a short search located the Skipper on shore. The surrounding area is very treacherous with many partly submerged rocks and narrow channels, so was unable to get any closer than about 15 metres to the beach. Fortunately, at the same time the Westpac Rescue Helicopter from Newcastle arrived on the scene, and was guided to the exact location by PS31’s search light which was trained on the stricken Skipper.

A Paramedic was winched down to the injured Skipper, and it was quickly assessed that he needed to be transported to hospital urgently. The Chopper lowered a stretcher, and after stabilising the patient, the Paramedic and patient were winched back up and whisked off to John Hunter Hospital where the Skipper remained for four days. His injuries included fractures to two vertebrae in his neck and multiple bruising and lacerations.

We met up with the Skipper a few days after he was discharged from hospital, and he expressed his extreme



The Skipper (middle) and friend (right) met and thanked the MRPS team involved in the rescue.

gratitude for our efforts, and those of the Chopper crew. He made a generous donation to our MRPS unit..... but the real satisfaction was hearing his side of the story and especially a “*Thank you*” video from his two kids.

If it was not for our 24/7 operation at MRPS, and the depth of training and the skills of our Watchkeepers and Boat Crew, there may have been no-one to hear his “*Mayday*” call, no-one to arrange the rescue efforts, and no-one to “*get the boats going*” to ensure his survival. I have no doubt that without our efforts, this lucky man may no longer be with us, and his two young children may have been without a father.

That’s why we do what we do!

Please.... STAY SAFE... IF IN DOUBT, DON’T GO OUT.

AND ALWAYS... LOG ON WITH MARINE RESCUE.

Laurie Nolan

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HISTORY OF THE INNER LIGHT

FACILITIES OFFICER

History of the Inner Light

On the 1 April 2022 we commemorated the 12150th Anniversary of the lighting of the first lamp at Nelson Head on 1 April 1872.

We were fortunate to have with us one of the descendants of the first lightkeeper, Geoff Glover, who is the great, great grandson of William Glover. The last resident lighthouse keeper was Jerry Jones who retired from that position on 9 December 1984. Jerry was the longest serving keeper, retiring after 28 years of service. We were also fortunate to have with us at that recent event, Heath Jones, who is the grandson of Jerry Jones.

The following is an excerpt from the presentation made by the Unit Commander which outlines some of the history and events from that commemoration.

“Little is written of the original occupants of this place, the Worimi People, but there is no doubt from local evidence that it was an important place in those tens of thousands of years of human occupancy by its original inhabitants that should not be forgotten. In the last 15 seconds of the hour clock of the human story in this country, you will be aware that Port Stephens was first sighted by Europeans when Captain James Cook sailed past on 11 May, 1770 but did not enter the port. Cook named the bay after the Second Secretary of the Admiralty, Sir George Stephens. Over the following years the waters were first charted by Charles Grimes in the brig, “*Francis*” and then by numerous surveyors until C.M.L. Scott in the Royal Navy vessel “*HMS Fantome*” in 1920 and after that by the NSW Department of Public Works which assumed responsibility for making surveyors of Port Stephens.

As the port was mapped and with increasing usage, mariners requested the service of lights to direct them safely through the Heads, past the sandspit and into the deeper channels avoiding the many shoals of sand. It's worth bearing in mind that the early development of our community in Port Stephens depended predominantly on coastal shipping for freight, travel and livelihoods.

The first of two Port Stephens lighthouses, Point Stephens,



From left to right. (Ports Stephens's Councillor) Lea Anderson, Geoff Glover (Great great grandson of William Glover, the first lightroom keeper), Meryl Swanson (Federal Memeber for Paterson), Heath Jones (Grandson of the last light keeper, Mrs Evelyn Visser (great, great granddaughter of William Glover), and her daughter Candace Humpries.

commenced operating on 1 May 1862 at Fingal Point. This light was built to guide vessels sailing north from Newcastle. The lighthouse was built on the eastern side



of Mt Stephens, fronted by rocky ground which breaks 400m offshore so should not be approached within two kms of the lighthouse.

The first light inside Port Stephens was shown on 1 April 1872 with a lantern lit in a small timber structure situated on Nelson Head near to where the current Marine Rescue Base is situated, some 52.5 metres above high water mark. In the NSW Government Gazette of 1872 the following Notice to Mariners was issued by the Office of the Superintendent of Pilots, Lights and Harbours in Sydney on 28 March 1872:

“*Harbour Light, Nelson Head, Port*

(Continued on page 15)

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HISTORY OF THE INNER LIGHT

(Continued from page 13)

Stephens. On and after the night of Monday 1 April, a harbour light will be exhibited at Nelson Head, Port Stephens, visible at a distance of from 8 to 10 miles in clear weather. The light will show bright to seaward, be eclipsed over the entrance shoal – and made out red after the shoal is passed and Nelson Bay can be steered for. When Nelson Head is passed the light will again make out bright and be a guide for picking up anchorage or proceeding further into Port Stephens.

Vessels seeking shelter in Nelson Bay can therefore run for the harbour light (bright), so long as the Point Stephens revolving light is kept in sight. When the revolving light closes with Tomaree Head, it will be



necessary to haul to the NNW till the harbour light is lost sight of and again made out red. A course can then be shaped direct for it and when Nelson Head is passed the white light will reappear and be a guide for coming to at Nelson Bay.”

The timber structure was replaced in 1876 by a tower, one storey in height, of octagonal shape. It was 11 foot internal diameter and attached to the keepers residence and entered from the residence’s verandah. The Light Room contained four single flat wick kerosene lamps with reflecting mirrors, exhibiting through glazed apertures in the brick walls, and shining a white light seawards and over the entrance shoal, red within the shoal and up the channel as far as Nelson Head, and a white light up the channel as far as Nelson Bay.

Electric powered globes superseded the original catoptric lamps in June 1948. The externally



mounted lights were activated by a switch in the Light Room. On 23 January 1978 the light was changed from a fixed light to an occulting light with a character of two seconds light, one second eclipse. In 1984 electronic controls were mounted in a lockable metal box on the external wall below the white light. This did away with the requirement of a resident Maritime Services Board Lightkeeper.



In 1995 the Light was relocated to the top of the wartime bunker to be operated from solar power. It was an occulting white and red sector light flashing every three seconds. This light has also been replaced by the laser lights situated on Corrie Island.

The first lightkeeper was William Glover and he was appointed to service under the Colony as a Telegraph Operator on 21 October 1869 with an annual salary of £52. He was appointed as the Lightkeeper on 28 March 1872 when official notification was made of the first use of the light. The guys get all the guernseys in our history accounts of that time, but since it is not many weeks since International Women’s Day on 8 March, I thought to bring you back to the realities of life here in the 1870s with this poignant little account of Mrs Margaret Glover from Penny Lane’s book **‘Sand Sea and Sky’**

“Imagine Mrs Glover, the lighthouse keeper’s wife back in 1875, wielding her flat irons – hefty chunks of hot cast iron - in her laundry behind the Cottage, after hours scrubbing, pummelling, wringing and hanging the family washing. No matter that she had a sigh-inducing view of the ocean, tree-dense hills and sea eagles gliding above. Did she wish for eagles’ wings? Her deeper sighs were for the soiled accoutrements of a voluminous clothed life with her light-house-keeping husband and their scurry of children.

If Edith in her late teens was still living at home, she would have scrubbed and pummelled alongside her mother, and possibly young Jemima and Louisa dripped sweat into the hot suds. Clarence, Francis and Albert would have kept clear of the laundry, probably following the lighthouse keeper with his kerosene-filled

(Continued on page 17)



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HISTORY OF THE INNER LIGHT CONTINUED AND COMMUNITY RELATIONS

(Continued from page 15)

jug....or chopping and stacking forests of wood for the cottage's four fireplaces and the kitchen.

William and Margaret produced 11 children, though by the time they lived in the cottage, maybe only six or seven of them squashed with their parents into the four small rooms, jostling one another for a place at the windows to watch ships come into port.

Margaret Glover heaved her flat irons for only three years in her lighthouse cottage laundry. Travelling up the steep, rugged track to the lighthouse, she was thrown from a cart and killed. William continued lighthouse keeping at Nelson Head for 14 years until one morning when he died suddenly as he attended to the lights. Since his wife's death, William had not travelled the track on which his wife had been killed, but on the morning of his own demise, he did so."

Worth a thought when you drive up the road to the top of Nelson Head today.

The lighthouse structure and Light Room has been administered and maintained since 1990 by, firstly, the Nelson Head Lighthouse and Rescue Station Reserve Trust and more recently by Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Where, as the Royal Volunteer Coastal Patrol and now as Marine Rescue Port Stephens, we have

sustained William's mission of saving lives at sea for the last 40 years, 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

Over the last 18 months we have initiated a complete refurbishment of the light Room to show how the original lights operated and to showcase some of the items that have been used in the Light Room Operations. I would encourage you to have a look at this Light Room and the adjoining Museum to gain a better appreciation of the maritime history of Port Stephens.

In the Light Room there is a very long list of the shipwrecks in waters adjacent to or inside Port Stephens. This list bears testament to the dangers of life at sea and the tragedy that occurs when ships come to grief along rocky shores in violent storms and rough seas. That is the main reason for lighthouses – to give ships protection from the elements and to guide them and their crews to safe anchorages and away from hidden reefs and shoals. Today we have a very safe environment for mariners but there is always a need for emergency services such as Marine Rescue Port Stephens where our motto is "Volunteers saving lives on the water".

John Reid

COMMUNITY RELATIONS OFFICER

ANZAC DAY



For More than a century, Australians, New Zealanders and our allies have stood shoulder-to-shoulder in the pre-dawn hours of the 25th April to conduct a vigil. Although we meet at this hour in recognition of the first ANZACs who came ashore at Gallipoli in 1915, on ANZAC Day we pause to remember all those who have served our nation

in peace and war from Anzac Cove to Afghanistan. On ANZAC Day we give thanks to all veterans for their service, their sacrifice and their resilient spirit.

On Monday 25th April 2022 more than 600 events took place across NSW commemorating ANZAC Day, 9200 veterans marched through the Sydney CBD with Nelson Bay hosting up to an estimated 4000 people, the biggest crowds ever seen at the Cenotaph in Apex Park for quite some time.

Deputy Unit Commander Colin Couper led the unit followed by Casey Hambrecht as the flag bearer and 25 members from Marine Rescue Port Stephens. Following the Newcastle Permanent Band down Stockton Street we were met with cheering and clapping as we proudly marched past the thousands of people lining the street. Unit Commander Ben van der Wijngaart met the unit at the cenotaph to lay the wreath marking the time the ANZACs landed at Gallipoli and recognising the

importance of the first ANZAC Day since Australia's withdrawal from Afghanistan, followed by the roaring flyover of an F-35A Lightning II jet from RAAF Base Williamstown jolting the crowds to attention..

(Continued on page 19)

**CENTURY 21 PARADISE WATERS—
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COMMUNITY RELATIONS, GIFT SHOP AND WESTPAC HELICOPTER PRESENTATION

(Continued from page 17)

FUNDRAISING

We have had a number of successful Bunnings BBQ's over the last few months, showing that people are starting to get back out into the community and back to Bunnings for the good old sausage sanger. Thank you to everyone who has supported us at these events, your support and donations keep our boats on the water helping us to help you.

Lisa Lodding



GIFT SHOP

Time rolls on in the Shop with Easter and Mother's Day perking up our sales. Winter here and the wet weather seems to have gone for the time being however the cold wind is with us, and the tourist prospects drop off at this time.

Denise is doing the lion's share of responsibility, currently managing rosters, balancing the books and multiple shifts. I am multi-tasking with meeting reps, managing stock and also multiple shifts. Our secretary is arranging the required paperwork and shifts as well. All staff are answering the call where needed.

We have had three members honoured for their long term membership i.e. five and 10 years of service.



We look forward to offering you something nice from the shop, do call in.

Sandra Scheuber - Manager

WESTPAC HELICOPTER PRESENTATION



On the evening of May 4 Marine Rescue Port Stephens members were given an operational insight into the day-to-day operations of the Westpac Helicopter. Training & Checking Aircrew Officer Kris Larkin had members total attention while outlining the capabilities of their helicopters. This was very impressive.

The in-depth presentation highlighted the importance of Marine Rescue to their operations.

Both radio base and boat crew members were updated on the procedures, communications and how best to help the Westpac Helicopters while on an operational job.

Graham and David from the Westpac Helicopter team delivered a history lesson from the first beginnings and how the Westpac Helicopter started.



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INNER LIGHT WEDDINGS

WEDDING CO-ORDINATOR

18 March 2022 - Kita and Jordan celebrated their wedding with family and friends after planning their wedding for 12 months. Kita and Jordan met on Instream 2015, and fell in love on their first date.

The couple said they were blown away by the view and Kita could picture herself walking down the grassed area looking at the water and her husband to be. Her Maid of Honour and bridesmaids were close friends and a cousin

They plan to honeymoon on a road trip to outback Australia

19 March 2022 - Monique and Ben celebrated their marriage with close family and friends. Monique's bridesmaids were her daughters Skye and Kate, the two



Whilst chatting to the Groom, who was nervously awaiting his Bride, nine year old Franko came up to me said he is going to get married at the Inner Light and have four children, two boys and two girls. He then proceeded to inform me "tomorrow when I'm twenty-one I'm going to the pub with dad and have a beer."

It was nothing less than a true belly laugh from me and embarrassment for dad. Aleesha is a beauty therapist, and Johnny a council contractor.

Bloss Cleary - 0490 226 399

On behalf of the Wedding Team



little flower girls were the couple's granddaughter Anabelle and niece Isabelle.

The couple met in 2019 at a local Martial Arts self-defence day which Ben was a volunteer member. They said they have been planning for their special day for nine months or so,

Monique runs her business **Bella Kate Styling and Luxury Picnics** in Port Stephens and Ben is a RAAF aircraft technician, the couple plan to honeymoon on the Gold Coast.

8 April 2022 - Aleesha and John shared their special day at Inner Light Reserve with close family and friends. Aleesha's flower girls Sienna and Alessia were stunning. The little Grooms Francesco (aka) Franko, and Gianni.



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RFS LIAISON LOWER HUNTER & HUNTER VALLEY

LOWER HUNTER RFS LIAISON



With the impending cessation of our relationship with Lower Hunter RFS in August. They will be absorbed into the centralised communications centre I thought it might a good time to look at some of the more exciting or unusual incidents we have looked after in Firecoms over the years. Personally my favourite is as follows:

One Friday we had a call from Fire and Rescue saying

that they had a call from a woman who had tried to navigate the back road between Chichester Dam and Frying Pan Creek camping via the state forest, and had bogged her car. They did inform us that they didn't really know who should carry out the job, but had come to us as a last resort. A senior RFS officer first went out to look for the car, and the road she said she was on. Despite the RFS vehicle, and a police car and her friends searching up and down the road where the car was supposed to be, the car was not found. Meanwhile the woman was getting more and more panicky and ringing up 000 ever ten minutes, so Fire and Rescue decided to patch her calls direct through to us. The police and her friends all gave up and left the area. Meanwhile, in one of the calls the woman mentioned a road name that she hadn't before. A quick check of the map by the RFS Duty Officer found the road, and asked the searching RFS officer to go along the road with red and blues flashing, and the woman was asked to put her head lights on and keep a look out for the flashing lights. Fortunately the woman and her car were found and extracted from the mud.

There is one lesson from this tale, DON'T NAVIGATE THROUGH BUSHLAND USING YOUR GPS.

Ross Debenham

The table below reflects the incidents received by MRPS from Lower Hunter and Hunter Valley Districts

Month		Bush/Grass	Structure	CFR	MVA	Car	AFA	Other	Total
Feb-22	LHRFS	9	5	5	11	3	6	18	57
Mar-22	LHRFS	6	1	16	8	16	9	22	78
Apr-22	LHRFS	5	3	18	13	15	6	14	74
TOTAL	LHRFS	20	9	39	32	34	21	54	209
Feb-22	HVRFS	1	2	2	4	4	3	4	20
Mar-22	HVRFS	0	1	3	4	4	1	6	19
Apr-22	HVRFS	2	2	2	3	2	0	3	14
TOTAL	HVRFS	3	5	7	11	10	4	13	

HUNTER VALLEY RFS

The table above reflects the incidents handled by MRPS for the Hunter Fire Districts:

It shows what a wet autumn we have had.

With the cooler winter months arriving, the RFS has reminded homeowners with a fireplace to ensure that the flue has been cleaned regularly. Incomplete



combustion creates creosote in the chimney, which, if left to accumulate, can block the chimney and ignite - which is why it's so important to have your chimney checked and cleaned regularly.

The Bushfire Danger Season came to an end on 31 March. While nowhere near the devastation of the 2019/20 months from hell, the RFS was still busy statewide during this period.



(Continued on page 24)

HUNTER VALLEY RFS

(Continued from page 23)



Firehoses are also handy to recover surfaces after floodwaters recede. Netball anyone?

It is with some sadness that we will no longer be handling the communications for the Hunter Valley District after 31 May. While not as busy as Lower

Hunter because of population differences and a more rural area to cover, there has been plenty of variety with mines, an army base, railroads, vineyards and horse studs. Plus some very remote areas outside Singleton and Muswellbrook. As a result, overnight operators have had a crash course in the geography of the upper part of the Hunter and have even learnt to correctly pronounce

Goorangoola (a.k.a. *garangalar* for the uninitiated).

The District is migrating to the RFS centralised Computer Assisted Despatch (CAD) system, joining most other Districts in NSW on the updated communications network.

We wish both our fellow volunteers and the staff of Hunter Valley all the best in the future and pass on how much we have enjoyed our service to you.

So while this will be the last Hunter Valley RFS report, you can keep up with their valiant service to their community on their Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/RFSHunterValley/>

Bon voyage from those on the Coast.

“If its flooded, forget it!”

Colin Couper

Prepare Act Survive



Clockwise from top left: Crew Epulettes for Paul Radford; Peter Young 5yr Service Medal; Shirley Clark bringing UC Ben down to her level; Peter Merlino Unit Life Member; Tony O'Donnell 10yr medal; Ron Lighton 20yr medal.

THE EXCALIBUR PART 3

THE EXCALIBUR TRAGEDY - PART 3

The role of RVCP Port Stephens

On the evening of 16 September, Watch Officer Mike Brown commenced night shift at the Nelson Head radio base of RVCP Port Stephens. It was raining heavily and gale force winds were forecast. At 1915 hrs Mike heard *Excalibur* attempting to sked with RVCP Forster Tuncurry (Fortun) on the HF frequency. Mike contacted Fortun to advise that a vessel was attempting to contact the base and was advised they did not have HF radio. Mike then contacted *Excalibur* at Fortun's request and conducted a welfare and position check. The crew reported all was well and that they expected to be at Port Stephens at approximately 0100 hrs the following day. Their position at that time was seven nautical miles south of Port Macquarie and 20 nautical miles to sea. A subsequent sked was arranged

when abeam of Seal Rocks.

This was the last reported contact with the yacht. At 2039 hrs,

responsibility for the yacht's voyage was handed over to Port Stephens. At that time, Mike Brown had no concerns for the vessels' safety.

Following receipt of the EPIRB signal and confirmation of a strobe light in the water by a fixed wing aircraft, a Westpac rescue helicopter from Newcastle was dispatched to investigate. At 0020 hrs Mike Brown heard a radio call from the helicopter passing coordinates of the EPIRB and strobe light to *MV Curia*. On plotting the coordinates he identified the position was within RVCP Port Stephens' watch area and advised the helicopter the base would monitor communications for the incident. He was not able to detect the EPIRB's signal on 121.5 MHz and his attempts to contact *Excalibur* by radio were unsuccessful. He contacted a vessel fishing near Port Stephens and asked the crew to report any sightings. Mike contacted the helicopter and advised that the yacht *Excalibur* was in the area and was a possible target. By this time the helicopter had identified survivors in the water and *MV Curia* was proceeding towards the location.

Mike received a call from Nelson Bay Water Police at 0057 hrs advising they were proceeding to the scene in *Nemesis* under command of Snr. Constable Ross Cramp. He asked if RVCP Port Stephens' rescue assets should be activated but this was declined. Mike continued to attempt to contact the yacht, without success. It was not until the two survivors were safely aboard *MV Curia* at 0343 hrs that authorities became aware that *Excalibur* had

capsized and four crew were missing.

As search and rescue operations commenced, a request for activation of RVCP Port Stephens lifeboat was received at 0403 hrs. Boat crew were immediately paged and started to assemble. Weather conditions at the time were atrocious. Malcolm Millikin remembers driving to the dock on flooded roads through torrential rain and thinking



that the voyage would not be a comfortable one. The crew were Col Wynn skipper, Peter Fisher engineer, and Rod Reeson, John Thompson, Ron Lighton

and Malcolm Milliken. They quickly readied *Danial Thain* and departed the dock at 0444 hrs. Initial conditions encountered were seas and swell of around two metres.

RVCP Port Stephens Divisional Commander Peter Phillipson was alerted of the incident as the boat crew were being paged and proceeded immediately to the base to set up an incident room and establish a search and rescue team. On arrival he found that Mike Brown was well in control of the initial incident. Peter Phillipson took over as Search Master and was soon joined by Operations Officer (OPSO) Arthur Heiler who undertook the chart work. Mike Brown continued in his role of lead radio operator. He was assisted by rostered radio base crew of Barry Hayes and Heather Harmer on the morning shift, and Ross Debenham and Bill Irons in the afternoon. All radio communications between the search vessels, aircraft and water police were monitored and recorded, together with phone calls of aircraft movements from AusSAR. All relevant information was plotted on the charts. Radio communications between the base and rescue assets (aircraft, police boats, merchant vessels and PS40) was by VHF and HF but reception at all times was difficult. The distance to the incident site was approaching the effective limit of VHF and when combined with the atmospheric conditions due to the gale, communications were very challenging. The lack of a high gain antenna made HF reception difficult. At times communications to the rescue assets had to be relayed through one of the helicopters. During the course of the day, radio base crew managed the increasingly heavy radio traffic, logged all radio and phone communications, fielded enquiries from the media and the general public, as well as performing their normal radio room duties.

(Continued on page 26)

THE EXCALIBUR PART 3

(Continued from page 25)

Around 0515 hrs, Water Police Sgt Don Anderson arrived at the radio base and established himself as Water Police Operations Controller in the back room of the radio base (now the John Weir radio room). A police radio at the base was found to be inoperable but he had a satellite phone and was able to communicate directly with On-Scene Controller and other rescue assets. RVCP radio base crew relayed radio communications to Don Anderson.

Once the boundaries of the search area established by AusSAR became known, the locations of the yacht, the survivors and other flotsam were plotted and set and drift determined. A southerly trend was quickly apparent.

Danial Thain arrived on scene around 0733 hrs and was assigned a search area. Malcolm Milliken described the sobering sight of the capsized yacht tethered alongside the *MV Curia* with the hull barely visible above the water. During most of the search, the fly bridge was manned as a lookout by the two youngest and newest boat crew members, Malcolm Milliken and Ron Lighton. Conditions on the cold, wet, windy and pitching fly bridge were extremely uncomfortable. The more experienced skipper, navigator and engineer remained in the wheelhouse to drive the boat, plan tactics, monitor communications and assess the prevailing conditions.

The initial search area assigned to *Danial Thain* was at the northernmost point of the search



area on the western side. This was well away from the calculated drift line and

the radio base crew requested *Danial Thain* be reassigned to track from the southern boundary up the apparent drift line. The request was declined. AusSAR controlled the search aircraft from Canberra while coordination on-scene rescue and merchant vessels was coordinated by the Water Police. As merchant ships contacted the RVCP base with their positions and directions, details were plotted on charts.

Not long into the search a horseshoe life ring from *Excalibur* was sighted by John Thompson and Ron Lighton from the fly bridge of *Danial Thain*. The position was recorded as it was important information in determining set and drift-lines for the search.

Subsequently, Malcolm Milliken and Ron Lighton sighted what they thought were heads in the water. However, much to the crew's disappointment the objects were two fishing buoys.

At around 1130 hrs the search area was enlarged to the south. The radio base continued to plot surface vessel movements noting possible sightings of interest and a definite drift line was established. By interrogating the large amount of collated search data, base personnel identified an area that they believed was not being searched. The local Water Police coordinator was advised and authorised base personnel to redirect some of the on-water search assets. The nearest asset was a merchant vessel which was directed to alter course. However, the search was soon suspended and all on-water assets were stood down.

As the afternoon progressed, the weather continually deteriorated and the smaller police launches had to leave the scene, leaving *Danial Thain* as the only continuing search vessel. Ron Calman remembers advising the crew of *Danial Thain* to return to Port Stephens late in the afternoon due to the rough conditions and poor visibility. About 1.5 hrs into the return voyage, a call was received by *Danial Thain* to return to the search area following the sighting of objects in the water by one of the merchant

vessels. A further search for about an hour proved fruitless. The crew presumed the objects may have been the previously sighted fishing buoys, which they subsequently regretted not having recovered. Returning again towards Port Stephens, and with fuel running low, *Danial Thain* encountered a violent storm with waves up to 10 m breaking over the boat. Fortunately, the vessel had

been constructed as a lifeboat for conditions in the North Sea and handled the conditions safely, but with great discomfort for the occupants. Four crew were sea sick while skipper Col Wynn was suffering badly from the flu. Engineer Peter Fisher was not affected and much to crew's annoyance, frequently came out of the galley to offer chicken noodle soup to the sufferers. *Danial Thain* logged off at 2130 hrs with only 30 minutes fuel left. The vessel had been at sea for 17.5 hrs. All radio room crew, including Mike Brown remained on duty all day until *Danial Thain* had returned safely to Port Stephens. Although *Danial Thain* suffered some minor structural damage during the search, all crew praised her performance under the prevailing conditions and attributed their safe return to her seaworthiness.

A relief crew was readied to return *Danial Thain* to the search the following morning. However, the sea search was abandoned as conditions had not improved and it was determined that the only option for a continuing search was by fixed wing aircraft. The relief crew were stood down.

(Continued on page 27)

THE EXCALIBUR PART 3 CONT. AND BIRDS AROUND PORT STEPHENS

(Continued from page 26)

This final part of this account of the Excalibur tragedy will be presented in the next edition of Port Chatter when the Coronial Inquest and its aftermath will be described.

Neil Fraser

BIRDS AT THE BASE - CRESTED TERN (*THALASSEUS BERGII*)

The Crested Tern is a large sea bird that is found around bays and harbours, roosting on boats and jetties and in mixed flocks on beaches and sandbars with Silver Gulls. It is



common in all Australian coastal regions and around the coast of the Indian Ocean and the western central Pacific Ocean.

The Crested Tern is a large sea bird 43-48 cm in length with a prominent black crown and nape of erectile feathers over a white forehead. The upper parts of the wings and the shallowly

forked tail are mid-grey. All underparts are white. It has a large yellow slightly down curved bill, the eye is dark brown and the feet black. Both sexes have the same plumage. The upper parts of immature birds are freckled dusky and white, the crown is weakly developed and the bill is pale yellow.

The Crested tern feeds on rising tides in the early morning and late afternoon. It catches prey by diving from a height of 7 – 10 metres into the sea to a depth of about half a metre. It feeds mainly on small fish but occasionally takes prawns and squid. It is often seen 'skimming' the water with fish in its bill possibly cleaning it. It commonly steals food from other Crested Terns, usually at breeding colonies.

Crested Terns are highly vocal, especially during the breeding season. The most common call heard at sea or roosting sites away from the colony is a throaty 'krrroorr'.

At the start of the breeding season between July and August large numbers of terns begin to roost some distance from the nesting colony at a traditional pre-breeding site which becomes the centre of displays between prospective mates. This includes courtship behaviour, partner feeding and copulation. After several weeks of pre-breeding, usually early September, the terns move suddenly to the nesting colony and lay simultaneously.

Nests in the colony are densely packed and adjacent owners can touch each other's bills. The nest is a small

scrape about 30cm in diameter, usually unlined or sparsely lined with grass. The female lays one large egg (61 X 41mm) that comprises about 15% of her body weight. After laying, both birds incubate the egg for 21 - 24 days. When the chick hatches, it is brooded and fed by both



parents in the nest for about three days before being led away from the colony. Parents continually brood the chick until it is old enough to join a crèche with others. The chicks are fed by both parents with small fish. Chicks fledge after 38-40 days and parents will continue to feed begging juveniles for several months. This long dependency may be necessary to give the young time to perfect their fishing techniques before becoming completely independent. After the breeding season most birds depart

the colony.

Crested Tern breed on predator free off-shore islands where the number of birds nesting varies with the availability of food resources. The largest colony in NSW is on Montague Island where there can be 700 – 1000 nest sites. A small breeding colony is present on Broughton Island with around 30 nests.

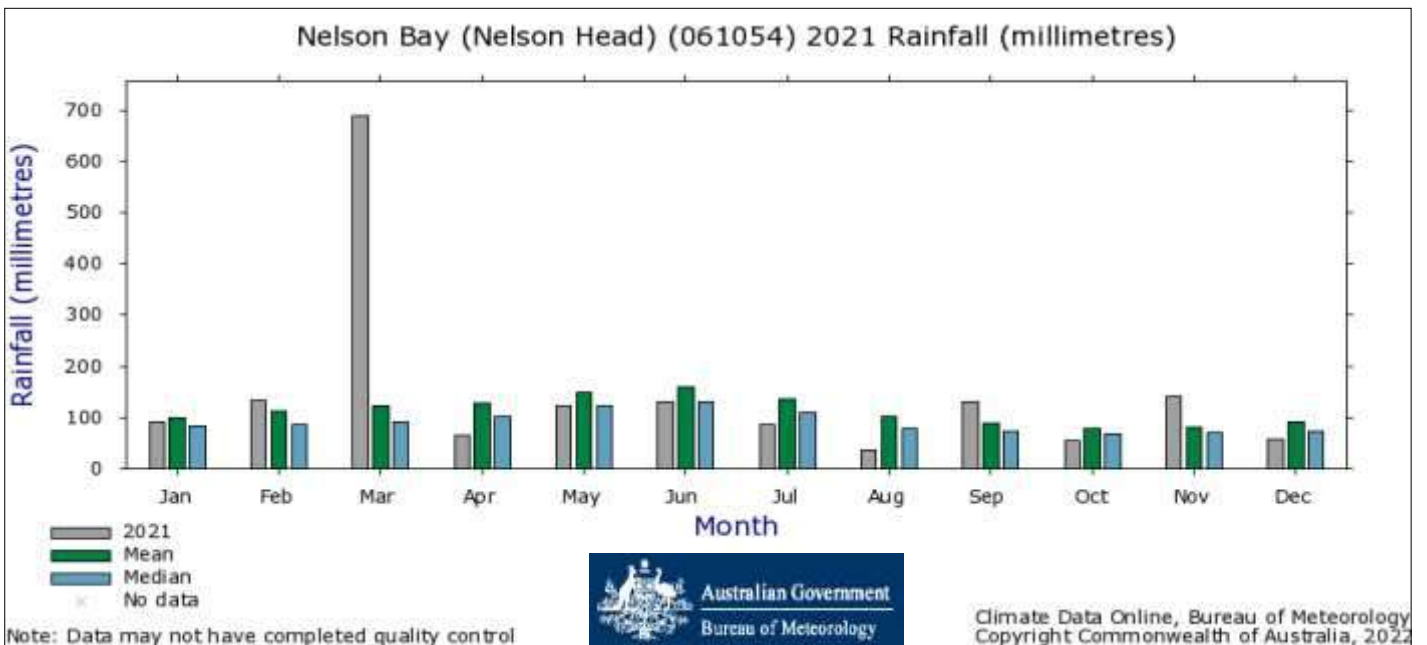


**Neil Fraser
Twitcher**



PORT STEPHENS WEATHER

Nelson Bay, NSW - April 2022					Nelson Bay, NSW - May 2022				
Date	Day	Temps °C		Rain	Date	Day	Temps °C		Rain
		Min	Max				Min	Max	
1	Fr	16	19.2	42.8	1	Su	14.2	21.2	2.6
2	Sa	16.2		17.3	2	Mo	14.7	23.5	0
3	Su	16.6	24.9	0.2	3	Tu	15.8	24	0
4	Mo		26.8	0	4	We	15.4	24.4	0.2
5	Tu	19	26.2	0	5	Th	17.1	23.5	4.2
6	We	19.5	24.4	0.1	6	Fr	14.6	20.1	0.2
7	Th	17.5	21.8	0.7	7	Sa	11	17.6	0
8	Fr	18.2	26.5	44.4	8	Su	11.2	19.7	0
9	Sa	19.5	24.2	6.9	9	Mo	12.2	21.7	0
10	Su	19.9	26	1	10	Tu	13.8	21	5.4
11	Mo	19.5	26.9	0.1	11	We	16.2	20.8	21.1
12	Tu	19.2	23.5	6.4	12	Th	16.5	21.6	15.8
13	We	16	21.1	6.8	13	Fr	18.8	21.2	6.4
14	Th	15.9	24.4	6.7	14	Sa	18.6	26	3.3
15	Fr	16.4	23.8	0.6	15	Su	16.9	22.9	0.2
16	Sa	14.8	24.5	0	16	Mo	16.9	22.8	0
17	Su	16.5	25.2	0.1	17	Tu	14	20.8	0
18	Mo	17	25	0	18	We	12.1	19.2	0
19	Tu	18	25.5	0	19	Th	9.2	17.8	0
20	We	17.4	23.5	0	20	Fr	11.3	15.7	1.6
21	Th	14.6	23.1	0	21	Sa	11.5	17.9	52.2
22	Fr	15.9	20.1		22	Su	13.3	17.5	10.3
23	Sa	16.2	20	1.3	23	Mo	13.2	19.3	30.6
24	Su	15.5	23	11.2	24	Tu	12.7	18	13.8
25	Mo	15	19.8	6.2	25	We	12.1	19.2	0.5
26	Tu	15	20.7	15.6	26	Th	12	21.9	0.2
27	We	16.2	22.2	9.9	27	Fr	13	22	0.2
28	Th	18.6	25.2	0.6	28	Sa	13.7	20.5	0.2
29	Fr	19	24.5	0	29	Su	12.8	17.4	0.2
30	Sa	19	22.4	0	30	Mo	11.7	19	0
					31	Tu	10.2	17.3	3.6
Statistics for April 2022					Statistics for May 2022				
Mean		17.2	23.6		Mean		13.8	20.5	
Lowest		14.6	19.2	0	Lowest		9.2	15.7	0
Highest		19.9	26.9	44.4	Highest		18.8	26	52.2
Total				178.9	Total				172.8





MARINE RESCUE PORT STEPHENS

“Volunteers doing our jobs professionally”



Our service to Port Stephens 2005-2021

People saved/ assisted	6,790
Rescues and assists	2,987
Rescue Crew volunteer hours	68,628+
Radio Base volunteer hours	329,241+
Radio calls made/received	327,809
Telephone calls made/received	318,929

Every day, Marine Rescue Port Stephens Members give more than 60 volunteer hours to serve our community

Volunteers saving lives on the water

MARINE RESCUE NSW PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSELS CURRENTLY IN SERVICE

The unit currently has two purpose built, specialised rescue vessels, crewed by motivated and trained volunteers who can be called upon at anytime, day or night, to head to the assistance of those who call.

A response time of 20 mins or less is estimated from alert to heading to sea. Our vessels boast a comprehensive inventory of the latest navigation, communication, safety and rescue technologies on board.

PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 31* *JOHN THOMPSON*



Specifications

Make / Model:	Steber International 38' - Category 3 SAR Vessel
Length:	11.46m (38ft)
Beam:	3.84m (12.6ft)
Displacement:	11.6 tonne
Draft:	1m
Fuel:	1350L
Engines:	Twin 420hp Yanmar diesel
Top Speed:	30kn
Crew:	Operational - normally 4
VHF:	Sailor 6222
Radar:	Raymarine Q24C Doppler
MFD's (Multifunction Display):	Raymarine Axiom 9 and 5 x Raymarine Axiom Pro 12 Hybrid Touch
AIS:	Raymarine AIS950
RDF:	Taiyo
27Mhz:	GME GX400B
DCN:	Tait TM9300

Rescue Vessel *Port Stephens 31 John Thompson* was built by Steber International, Taree, NSW and completed in May 2016. Her single hull is made of glass-reinforced plastic.

Port Stephens 31 is fitted with state-of-the-art radar, direction finding and navigation equipment as well as forward looking infra red search equipment.

John Thompson has been prepared to Marine Rescue NSW specifications with minor customisation at the request of Port Stephens Unit and is capable of covering Port Stephens and anywhere along the coast for example Broughton Island, Seal Rocks and 30nm out to sea or further if tasked by MACSAR.

**PORT STEPHENS RESCUE VESSEL *PORT STEPHENS 30*
*CODI-K II***



Specifications:

Make / Model:	Gemini WR-850
Type:	Rigid-Hull Inflatable (RHIB)
Length:	8.5m
Beam:	2.8m
Engines: -	2 x Suzuki four-stroke Outboards 200hp each (150kW)
Fuel Capacity:	2 x 200 litre tanks
Fuel Consumption:	Cruising speed - 50 litres / hour
Displacement:	3.2 tonnes
Survey:	2C
Crew:	4 operational
Speed:	Top speed around 40 knots. Cruising speed 25 to 30 knots.

Rescue Vessel *Port Stephens 30 Codi-K II* was manufactured in South Africa, prepared by Britton Marine of Taren Point NSW, and completed in February 2012. Her single hull is made of glass-reinforced plastic with alloy longitudinal keel reinforcement and her cabin is glass-reinforced plastic.

She boasts among her electronic equipment a Raymarine Radar/Plotter, Furuno AIS Class-A and FLIR Thermal Night Vision System.

Codi-K II has been prepared to Port Stephens Unit specifications in consultation with Marine Rescue NSW, and is capable of covering all of the areas of Port Stephens; ie, the Myall River system, Karuah River, and the other shallow areas of our waterways, as well as outside waters as required.

IN APPRECIATION....



Contributors to this issue of *Port Chatter*:

Colin Couper, Ross Debenham, Neil Fraser, Laurie Nolan, John Reid, Will Scott, Ben van der Wijngaart. You too can become a contributor and you will be most welcome. See inside front cover.

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