



Issue 7
April 2021

Watt's Happenings

Bar
Lounge
Club Museum
Snooker & Darts



United Service Club Newcastle

Since 1927



**United Service Club
Newcastle
Since 1927**

<https://www.facebook.com/USCNewcastle/unitedserviceclub.wildapricot.org/>

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Club recorded a very pleasing trading result for the March quarter. Prospects continue to be good with a large number of functions coming up.

In line with your 2021 Board's focus, on restoration and renovation and preservation of our assets, we have enabled a USC 'Historical Committee'. To aid this, 'Property Member' is a new addition to the Honorary Assistant Secretary's portfolio. To maintain overview of these activities, he will deliver reports to the monthly board meeting from the 'Historical Committee'.

Our dedicated team of member volunteers, so far working in an unofficial capacity, have now accepted the following roles within the Historical Committee: Committee Coordinator, Gloria Thirkell; Assistant Archivists, Vicki Hill and Janet Aisbett. There is provision on the committee for another Assistant Archivist and a Library Archivist.

Active participation in your Club during the quieter autumn and winter months will be rewarding for you and important for USC. Although we don't currently have a functioning dining room, you are encouraged to order in. As a popular option, a number of people bring nibbles to have in the lounge over a quiet drink before moving on to dinner engagements, or order in takeaway to remain in the Club and enjoy the atmosphere.

Members are encouraged to like and follow the Clubs Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/uscnewcastle> for quicker updates with 'Watts Happening' on a daily basis. We can also 'tag' members (should you wish) in photos to be displayed and you can 'check in' to say that you have visited the Club.

Members are reminded that due to Covid induced difficulties resulting in the 2020 AGM being held early in 2021, the current board will continue to hold office until the 2022 AGM. Your attendance is encouraged at the 2021 AGM scheduled for Friday the 16th of April to commence at 6pm.

2021-2022 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President: Ernie Thirkell
 Vice President: MAJ Simon Macks (Retd)
 Hon. Secretary: WO2 Jason Gladys (Retd)
 Hon. Assistant Secretary: Andrew Hill
 Hon. Treasurer: Mr. Joel N. Griffiths BCom CA
 Director: WO2 Brett Hodgetts
 Director: Phil Screen
 Director: David Thomas
 Director: James Wallace

2021-2022 PATRONS

BRIG Derek Sharp (Ret) OBE
 MAJ Roland MILLBANK (Ret)

2021 Watt's Doing Now

Once again, work has continued behind the scenes achieving slow, but recognisable improvements. With the exception of our two recent working bees, most of the 'hard yakka' at this stage has been achieved by your directors.

A prime example was after Simon had arranged for furniture to be loaned by the Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club (p3). He was joined by Jason & Ernie to get it to the USC in time for Lynch's Hub gourmet 5 course 'Tastes of Australia' degustation dinner.



Simon & Jason loaded the furniture onto Jason's vehicle at the NCYC. Then 'the old man', Ernie, helped Jason unload & store at the USC.



**20 February
Strongroom
Cleanout
Working Bee**

**The
inaccessible
became
accessible !**

Welcome New Members, February & March

Sam Dhnam
 Steven Dick Grant Moylan
 Garth Eathey Virginia Ross
 Analee Isbuster Joseph Waldron
 Ivy-Rose Laidler Rene Smith

Above: From the left behind our Bar Manager Catherine Fidock-Jones: Mark Jordan; David Foot; David Knott; Jim Callighan; Campbell Hill; Jason Collins; USC President Ernie Thirkell; USC Directors David Thomas & Andrew Hill. We had an apology from Mick Cairney (just out of hospital).
 Photo by Gloria Thirkell

In this Issue

- p1**
*Cover
- p2**
*Welcome New Members.
*Watt's Doing Now.
*President's Message
- p3**
*1st Female Member.
Lyn Van Homrigh
*'Upcoming' notification.
- p4**
*Getting to know Matt
*Functions & photos
- p5**
*Meet Staff:
Catherine Fidock-Jones
*Crash Test Drama
*Social snaps
*Lynch's Hub ad.
- p6**
Thank you
- p7**
*Historically Speaking
*Ramsland Laidler ad.
- p8**
*Bar news
*Winner of club shirt.
*Stop press
*Explore your Club.
*Exploration Winner Feb.
*Sparke Helmore ad.
*Contact Us

LYN VAN HOMRIGH USC NEWCASTLE'S FIRST FEMALE MEMBER

On 12 December 2007, Lyn became the United Service Club Newcastle's first female member after 80 years of male exclusivity!

Lyn studied a Bachelor of Science (Mathematics) at the University of Newcastle, and after graduation moved to Canberra for her first teaching position. It was during this time that she joined ANU Company, Sydney University Regiment (SUR). After serving with SUR for 3 years and moving to Sydney to further her teaching career, she applied for officer training at the Officer Cadet Training Unit (OCTU), Ingleburn.

Lyn graduated first in her class as Lieutenant and was posted to Royal Australian Corps of Signals (RASigs), specifically 142 Signal Squadron, which was later to become part of 8 Signal Regiment. After 4 years at 142 Signal Squadron, her next posting was to the Reserve Command and Staff College where she attained the rank of Captain before moving to Newcastle, again for another teaching position.

While working and living in Sydney, Lyn became a member of the United Services Club (USC) Sydney where she enjoyed the opportunity to use their extensive military history library. With her father a member of USC Newcastle, and under the assumption that the two clubs with the same name were linked, she asked about membership in our club. Lyn's enquiry about joining the USC Newcastle was rejected on the grounds of being female.

Sometime later, John Van Homrigh, a Director at the time, took up his daughter's cause, pointing out that she was a Captain in the Army Reserve and therefore qualified to be a member. Lyn recalls that she still had to 'prove she was an officer' and the board agreed to consider it at the next meeting at which her membership was then approved.

Lyn still occasionally visits the club on a Friday, but the opportunity doesn't arise very often. This is due to both the short opening hours and to her commitments as Deputy Unit Commander, Training Officer, Watch Officer, and Crew at Marine Rescue Newcastle.



page 3

Above: Lyn displaying a 2006 photo of her father, John Von Homrigh, Jeff Robinson and Vic Giles who at that time had collectively served 25 years as Directors of the USC.



Above: Lyn (left) with MR Newcastle Radio Officer, Rick Nevile (right), on a recent visit to Marine Rescue Sydney Radio Base at Terrey Hills.

UPCOMING

April 24
BATTLE OF KAPYONG
DAY

April 25
ANZAC DAY

2021
CENTENARY
of
AIR FORCE

From its modest beginnings in 1921, Air Force has grown into a potent, world class Air Force which Australia relies upon in both conflict and peace.

Getting to Know You
Interviewing USC member Matt Guyder



How did you rine out about USC?
'I'm a friend of James Wallace. When Ramsland Laidler moved downstairs, James was quick to bring me along.

'I found this to be a really good place to wind down in good company.



'I was a regular for about 6 years when, this being somewhere I value, I joined'.



Above & above right: 'I'm at the club after work most Thursdays and Fridays'.

Most fun club memories ?

'There have been so many good times here. It's difficult to single out any in particular.

My 40th birthday ; Harry and Megan's marriage; Remembrance Day 2020. It could become a very long list.

Remembrance Day was special on a different level. It was really meaningful. There was a sense of people absorbing the significance of the day.

I appreciated the opportunity to be with friends watching the Australian War Memorial live stream the 20 minute Last Post Ceremony for the Unknown Soldier.



Left: I took the opportunity to post two poppies on the club remembrance board, one each for a grandmother and a grandfather who have served.

USC does functions & can arrange catering

The kitchen is available for functions:

- * in-house caterer;
- * cater for yourself;
- * order in.



Above: Centre for Psychotherapy welcoming new staff member - own nibbles.



Above: Damien & Co



Sienna and Harry



Yana and Jackson



Joe and Ivy Rose



Above: Andrew



Above: Amanda



Above: paper plate - Really?



Above: Total amusement as Jas put his candles out the Covid way ; with a paper plate fan!



Left: Troy Dhnam, John Stevens, Brad Norris

Meet the Staff
Catherine Fidock-Jones



"I had never poured a beer in my life until I started work here!"

A local born and raised at Warners Bay, USC's Bar Manager Catherine has a Business Degree and one in Events Management.

Catherine's first job was at the State Health Department before she married and became a stay-at home mum until re-joining the workforce in 1985 as Admin Manager for Yakka Industrial Clothing. It was in that capacity that she opened their first Newcastle outlet in 1988. During the next 15 years with Yakka Catherine established a sound relationship with her employers eventually opening her own business as a Yakka Reseller.

In 2007 or thereabout, Catherine sold her business and agreed to work for one year for Hip Pocket Work Wear & Safety just to help establish their new business. Catherine said: "I finally got to retire. Then I realised that I was too young to retire!"

Catherine's partner at that time became Manager at USC, which he did successfully until about 7 years ago when he stepped down to work behind the scenes. Catherine took over the bar and all its extras. That entailed- functions – event management etc until the club dining room was leased out..

'Crash Test Drama Hunter'

USC Lounge - 7pm - First Friday each month

Support the locals, be entertained & enjoy a drink or two. The timing is great - 10 minute performances & breaks!

Prizes: \$15 entry for audience, writers, directors & actors is split among winners.

You've got to be in it to win it - contact Jeff Tabley. jtabley@yahoo.com 0432376672



Above: Friday 5 February -it was informal, fun and entertaining.



Above: Garry and Philip



Above: James (Director), Pat & Mansell wore Purple poppies for 'Animals in War Day.'



Above: Lynch's Hub dinner guests.



Jason (Hon. Sec) & Alison



Above: Phil (Director) and Ray



Lynch's Hub is our preferred catering partner for USC functions.

Support your club by holding your next function or event with us.

Request menu or grazing platter options from the bar manager or direct from Lynch's Hub on (02) 4925 2926



EXTENDING TO ALL USC VOLUNTEERS, SUPPORTERS AND SPONSORS A HUGE THANK YOU

Newcastle Cruising Yacht Club has been a big supporter of this club for some time. This has ranged from allowing us the use of their ute on a couple of occasions through to the most recent loan of folding chairs made redundant by demolition of their marquee to make way for building extensions.

Ramsland Laidler Solicitors our long-time tenants are given thanks for unstinting support as well as understanding when overdue renovations to their leased rooms need to be put aside for more pressing repairs such as the major roof leakage issues in 2020.

This doesn't magically happen



The club is indebted to Alison Gladys who regularly donates considerable time and her expertise in interior designing.

Responsible for the new colour scheme of the bar and theming of functions right down to the music, she gets down to the basics as well: laundering linen, polishing silverware and glasses; sourcing the right florists & collecting the arrangements. 'But wait there's more!'

But it's appreciated



Left: *The recent Australian Native Flavours 5 course degustation dinner catered by Lynches HUB. A most sought after event only ticketed for 26 diners.*

Our Social Media is handled free of charge by Jordan Faith from Newcastle Tech Support. Our thanks are unbounded.

Working Bees - Your club is indebted to you, both members and staff who have volunteered in the working bees. P2 has a photo of the latest group. *Incidentally yet another box of very old reference books was unearthed from the clutter!*

Tradies are members too. Huge thanks to Jim and to David, two members who frequently, free of charge, give their expertise and their time in their respective trades. Without their support much wouldn't have been achievable.

page 6

FROM THE BAR ROOM FLOOR

It's been said (most recently by Mansell) that *'the best stories are left on the bar room floor.'*

With that in mind we are resurrecting what we can from early years before those who were told also qualify for their feathered wings. These tales (which may be true) are being gathered for the day when our publication has expanded and has more space for their inclusion. Thank you Kim Laidler for making us aware of the need and for supplying the first bitter sweet tale.

Vicki Hill is another club member to whom we are all indebted. As a volunteer, with few exceptions, she has put in anywhere between 4 and 8 hours in any one week for the past year. She generally works with our artifacts, but because **it doesn't magically happen**, has at times cleaned venetians, windows & both club entry ways. Recently Vicki has concentrated on the Toy Soldier collection. She is a much valued member of the new Historical Committee. Huge thanks Vicki!

Thanks for sharing photos!

Two of eight digital photos of the Japanese surrender at Wewak.



Huge thanks to David Watts – for the digital copy of 44 pages from his Grandfathers WWII PNG photo album.

193 digital photos.

Thank you Sean Martin for your recent gift of photos from your overseas deployments. Each one is spectacular.



The Silver Frames

Regular visitors to the Club have developed a keen interest in these.

We are thankful to members who donate sets of 5 photos from their military deployments in war zones and in UN Peacekeeping. Photo sets are being rotated to time with each new 'Watt's Happenings' issue.



Above: *Peter Green's photos*

Historically Speaking

Historical Committee

We've had positive feedback from our members with regard to postings about USC's artefacts in recent issues.

It's always a healthy lively debate in the bar. Recently it was regarding the origin of our 'Charge at Beersheba' photo which appeared in Issue 4. An outcome, thanks to Club Member Greg Box is that we now have a copy of a handwritten letter by Eric George Elliott, a range finder with the 4th LH Brigade, in which he gives details of the events leading up to him taking the famous photo on 31st October 1917.

The Deck light featured in Issue 5 has been examined and discussed at length by many of our salty seadogs. The general consensus based on the design and structure of the light has been that it is from HMAS Adelaide I.

Regarding the origins of the Chateau photo in Issue 6, USC Life Member & past Secretary Roland Millbank supplied the following: "Author of *The Diggers View WW1*, Juan Mahony was guest speaker at a formal Army Lunch on 1 July 2016 at which time he presented the photo which appears in his book, to the USC".

Your input is important - please keep it coming!



Sam, a member of the Australian Armed Forces Re-enactment Heritage Unit, knows more than a little about the role of horses in war. He rode in Israel in the 90th anniversary re-enactment of the Battle of Beersheba and Murrurundi NSW in the parade to mark the 100th anniversary of the charge.

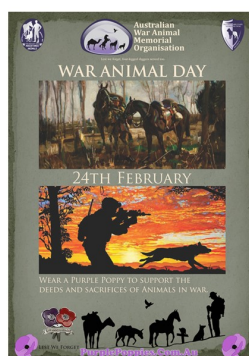
He is keen to do a presentation on the Light Horse for the USC, involving a video of the re-enactment, a display of the WW1 woollen period uniform, complete with slouch hats adorned with emu feathers and a Q & A session.

Australia's first official War Animal Day was 24 February 2019.

Page 7

Further reading:

<https://www.awm.gov.au/national-day-for-war-animals>



Your Club marked the occasion by distributing purple poppies to members in the bar and displaying posters large and small promoting the importance of recognising Australian War Animals.

Central to the main display was 'THE AUSTRALIAN LIGHT HORSE THEY RODE INTO LEGEND' on loan from your VP Andrew Hill..

Over 8 million animals died during WW1 alone.

Also featured were photos of Australia's 1st International war animal memorial at Pozieres in France.

"a ridge more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth."

[Ref: C.E.W. Bean "Anzac to Amiens", USC library, 5th edition 1968, p 264.



Left: USC Directors Phil (Screeny), Jason, Ernie, David and James with (centre back), USC Honorary Member Sam Dharam.

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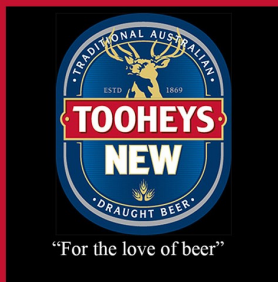
Suite 1, Ground Floor, 57 Watt Street Newcastle NSW 2300

Ph: 4929 7979 Fax: 4915 0047 Email: admin@ramsland.com.au



Above: USC Directors enjoy Spinifex F88

Club Merchandise
Short Sleeve Black Polo
with USC Logo



Andrew Knight is a Partner at local Hunter law firm Sparke Helmore and is also a member of the USC.

He specialises in property law and estate planning and can help you with wills, trusts, powers of attorney and guardianships as well as assist you in preparing a comprehensive estate plan.

You can contact him on andrew.knight@sparke.com.au or call him on (02) 4924 7606

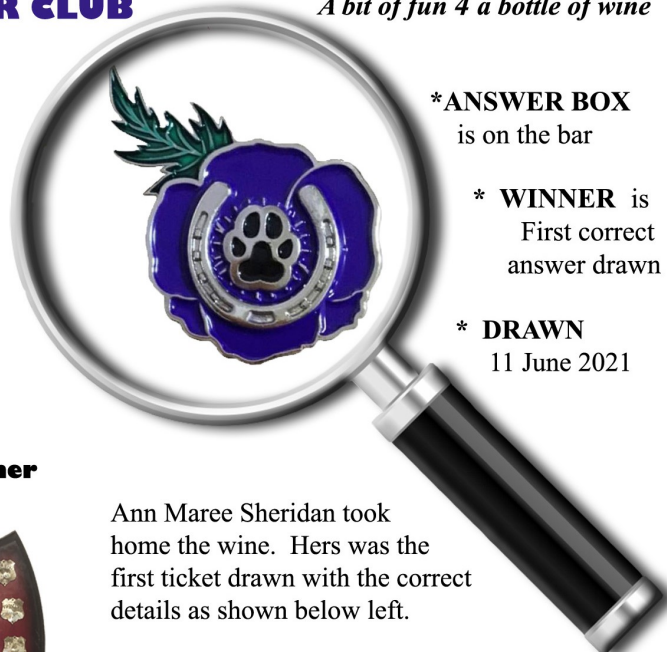
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EXPLORE YOUR CLUB

A bit of fun 4 a bottle of wine

- * **FREE** Answer slips at the bar.
- * **NAME & CONTACT**
 - On what artefact you found it.
 - In what room.



- * **ANSWER BOX** is on the bar
- * **WINNER** is First correct answer drawn
- * **DRAWN** 11 June 2021

* **One entry per visit.**

February 2021 Winner and Artefact



Ann Maree Sheridan took home the wine. Hers was the first ticket drawn with the correct details as shown below left.

The engraved Eric Parker 1981 was found in the Games Room on The Andy Hanley Trophy (Golf). Eric was awarded USC Life Membership, 30 April 1998.

CONTACT US

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