



# HELM



## Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

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**DECEMBER 2019**

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### 30 YEARS AGO, BACK IN 1989

Bob Hawke is Prime Minister.

Aust. Population - 16,814 million.

**AVERAGE PRICES:** Average salary \$26,000

New House \$125,000      New Car \$12,500

Litre of petrol \$0.52      Postage stamp \$0.35

**EVENTS:** Gaby Kennard becomes the first Australian woman to fly non-stop around the world.

Peter Carey's novel – Oscar and Lucinda - wins the Miles Franklin Award. Acropolis Now, Fast Forward and The Big Gig premiere in Australia.

Network Ten is sold for \$22 million.

**SPORTS:** Cricket – Australia regains Ashes on English soil for the first time in 40 years defeating England 4-0.

NSW Rugby League new advertising campaign featuring Tina Turner singing "What you get is what you see".

Soccer – Marconi Fairfield win 2-0 over Sydney Olympic in the last season played in traditional winter format.

**MOVIES:** Dead Poets Society; Batman; When Harry met Sally; The Little Mermaid; Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade; Back to the Future II; Steel Magnolias.

**POPULAR MUSIC:** Tina Turner – The Best; Ian Moss – Tucker's Daughter; Mental As Anything – Rock and Roll Music; Proclaimers – I'm Gonna be (500 miles); iconic The Wind beneath my Wings; If I Could Turn Back Time.



The 1990 Logies celebrated most popular shows & actors of 1989. Amongst the winners were: Neighbours, Bangkok Hilton, A Country Practice, Hey Hey it's Saturday, and Burke's Backyard;

Nicole Kidman, Shane Porteus, Georgie Parker, and Daryl Somers. Johnny Young was the seventh entertainer to be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

#### The Berlin Wall comes down on December 9

Rain Man wins Academy Award - Best Picture

Galileo Space craft launched by NASA, Oct 18<sup>th</sup>

Interest rates on home mortgages reach 17%

Average weekly earnings are \$490

Nintendo releases the Game Boy

The first episodes of the Simpsons are shown.

In Egypt a 4400 year old mummy is found in the Great Pyramid of Giza

The first episode of Seinfeld is aired

Toyota releases its luxury brand Lexus

The computer and electronics company ASUS

is founded in Taipei, Taiwan

World population is 5.2 billion

St Peter's Chapel – built in 1884; now beautifully restored; is located at the rear of ARTea's Garden and Gallery - Josephson St; and is host to HELM. Recently blessed by Bishop Charlie, the official launch was attended by MPs Pat Conroy and Yasmin Catley. Share in our heritage, Fridays 10 am – 2pm.



Life in 1989            1  
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first national  
REAL ESTATE | Andrew McGrath

Kindly supporting the community –  
including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.

**SWANSEA PLAZA ARCADE**  
**NEAR COLES – Ph: 4972 1066**  
**CHECK OUT THEIR FACEBOOK**

## DECEMBER, 1989

If you follow the 12 year cycle of the **Chinese Zodiac**, 1989 was the year of the snake. On a bad day, the snake can be malevolent and mysterious. The Chinese believe that five elements are the foundations of everything in the universe; and these natural phenomena – wood, fire, earth, metal and water, can generate or destroy one another. The snake belongs to the Earth elements.

At the **movies**, Christmas season releases were *National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation*, where the Griswold Family plans turn to disaster; and *Prancer* – 8 year old Jessica, refuses to give up her belief in Santa, and finds a hurt reindeer in the woods she believes to be Prancer.



If listening to the **radio**, you may have been singing along with songs like *When the Night Comes*, *When Will I See You Again*, *Hitchin' a Ride*; and planning to take advantage of the new extended trading hours being advertised. 1989 was the first time that all retailers were given permission to trade on Sundays, but only on the two Sundays before Christmas (December 17th and 24). The previous year, Grace Bros had experimented successfully with **Sunday Trading** at its city store. This was not welcomed by the Allied Shops and Trades Union, but despite that many workers elected to work on both Sundays attracted by double pay for the hours worked. People enjoyed the convenience that came with it knowing they had extra time to shop. Westfield claimed that 50% of its shoppers wanted Sunday trading. NSW was now another step closer to seven days a week trading. With Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> being Christmas Eve, it was generally the larger shopping centers that stayed open. Norman Ross promoted that they would be open until midnight, on Thursday with lots of bargains in toys and appliances. **Carols in the Domain** had grown through the 1980s into a major community event and was held December 16<sup>th</sup>, attended by about 90,000 people. It began in 1983, started by Robyn Hobbs, who had observed other carol events in Australia, and wanted to develop a major Christmas celebration for Sydney; choosing the Salvation Army to be the benefitting charity. It was sponsored by the fuel company Esso; and hosted by Barry Crocker.

### This year marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversaries of Australia's two most devastating bus crashes.

The festive mood quickly disappeared early on Friday morning, 1989, as newsflashes broke the tragic news. Two tourist coaches full of people heading home for Christmas, both travelling at 100 km/h had crashed head-on on the Pacific Highway near Clybucca Heads on the NSW North Coast, 12 km north of Kempsey, in the early hours of December 22. 35 people died and 41 others were injured, as the two coaches concertinaed into each other. The impact snapped seats from their anchor bolts so that seats and passengers were hurled about, trapping many people and their luggage against the back of the buses. Just two months earlier, on October 20, 1989, a bus and a semi-trailer had collided on a straight stretch of the Pacific Highway at Cowper, near Grafton, again the North Coast; killing 21 people and injuring 22 others. Emergency workers who attended were traumatised.



As a result of the crashes, inquests by state coroner Kevin Waller recommended the entire Pacific Highway be made a dual carriageway from Newcastle to the Queensland border. He also recommended research into safer coach seats, seat anchorages and seatbelts; better emergency exits were also necessary as rescuers were unable to enter the wreckage immediately as they were too high off the ground. A Memorial Garden has been built by the Lions Club at Clybucca to commemorate the victims of Australia's worst road disaster. TripleM



## NEWCASTLE EARTHQUAKES

With just a few days to go before the end of the year, another tragedy struck. – THE earthquake. Newcastle was not a newcomer to earthquakes. A 5.3 quake occurred on 18<sup>th</sup> June, 1868 causing damage in Hunter St and The Hill; Pit Town and Wallsend. May 16<sup>th</sup>, 1906 saw damage occur again at The Hill with ruptured water mains, and some cliff erosion. In 1916 an earthquake further north towards Taree, caused alarm along the Mid-North Coast with damage evident to the Seal Rocks lighthouse. 1925 witnessed another 5.3 quake just before Christmas – December 18<sup>th</sup>, creating damage and panic in Hunter Street (particularly at the Theatre Royal). Then at 5.6 came the big one - thirty years ago, on December 28, claiming 13 lives; 160 people injured; damage estimated to be \$4 billion. A further 5.4 earthquake at Ellalong on 6th August, 1994 was costly in terms of the damage bill totalling \$36 million with 1,000 homes and 50 other buildings affected; 5 people were injured. *WikiProject*

### DECEMBER 28, 1989, AUSTRALIA'S MOST DESTRUCTIVE EARTHQUAKE HIT NEWCASTLE, WITH DEVASTATING CONSEQUENCES.

At 10.27 a.m. the earthquake rocked Newcastle, registering 5.6 on the Richter scale. It was felt in Sydney and beyond, (Bega, Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Coffs Harbour). It was relatively shallow starting about 11 km under the Earth's surface, the epicentre being at Boolaroo (about 15km south-west of Newcastle's CBD); lasting 6 seconds. In the scheme of things, it was a relatively moderate earthquake, yet it caused so much damage, due to a variety of factors. Over time, the Hunter River had deposited soft sediments creating a soft base layer, making the shaking experienced by the buildings worse. Buildings were more likely to be damaged due to their construction and deterioration with age. Some were made with low-quality, unreinforced masonry – there were no reinforcement bars and little strength in the bricks and mortar to withstand the shaking. For some buildings, being

so close to the coast made things worse due to corrosion of brick ties between brick courses. Although there had been earthquakes in the region before, even the most recent building codes at the time (1979) did not require earthquake resistant design in Newcastle or the strengthening of old buildings. *Aust Geographic*



#### Some statistics:

Thankfully, less people in the city due to strike by bus drivers. 13 people died – 9 at Newcastle Workers Club, where the floor collapsed; 3 in Beaumont St, Hamilton, due to collapsed awnings; 1 from shock.

160 people were hospitalised due to injuries.

50,000 buildings were damaged; 80% of these were homes; 147 schools, 3,000 businesses.

300 buildings were demolished – more than 100 homes; and Newcastle Workers Club, Century Theatre, and Kings Hall.

300,000 people were affected and 1,000 made homeless.

Cost was estimated at \$4 billion (about \$8 billion now).

## 'in chaos – everything was just everywhere': Memories from the Newcastle earthquake

“Within seconds, long stretches of Newcastle and Hamilton looked like war zones.

In the street, a local television reporter was conducting an interview at a bus depot, when the quake suddenly struck. News reports at the time described the morning in 1989 as a typical day in Newcastle before the tremor wrought havoc on the city.

Those who lived through it, or who joined the rescue and recovery effort that began almost before the shaking had stopped, will never forget the events of that time. The sheer scale of the damage. The strange stillness and silence of the aftermath. The personal bravery and heroics that emerged as personal earthquake stories were told to the world. The euphoria, later that summer, of the Newcastle earthquake concert, when more than 40,000 people came together for some well-earned rock'n'roll relief.

For months after, the quake dominated daily discourse. The battles over important but damaged buildings. The dealings with insurance companies. The tales of lives rebuilt. Of discharges from hospital after months on the mend. Good stories and bad, as shonky fly-by-night builders cashed in on an urgent need for labour. Now, an entire generation has grown to adulthood knowing the earthquake not by experience or memory, but as history. Even those who were there on the day now sometimes find themselves remembering it after the event, or when someone reminds them. For some people, remembering the earthquake is an exercise in pain, of pointing to a tragedy that all wish never happened. Even so, there was much to be proud of that day, and in the days that followed, and we must not allow the events of that time to fade completely. The earthquake is Hunter history, and an important part at that.”

*Archival Revival, Newcastle Herald*

Some thought a plane had crashed, some speculated a mine had collapsed, a BHP explosion, a truck accident.

An off-duty paramedic was called to the Workers Club. “The building looked like a pack of collapsed cards. It was a maze of concrete, dust, steel rods and pokie machines. We had to search that dark hell for survivors. There were voices in a three-metre deep cavity. I was lowered down with a fire hose because we had no ropes. We got the people out ... while the dust fell and concrete reo rods twanged. It was so dusty it was hard to tell people from the rubble.”

As well as all the harrowing stories, a few humorous events emerged: the jockey who ran from the steam room almost starkers; the piano which had almost disappeared down a giant hole in a lounge room at Cooks Hill.

**In the aftermath.** In February 1990, the who's who of Australian rock'n'roll came to play at the packed Relief Concert held at the International Sports Centre, now Hunter Stadium. The bands performing for free included Midnight Oil, Split Enz, The Angels, Crowded House, Ian Moss, Jimmy Barnes, Ross Wilson, Mark Hunter, Spy V Spy, Party Boys, Johnny Diesel & the Injectors and Noiseworks. They raised \$900,00 for the Lord Mayor's appeal. Songs were written about the earthquake, including *Earthquakin'* by The Porkers; and *Faultline* by Silverchair. Peter Corris who lived through the event, wrote the book, *Aftershock*; Paul Brown the play, *Aftershocks*. Sources: *Newcastle Herald*, UON, NBN 9

Newcastle hospital evacuated to beach



**More importantly it drove home the need to understand the effects of earthquake hazards better in Australia and develop standards in building design that will resist the devastating damage.**

### Disclaimer

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