



HELM



Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

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DECEMBER/JANUARY 2020

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JOYEUX NOEL FROHE WEIHNACHTEN
 FELIZ NAVIDAD BUON NATALE
 BONNE ANNEE GUTES NEUES JAHR
 FELIZ ANO NUEVO FELICE ANNO NUOVO

Christmas is a Christian festival, celebrating the birth of Jesus; December 25 being chosen by church officials in the 4th century as the date for the feast of nativity. Orthodox Christians use the Julian Calendar, which runs 13 days behind so they celebrate Christmas on 7th January in countries like Russia, Ukraine, Greece. The Victorians shaped Christmas as we know it, celebrating with carol singing, Christmas cards and decorated trees. Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, was born in Germany, and brought the first tree over in the 1840s. For many, the Christmas period is a time to prepare for the 25th; and is linked to enjoying a holiday from work or school.

SCENES FROM CHRISTMAS PAST.



Peter Myors was a Belmont telegram kid. In the 50s, a time before emails and few home phones, messages were often sent by telegram. Lodged and paid at the local Post Office; telegraphed to PO in the address town; delivered the same day by a Telegram Boy/Girl. With the large volume of Christmas telegrams, kids were employed to deliver them by push bike. They would be allocated a batch of about 6 telegrams, which were delivered as quickly as possible before returning for more. On Christmas Eve deliveries took up to 8pm as they were often given a cooling drink, especially in hilly areas. *LMCC Comm History*



1. Fishing group, Speers Point Park, 1915 – part of a “small canvas town” that sprang up during Christmas vacations.
2. Crowd visiting Father Christmas in Watt St, Newcastle, in front of the train station, sponsored by Bargain Arcade.
3. Children's Christmas picnic, Speers Point Park. c.1957. *LMCC Comm History*



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

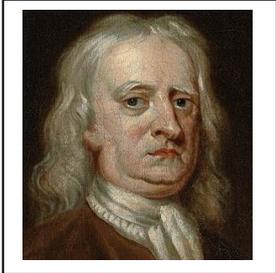
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DECEMBER 25 BIRTHDAYS



People born on December 25th are under the Zodiac sign, Capricorn, the horned sea goat. The zodiac signs slowly evolved from 1300 BC to 500 BC. The Babylonians used the signs to mainly mark the seasons, then to locate the position of the planets and stars. It was adapted by the Greeks for astronomy and astrology, giving animal representations. According to legend the animals were honored by Zeus, the most powerful Greek god. Capricorns are said to be shy but kind, patient, reliable, ambitious, practical and calm.

FAMOUS PEOPLE BORN ON DECEMBER 25



Sir Isaac Newton, one of the most important scientists of all time is probably best known for his discoveries of motion; and gravity after observing an apple falling from a tree. Born in Lincolnshire 1642, he confirmed the earth and planets revolved around the Sun.

Other scientists born Dec 25 were:

John Phillips an English geologist, born 1800. He created a geological time scale linking fossils and rock layers they are found in– naming Paleozoic, Mesozoic and Cenozoic eras.

William Gregor born 1761- British mineralogist -discovered titanium on bank of a stream.

Richard Shope (1901-1966) - American virologist, who linked influenza virus in pigs and humans. He identified the main cause of 1918 pandemic as influenza A virus. This eventuated in flu vaccines.



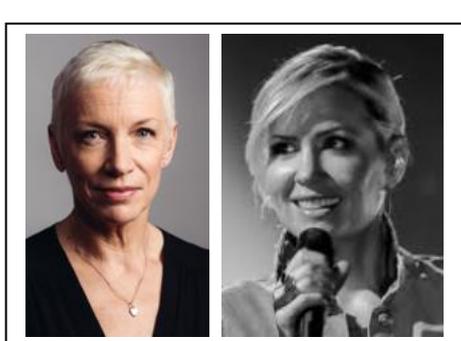
Humphrey Bogart (1899-1957) starred in many movies including classics like “Casablanca” (1942), “The Big Sleep” (1946); winning the Academy Award, for best actor in “The African Queen” (1951). His 4th marriage was to his leading lady Lauren Bacall in 1945.

Ava Gardner. The American actress and singer was born on Christmas Eve, 1922, and was the star of many movies such as “Show Boat” (1951) and “The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean” (1972). Nominated for an Academy Award for “Mogambo” (1953).

She was married to Mickey Rooney, Artie Shaw and Frank Sinatra.

Sissy Spacek - born in Texas 1949 with Czech/German/British ancestry. Mary Elizabeth who loved to climb trees, ride horses; was nicknamed Sissy by her brothers. She first came to notice in “Carrie” and is best known as winner of the Academy award for best actress in the 1980 film about country singer Loretta Lynn in “Coal Miner’s Daughter”; performing the songs herself. She has also acted in many TV shows.

Stephanie Meyer was born on Christmas Eve, 1973. An American author, she is best known for her vampire romance series “Twilight”, which has sold over 100 million copies. Listed one of “100 most influential people in 2008” - Time Magazine.



Annie Lennox OBE. The Scottish singer-songwriter was born in Aberdeen. In the 80’s she was a part of the Grammy Award -winning rock band, the Eurythmics, renowned for “Sweet dreams are made of these”. Annie was very prominent wearing orange hair and a man’s business suit. A talented flute, piano and harpsichord performer, she began a solo career in 1992.

Didi. An English singer-songwriter, who also performs on piano, guitar, drums, omnichord and recorder. She has received awards for Best British Female; and Album; and took part in the 2004 British Band Aid charity performance “Do They Know It’s Christmas?” Newsday.com/wikipedia

Justin Trudeau Born in 1971, the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada is their second youngest. Before entering politics, he worked as a teacher. He is the eldest son of previous Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau.

Clara Barton Born in Massachusetts 1821, Clara was a pioneering nurse in the American Civil War who founded the American Red Cross.



In the days of Clara Barton nursing education was not very formalized. She did not attend nursing school and provided self-taught nursing care. In another time and place, NSW was progressing into the 20th century. In 1904 a Royal Commission was held to find ways of reducing deaths of women due to childbirth. Improvements to the care of women during pregnancy and childbirth resulted, gradually establishing private and maternity hospitals, and midwifery sections. Some 16 midwives set up maternity hospitals in the Lake Macquarie area at Charlestown, Speers Point, Toronto, Catherine Hill Bay, Barnsley, Morisset, Cardiff, Cooranbong, West Wallsend. The one that a lot of mothers and babies from our area can identify with is Nurse Dick's Roslyn Private Hospital in George St, Belmont.

NURSE MARGARET CHALMERS DICK.

Margaret was born in Joadja Creek NSW to Scottish parents in 1895. The family, with 7 children moved to Dudley and then settled in Belmont c.1922. Her mother was a midwife at Dudley; her aunt opened the first maternity hospital in Lithgow. Studying psychiatry at first, she then undertook an intensive course at Crown St Women's Hospital in Sydney, graduating with honours. As a reward, her parents bought a block of flats in Belmont, an area with a growing population. The property was originally built as a large home for Capt. Bain, pilot and Harbour Master of Newcastle. After his death in 1905, the house was converted into residential flats; and then with further alterations it became a private maternity hospital; the first for Belmont. As was custom at the time, advertisements were often placed in the local newspapers to publicise her skills, experience and the new facility. "...In the early years, Nurse Dick, a local district nurse at the time, travelled to patient's homes as far away as Catherine Hill Bay and Nords Wharf, usually by horse and sulky through rain, hail, or shine. However, as the community developed and the popularity of Nurse Dick's Private Hospital grew, Nurse Dick found she was unable to maintain house calls and started treating patients, at the hospital, from as far away as Merriwa, Gloucester, and Sydney..." On some occasions, babies were left in her care after birth. As time went on further additions were made; and in 1946 it became a registered private hospital. Also known as Roslyn Private Hospital, this maternity facility operated until c.1957. After its closure, the building reverted to being residential flats, one of the units occupied by Nurse Dick until her passing in 1964. History has gone full cycle and the building is now once again a private residence. During the time of the maternity hospital, over 5,000 children were born there, 14 sets of twins, 1 set of triplets.



c.1930

Roslyn Hospital was located in George St, Belmont. In the early days of Belmont, George Clouten received land grants, and George St was named after him in 1888. He was a fisherman. One of his descendants, Keith Clouten, outlined the early history of the area in his book "Reid's Mistake".

Source: LMCC Community History.

NEIGHBOURS MEMORIES – Keven and Joan Harman

Keven's family lived across the road in number 23 in the time of Nurse Dick. The house was always a cream colour. The building was big, but further additions were made, extending westward; and the verandah was closed in to make it even bigger, to accommodate more beds. Internal rooms were more like private rooms, whereas the verandah was a dormitory style. There were no signs to say it was a hospital. Everyone just knew and went there. You had to book in early. The staff consisted of Nurse Dick, who was the supervisor and nurse, assisted by Vera, the cleaning lady, who helped with deliveries. Nurse Dick didn't really believe in doctors, unless an emergency emerged. She did offer analgesics to the mothers to help ease the pain.



When Joan was having her first child, in all the flutter and excitement of the moment, when it was realized that the big event was imminent, Keven's mother called for a taxi, which duly arrived. The hospital was just across the road, but she did not want to disappoint her mother-in-law and got in one side of the taxi and out the other, leaving a rather perplexed driver. The hospital closed in the late 1950s and Joan had to have her 3rd child elsewhere. But it just wasn't the same.

CAPTAIN JOHN BAIN

John Bain was born in Wick, Caithness, Scotland, in 1829. He became a seaman at a young age, learning his skills on ships trading along the British coast. He joined the British Navy for a number of years before returning to the merchant service, where he rose through the ranks to be in command of a number of ships at home and abroad. He married a local lass from Wick, Joanne “Joan” Jolly. In 1873 they emigrated to New Zealand, John acting as a pilot and engaging in the New Zealand trade. From there they moved to Newcastle to take up an appointment as a junior pilot. His experience and performance shone through, becoming a senior pilot after a few months, with promotion to Assistant Harbour-Master; and Marine Board Inspector.



In this capacity he took part in the rescue operations of several shipwrecks. In September of 1881, the wooden barquentine, *Prince Victor*, was abandoned off Seal Rocks. “.....On one occasion he was deputed to proceed in search of the barque Prince Victor, which was reported as having been passed off the coast with smoke issuing from her. He proceeded in the Government steamer Ajax, and after a five days' cruise discovered that the crew had landed at one of the coastal stations, where they were picked up and brought on to Newcastle by the Ajax.

The vessel, however, was burnt to the water's edge and eventually disappeared....” *Newcastle Morning Herald*

On another occasion in Jun 5, 1888, the *Berbice*, a 20 year old, 50 metre triple masted sailing ship came to grief during a southeast gale and huge seas on the infamous Oyster Bank – a graveyard for many ships at the time, on the northern side of the entrance channel to Newcastle Harbour; where the northern breakwater was later built at Stockton.



Photo from UON Cultural Collections

Not enjoying good health, Capt. Bain retired in 1893 and passed away in 1905. He was described as “....social and companionable, of keen sensibilities, and kind and neighbourly to a great degree. Being of a very sympathetic disposition, he readily and kindly helped his neighbour. As a Christian, he was a sound Protestant, and for many years he held the office of ordained elder in Hunter Street Church, Newcastle....” *Newcastle Morning Herald*

He was survived by his wife and 2 married daughters; one had moved to Lithgow, and the other -Joan Jolly Nixon (Bain) to Wagga Wagga, where she died in 1955.

CAPTAIN BAIN'S HOUSE

The very large house was built prior to 1890, and could be seen in all it's glory in the Ralph Snowball Photo taken in 1891. It was one of the very early buildings in Belmont and was a sign of the growing expansion of Newcastle to the suburbs. It was built from timber and weatherboard; with verandahs facing to the southeast and southwest, and a bay window enjoying a wonderful view from its position on the hill.



Peter Murray, *From Bahtahbah to Belmont*

The house was called “Corramore” and later became known as “Iluka”. The house was designed around a central rectangle with wings extending to the sides. It featured scalloped brick balustrades, bullnosed copings to the verandahs and chimneys with glazed Terracota pots. *Environment.nsw.gov.au*

In the course of time, significant alterations were made when it was transformed into a block of flats; then Roslyn Private Hospital; back to flats and then a private home; now in the process of being restored.

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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS FOR MORE HERITAGE STORIES!!!



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