

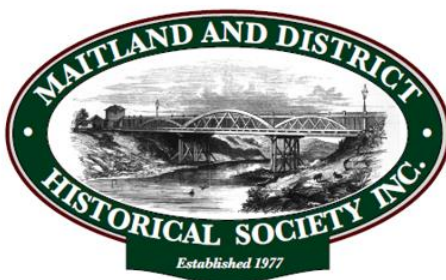
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# NEWSLETTER N<sup>o</sup> 74

30<sup>st</sup> April 2025



Steamfest has come and gone once more. I don't know about anyone else, but I certainly had an enjoyable time as evidenced by the attached photo ...

From the perspective of the Society, it was most successful with around \$2k of merchandise being sold. Steam Buffs can't seem to get enough memorabilia. The best sellers were mugs and carry bags. The bags were a new

item, but you can be certain we'll get them again. Whilst still under repair and absent from this year's festival, anything with a 'picture' of 3801 is a certain hit.

Treasurer Jennifer (with helpers), put together a display of photos of the station and the station precinct during major flood events dating back to 1893. It even attracted the attention of the station manager, MDHS providing photographs he'd not seen before.

That we continued the flood theme leads us into the next article:

*Two Maitland history projects have been shortlisted in the National Trust Australia (NSW) Heritage Awards. Maitland and District Historical Society Inc was involved in both projects.*

A full list of entries is found on <https://www.nationaltrust.org.au/.../nsw-awards.../>

*The first project is listed under "Events, Exhibitions and Tours" was the 70th anniversary of the 1955 flood held at the Council Administration Building in February and March this year.*

*The historical society together with the Maitland Regional Museum, Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles, Maitland Steam and Antique Machinery Association NSW, SES, Hunter Valley Flood Mitigation Service and Local Land Services all collaborated with the Activations department of Maitland City Council to make this event successfully happen.*



*The Maitland and District Historical Society Inc. provided the photos and information in the second section of the exhibition which explained the cause, the event, the damage and resilience and restoration of the 1955 flood.*

*The second project is listed under Resources and Publications – “Maitland in Focus”. As a member of the Maitland Heritage Group the Society assisted with fact proofing the publication.*

*You can support these projects with a People’s Choice Vote! Voting closes on Sunday 4 May. You can vote for both Maitland in Focus in the 'Resources and Publications'*

*category and Flood Level 1955 in the 'Events, Exhibitions and Tours' category. Make sure to cast your vote here [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Peoples-Choice-Heritage-Awards](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Peoples-Choice-Heritage-Awards) before the 4 May 2025.*

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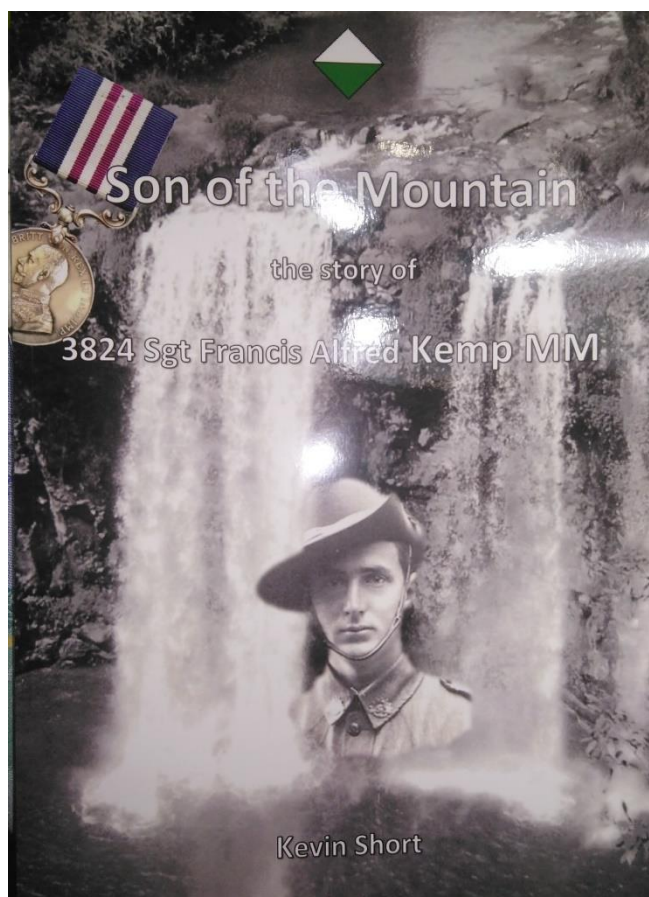
Another recent item that will interest members is a YouTube film celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the **Newcastle ANZAC Memorial Walk**. With ANZAC just past, it is a poignant reminder to us all ....





The Walk was opened on April 24th 2015. Out of respect and reflection of such a magnificent icon, *Out of the Square* has produced and self-funded this 'mini-doco'. We are proud of where we live, we value those that served to ensure our lives are as they are today. We are also inspired by those 'having a go', and making very special things happen to benefit Newcastle and the Hunter Region. This project is a true testament to vision, belief and selfless collaboration.

Link to YouTube to the new film <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=glOUxQfVeU0>



While on the score of ANZAC Day, I had the privilege of returning to my ancestral home of Dorrigo and attended their Dawn Service. It was very poignant.

My Grandfather (Mum's father) and two Great Uncles as well as Dad's brother all enlisted from Dorrigo and served. One Great Uncle, Sgt Francis Alfred Kemp MM was the subject of a book I published in 2018 on the anniversary of his death. Grandfather and his brother were both wounded twice, the first time on the same day – Menin Road on 20<sup>th</sup> September, 1917.

Grandfather was lucky in that he was hit by bullets from a machine gun across his lower abdomen, the bullets fortunately missing all his vital organs. His belt buckle was smashed and his belly sprayed with shrapnel. Such

were his injuries; Grandfather was not initially recovered by the stretcher bearers until the following day when he was found to be still alive. He was out of the 'line' for nine months recuperating and he maintained this ultimately saved his life.

Uncle Frank received a Military Medal (MM) at Bullecourt on his 21<sup>st</sup> birthday and was killed in front of Estrées on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1918, the last battle in which the 20<sup>th</sup> battalion was involved. He missed surviving the War by about 12 hours.

Frank Kemp was also the Great Uncle of Jean Archer, wife of our patron Cameron, Jean of course being my 2<sup>nd</sup> cousin.

The other BIG thing for the diaries is .....



I will 'Post' a full programme of events in the next Newsletter.

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Finally, only two more 'sleeps' until we go to the polls ...

As an 'old' electoral official, I'm mildly amused at the almost indecent increase in Pre-Polling. It was created explicitly for electors unable to attend a polling place on polling day.

You can vote early either in person or by post if on polling day if you:

- are outside the electorate where you are enrolled to vote
- are more than 8km from a polling place
- are travelling
- are unable to leave your workplace to vote
- are seriously ill, infirm or due to give birth shortly (or caring for someone who is)
- are a person with disability (or caring for someone who is)
- are a patient in hospital and can't vote at the hospital
- have religious beliefs that prevent you from attending a polling place
- are in prison serving a sentence of less than three years or otherwise detained
- are a silent elector
- have a reasonable fear for your safety or wellbeing

If you've already voted, did you lie? Either way, it means I won't have to queue on Saturday ....

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Canada of course held elections yesterday and surprisingly re-elected the Liberal Party, a party that was 20 points behind only a few weeks ago.

It's amazing how having a mad dog barking over the fence upsets the sensibilities and changes one's attitude to domestic animals. That said I'm not sure Donald Trump is domesticated – more like rabid? He couldn't even attend the funeral of Pope Francis without causing controversy.

There is also no doubt that the Trump invective has influenced our election. Peter Dutton has had severe difficulty aligning himself and the Liberal Party with the conservative 'Right' and still keep the Trump influence at arm's length. I guess the results on Saturday night will determine if he's managed this difficult task.

I did find the following caricatures amusing though.

The one over is even better ....







Should it be spelt “Fowl” or “Foul” ?



Apologies to Mary Poppins for this one ...

For those that don't know:

**POTUS**

[ˈpəʊtəs]

*noun*

*US ENGLISH*

**President of the United States.**

**Our next Speaker Evening is scheduled for**

**TUESDAY 6 MAY 2025 at 5 30 pm.**

**Speakers: Lynette Huckstadt**

**Topic: The Australian Museum of Clothing and Textiles**

**click on 'Future Events' for more information**

**There is a \$5 charge, which also covers the cost of refreshments.**

**All welcome.**

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Until next time ...



President

After playing guitar for years, I thought I could learn to play the piano.

But it's not an easy instrument to pick up.

I told a joke on a Zoom Meeting and no-one laughed...

It turns out I'm not remotely funny.

# OUR PAST: Maitland's Magnificent men and their cycling machines

By Allan Thomas

July 9 2023



A cyclist in Maitland circa 1900. Cycle racing in Maitland predates the Tour de France which began in 1903.

The Tour de France bicycle race began in 1903.

In Maitland, bicycle racing started even earlier.

The "modern" bicycle arrived in Australia in the 1860s.

Cycling became a recreational activity for men and women, but it was also taken up by people to travel to and from work.

Before long, cyclists began to compete among each other in sporting events.

In 1885 a group of bicycle enthusiasts formed a club in Maitland.

Its first road race was held in March 1886 with 12 cyclists entering. Seven were given time handicaps.

Trophies were donated by merchants James Wolfe and Isaac Gorrick, bookseller R Blair and S Fitzgerald.

The race attracted more than 200 spectators and each cyclist had a crowd of supporters.

The event was reported in the *Maitland Mercury* of March 27, 1886:

***In 1885 a group of bicycle enthusiasts formed a club in Maitland. Its first road race was held in March 1886 with 12 cyclists entering.***



"The course was from nearly opposite the residence of John Gillies jun. to the Victoria Bridge, thence round the Trappaud Road into the Louth Park Road, up that thoroughfare into Rose Street; then up the Cattle Track to South Maitland, into Regent Street, where a flag was posted to turn; thence back the same route into the Cattle Track, finishing opposite the High Street Railway Station.

"The course was 63/4 miles as measured by Mr J M White, surveyor . . . Each rider was dressed in very neat and appropriate costume.

"P.S. Deane was the first to be set going by the starter, Mr Brierly, and he got so far away in his 180 seconds that it was thought he would never be caught . . .

"When turning into Louth Park Road, Deane came into violent collision with a cart in the roadway, and came a tremendous cropper, cutting his hands greatly, and otherwise bruising himself.

"He, however, pluckily remounted, but as his bike was out of gear he got another fall. He was in front at the time and going well.

Y Bonthorne also came down but escaped almost scatheless. Only four finished."

In 1892 the Maitland Bicycle Club was joined by the Belmore Bicycle Club. Newcastle, Singleton and Muswellbrook also formed clubs, and they frequently competed against each other in both track and road races.

In 1899 the Maitland club had 78 members, including men from many of the city's leading families such as Gillies, Dimmock, Cohen and Cracknell.

Track racing at the sportsground was hugely popular with cyclists and spectators: a 1901 race day had 173 entries, many from Sydney.

The Maitland road race courses included Lorn to Woodville and return, Maitland to Kurri Kurri and back, East Maitland to Belmore Bridge via Largs, Campbell's Hill to Black Hill and back, and twice around Campbell's Hill to the Old Toll Bar. Races frequently attracted 25 or more cyclists.

A race was held in 1899 from the Belmore Hotel through Lochinvar up Harper's Hill and then back to Lochinvar.

Perhaps many knew of the poem 'A New Lochinvar' printed in the *Sydney Evening News* on May 16, 1896:

*Oh, young Lochinvar has come out of the West*

*Of all patent bicycles, his was the best*

*His envious rivals would have to look far*

*To find a bike-rider like young Lochinvar*

*"They follow, of course, but they'll follow afar,*

*For I've punctured their tyres," said young Lochinvar.*

Our History

# Humanitarian and philanthropist, Caroline Chisholm left her mark on Maitland

By Chas Keys

July 23 2023



Caroline Chisholm Cottage on Mill Street, East Maitland and Caroline Chisholm (inset).

Caroline Chisholm never lived in Maitland, but she has an honoured place in Maitland's history.

She was the originator of the Caroline Chisholm Barracks (or Cottage) at 3 Mill St, East Maitland, known in times past as the Maitland Benevolent Asylum (Maitland's first hospital) and the East Maitland Immigrants' Home.

She was perhaps Australia's greatest nineteenth century female philanthropist.

Born in England in 1808 and raised to believe in the dignity of the individual human being, Chisholm arrived in Sydney in 1838 on the "Emerald Isle" with her army officer husband, Archibald, and their children.

She quickly noted the hardships of many other arrivals people were landing with no job, family, contacts, money or accommodation and she moved to alleviate their situations by establishing hostels and helping immigrants to find work.

Her efforts began in Hyde Park, where her ability to interest authorities in humanitarian projects first became evident.

She convinced Governor Sir George Gipps to allow her to establish a home for girls: this became the Female Immigrants' Home which accommodated nearly a hundred young women.

She sought to get them jobs, mainly outside Sydney on farms and in small towns from Goulburn to Brisbane, and she established several hostels in which they and other poor people could live.

Chisholm helped thousands to establish themselves in New South Wales.

She pushed British politicians to improve conditions on immigrant ships and in Australia she sought to publicise the dreadful living conditions endured by many on the Victorian goldfields.

To finance her endeavours she raised money by giving lectures in England, on the continent and in Australia. She lobbied politicians, media figures and even the Pope for help.

She was particularly noted for the assistance she gave to young immigrant women. Some of them, robbed, exploited and destitute, had had to resort to prostitution to survive.

***She was particularly noted for the assistance she gave to young immigrant women***

She met many women on Sydney's wharves, took them under her wing and shielded them from potential personal disaster.

One of her hostels, the only one in a building that still exists today, was located in East Maitland. It was established in 1842 in a row of very basic, low-cost, one-storey sandstone terraces built between 1831 and 1835 by 'Gentleman' John Smith.

Smith had been one of the original convict settlers of Wallis Plains and had prospered in business in the Maitland area and Newcastle. His terraces were known as "*Smith's Row*".

The Mill Street cottage which Chisholm rented from Smith was protected by a Permanent Conservation Order in 1987 and added to the NSW State Heritage Register in 1999.

It is one of the oldest buildings in Maitland and the most famous in the locality once known as "*Moontown*" which comprised Mill, Emerald, Courtland and Villa streets.

Long after her death in England in 1877, Chisholm's legacy was recognised in Australia. For nearly 30 years from the late 1960s her image adorned the \$5 note, and suburbs in the ACT and Chisholm estate, off Raymond Terrace Road, are named after her. A Heritage NSW 'blue plaque' honouring Chisholm's legacy was erected on the Mill Street Cottage in 2022.