

Brian Everingham

February 2021

Newcastle Escape



Margel Hinder

Tuesday 23rd February 2021

Day 1



We have escaped Sydney once more. This time we are spending a few days in Newcastle, the city we both moved to for our first year of University in 1970, 51 years ago! We were innocent 19-year-old students, enrolled in Arts, living frugally with a scholarship and a bond to train us to become teachers. I lived in Prince Street, Waratah, with could who seemed aged but who were in fact still working (in the steel works, at Stewarts and Lloyds), whose small home faced the main railway line and from which, across the tracks, we could look into the rolling mills of Comsteel and see the red-hot metal being pulverised into shape.

It was an introduction into working class politics for this young lad fresh off a dairy farm, fresh from the home of a Country Party stalwart, but a willing student, having gone through my high school years in that turbulent time of the 1960s. And so, I think it's fitting that I begin this diary with an image of the old Trades Hall, from where Peter

Barrack held sway in my time here in this city. He only died in January 2020¹. It was his role in the local moratorium movement that I knew and understood.

We did a drive around our old university. It is much larger than it used to be and the traffic was horrendous. We didn't feel the need to struggle for a car park to explore our old haunts and, as it was raining, it seemed the right thing to just head to Newcastle West, find the Quest Apartments, book in, and unpack.

And what better way to spend the remainder of the day, from 2.00pm to 6.00pm, walking the central part of Newcastle, seeing just what has happened to our old haunts (that earthquake in 1989 changed much of this place from what we remembered: so, too, did the Liberal Government decision to rip out the old train line and replace it with a light rail option, opening up much of the foreshore to developers! I carried the Panasonic camera to record the changes.

¹ <https://www.newcastleherald.com.au/story/6598672/obituary-hunter-union-giant-peter-barrack-remembered/>

ACCOLADES have begun to flow for Peter Barrack, the progressive activist and long-term Newcastle Trades Hall Council secretary, who died on Friday, aged 84.

His wife, Di Barrack, said her husband had been seriously ill and "in and out of hospital" for more than a year with renal problems that followed an earlier bout with prostate cancer. He died of acute renal failure.

Mr Barrack was trades hall secretary from 1979 to August 2000, retiring just before his 65th birthday.

Mr Barrack was born at Stockton in 1935 and joined the Painter's Union at 18.

His 20 years as a member of the Communist Party of Australia unsurprisingly drew the attention of Australia's main security organisation, ASIO.

So much so, that fellow activist, the late Bob Phillips, wrote in 2011 that Mr Barrack's declassified ASIO file was a big help in compiling a 70-page essay, Peter Barrack - a Life of Political Activism.

The record shows that Mr Barrack and trades hall were involved in virtually every major issue that affected the Hunter industrially, and socially, during his time in office.

Mr Barrack was a key organiser for any number of progressive causes, including May Day, Vietnam Moratorium, anti-Apartheid, peace and Indigenous rights.

Over time, the growing respect he received from business and political leaders resulted in board positions on Hunter Water, and various government development agencies, including the Hunter Development Board and the Hunter Economic Development Corporation.

Trades hall was continually pushing to maintain manufacturing jobs in the region, and helped campaign to revive shipbuilding in Newcastle in the 1980s. Submarine and frigate contracts went elsewhere but Newcastle won construction contracts on both jobs.

Mr Barrack was a reformer at Newcastle Workers Club, serving as president from 1981 until 2003.







The site of the old Store, the Co-op. Now, sadly, a multi-storey carpark. Cooperatives are a thing of the past





The new urbanite!



The old Technical College – now an art college





Newcastle Town Hall: in 1974 we booed Billy Snedden here





The fountain designed by Margel Hinder²

Hinder's acknowledged master work is the water sculpture known as the Captain James Cook Memorial Fountain located in Newcastle, New South Wales's Civic Park. Completed in 1966, it was created with steel, copper and granite.

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Margel_Hinder

Hinder was married to fellow artist Australian-born Francis Critcheley Hinder, known as Frank Hinder. They were married in Wellesley, Massachusetts in 1930. Hinder arrived with her husband in Australia in late 1934. Hinder made her mark both as an artist or 'sculptress' as she was often referred to by arts writers. She was described as 'tall, slim' brunette and attractive' and given to wearing "strikingly original clothes' and the hats which she designed. They exhibited together in group exhibitions, and had two retrospective exhibits: 1973 at the Newcastle Regional Gallery and 1980 at the Art Gallery of NSW). Frank and Margel Hinder are the subject of a biography by Renee Free.

Margel Hinder died on 29 May 1995 at Roseville, New South Wales



Another Hinder work inside the Newcastle Art Gallery



George Baldessin – Mary Magdalena³

³ George Baldessin (1939–1978) was an Italian-Australian artist, printmaker and sculptor. His work features in most major private and public collections in Australia, and many overseas. A charismatic figure in the history of Australian art, especially in Melbourne in the 1970s, Baldessin was known for his generosity and encouragement to others' creativity until his accidental death in 1978, at the age of 39. Tess Edwards-Baldessin restored and reopened Baldessin's original bluestone studio in 2001 as the Baldessin Press & Studio.

<https://baldessinpress.com.au/george-baldessin/>



The main exhibition was called Void⁴ and showed art of some indigenous artists from the Kimberley area. Some of the work was inspirational but I could not take photos in that gallery.

⁴ The void is a multifaceted concept, not simply of presence and absence, but a place that exists between distinct worldviews, is occupied by meaning and is imbued with personal, historical and ancestral significance. The artists presented in this exhibition do not simply define the void as denoting a lack, but rather they utilise form to represent the formless.

Void brings together contemporary Aboriginal artistic practice from across the country. Curated by Emily McDaniel, the exhibition features existing works across the mediums of drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, textiles, video and photography by artists including Pepai Jangala Carroll, Jonathan Jones, Mabel Juli, John Mawurndjul AM, Hayley Millar-Baker, Mick Namarari Tjapaltjarri, Mr R Peters, Doreen Reid Nakamarra, Andy Snelgar, Dr. Thancoupie Gloria Fletcher AO, Freddie Timms, James Tylor, Jennifer Wurrkidj, and Josephine Wurrkidj.

<https://nag.org.au/exhibitions/current/void>

We then headed up along Darby Street to see the old Abbey that Faye stayed in over two periods of her life when it was a hostel for young women. Opposite it is an old wool store that has now been converted to units. That place would have solid walls!





The hostel where Faye stayed



Newcastle Synagogue



Homes on The Hill: we attended parties here with people such as Milorad Pavlovic and Greg Giles. Some of these old homes had 14-foot ceilings





That's Stockton over the Hunter



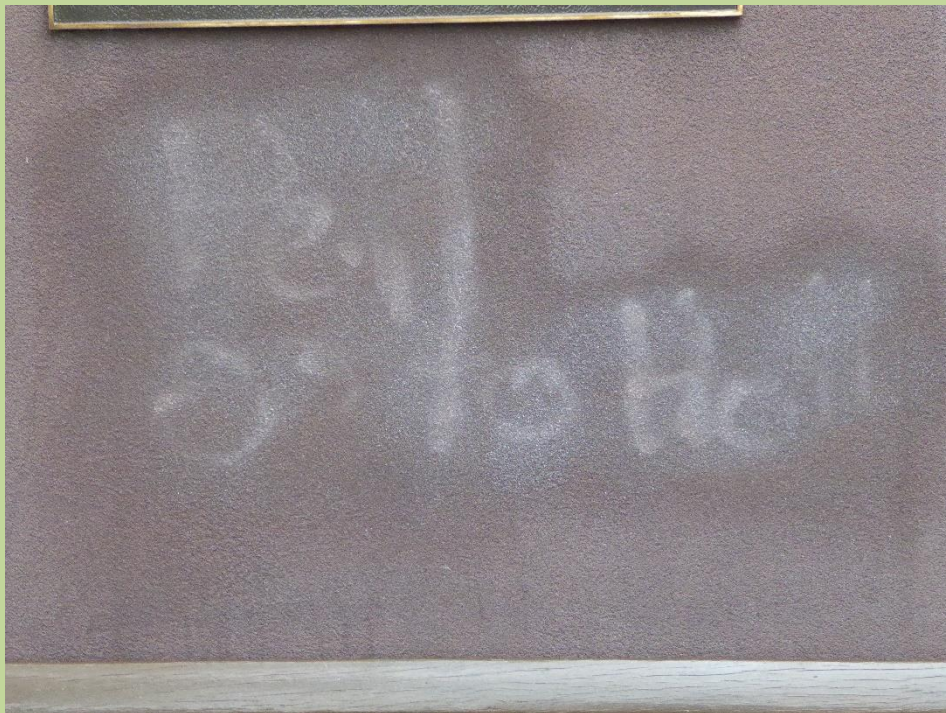








Christ Cathedral – badly damaged in the 1989 earthquake but basically rebuilt
Faye helped make banners for a production of “Murder in the Cathedral” that happened
here in 1973



Someone doesn't know the difference between an Anglican and a Catholic church
Graffiti not quite removed!



The coal ships enter the river to be filled. Joel Fitzgibbon will be please





Tyrrell House⁵

⁵ <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=2170257>

Tyrrell House is named after William Tyrrell, first Bishop of Newcastle. Consecrated as a bishop in Westminster Abbey, he was installed as Bishop of Newcastle in January 1848. He revived the plan to build a proprietary school in the Hunter region and sought to use the funds originally subscribed for this purpose in 1840.

<https://www.as.edu.au/boarding-day-houses/tyrrell-house/tyrrell-house-history/>



I love how all these old Telstra settings have been painted



Newcastle Customs House



And the old Newcastle Railway, now gone!





Replaced with a light rail line!



At each station they connect to a power outlet overhead. No need for long overhead wires



And now we walk down Hunter Street, made famous by Bob Hudson, in “The Newcastle Song”!!!! Performed live for us at the university when it came out!

The Mall looks very sad!!!!





The old police station and lock-up



The facades being “preserved” while behind it something else





Paparazzi Dogman and Rabbitwoman