2001

The forgotten sunday: the Newcastle Sunday Mirror 1959-1961

Ron Morrison

University of Wollongong

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THE FORGOTTEN SUNDAY:
THE NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR 1959-61

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

from

UNIVERSITY OF WOLLONGONG

by

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DipArt MA

Faculty of Creative Arts
Graduate School of Journalism

January 2001
DECLARATION

I, Ronald J. Morrison, declare that this thesis, submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the Graduate School of Journalism, Faculty of Creative Arts, University of Wollongong, is entirely my own work unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

Ronald J. Morrison
15 January, 2001
ABSTRACT

This thesis concentrates on a very limited period of Australian newspaper history. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror, Newcastle's only Sunday newspaper appeared briefly in 1959-61 wrapped around the Sydney Sunday Mirror. It was not a 'free' newspaper. The price of 6d. bought the reader the complete Sydney Sunday Mirror with the addition of the Newcastle paper with up to 32 pages of local stories, local pictures featuring local people together with local advertisements. Forty years later it has been largely forgotten. This thesis postulates, however, that it deserves study as a innovative venture into regional newspaper production.

The Newcastle Sunday Mirror campaigned vigorously against Sydney domination, promoting Newcastle interests and championing the 'battler'. Its journalism drew on three major genres of tabloidism: hard news tabloidism; Fleet St tabloidism; and Nortonism. Definition of these genres, and their application to Australian journalism, particularly regional journalism, are principal conceptual objectives of the thesis. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror was often dismissed as sensational and its accuracy was questioned, particularly by the conservative Newcastle Morning Herald. Ironically, moonlighting journalists from the Newcastle Morning Herald and The Newcastle Sun were frequent suppliers of copy for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. Such elements of news gathering and production are closely analysed in the distinctive context of a regional Sunday newspaper with a proprietary based in Sydney, and committed to tabloidism.

The initial popularity of the paper helped to stem the declining sales of the Sunday Mirror which lost substantial circulation after it was transformed in late 1959 from the salacious, sensational Truth to a Sunday tabloid targeted at family audiences. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror was rather more successful than the metropolitan Sunday Mirror in building advertising and circulation, and promoting its content to regional audiences. Rupert Murdoch's acquisition of both the Daily and Sunday Mirror in May 1960 provided initial opportunities for the further development of the newspaper. It succumbed, however, to the serious economic downturn sparked by the severe "Credit Squeeze" of 1960-61. Despite the fate of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and its subsequent neglect, it provides significant insights into journalism, newspaper production, advertising, circulation and promotion, particularly in regional Australia. It also offers some fascinating clues to the evolution of tabloid journalism and free-newspaper distribution in the decades after 1960, particularly by Rupert Murdoch's News Ltd proprietary.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I thank Professor Clem Lloyd for his advice, support and supervision. Also the former journalists, administration staff and newsagents who supplied information willingly about the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, the Newcastle Morning Herald, The Newcastle Sun, the Sunday and Daily Mirror, the Sunday and Daily Telegraph, The Star and The Post. Particular thanks go also to Graham Marjoribanks, librarian, at the Newcastle Herald, Jane Scott, librarian, University of Newcastle, Keith Newey of Newey and Beath printers, the staff at the Audit Bureau of Circulation, the staff at the Newcastle Regional Library and the staff at the Mitchell Library, Sydney. Nan and Bill Cullen supplied original copies of The Star. Nancy Graham allowed me access to original documents and letters of her late father. Lydia and Norman Taylor, and Eileen Fletcher in England researched early copies of the London Daily Mirror and News-Pictorial. Thanks also to Alan Farrelly of News Limited, Bill Delaney and the staff of Pronto at The Junction for the colour photocopying, press photographer, Ron Bell, and Jane Klein for the German translation.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my wife, Elizabeth Morrison, for her support and encouragement over the years of my research and without whose help and wordprocessing skills, this thesis would never have been completed.
NOTE ON CURRENCY AND MEASUREMENT

This thesis employs contemporary units of currency and measurement.

There were 12 pennies (d) in one shilling (s), and 20 shillings in one pound (£).
The sum of 7 shillings and 6 pence could be written as 7/6 or 7s 6d.
A guinea was £1 1s (or £1/1/-) equivalent to 21 shillings.
When Australia changed to decimal currency in 1966, $2 became equivalent to £1.

There were 12 inches to 1 foot; 3 feet to 1 yard and 1,760 yards to 1 mile.
The metric equivalent of imperial measurement is:

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<td>one inch (1&quot;)</td>
<td>25.4 millimetres</td>
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<tr>
<td>one foot (1 ft)</td>
<td>0.305 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one yard (1 yd)</td>
<td>0.914 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one mile</td>
<td>1.609 kilometres</td>
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Newspaper measurement:
The size of type is measured in points:

72 points = 1 inch

The size of columns in most Australian newspapers in 1950’s and 1960’s:

9 ems = 1 1/2 inches

The page depth in most Australian tabloid newspapers in the 1950’s and 1960’s was 14 inches.
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CHAPTER ONE

A LOST NEWSPAPER

"There is nothing as dead as yesterday's newspaper," is a well-known saying. But as the yesterdays accumulate into years, life returns to the pages and we suspect we are reading the very makings of history.

Alan Finch

Setting a Context

It's more than 40 years since the first issue of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror appeared on November 8 1959. For the transformed news media audience of Newcastle in the early 21st Century, it might never have existed. Only those directly associated with it remember the newspaper with any clarity. These include journalists, photographers, advertising agents and clients, circulation agents and contractors, freelancers, their counterparts who worked on rival papers, and some newsagents. Lingering memories may also be held by those who were featured in its columns, won prizes in its much-publicised competitions, had their wedding pictures published, or their children photographed. The six years of research for this thesis demonstrates that unless there was a specific contact with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, its memory has largely faded. Yet although dimly recalled, it was a venture of some historical significance, as this thesis seeks to show. The paper deserves remembrance for its campaigning journalism, the pivotal role it played in regional public policy, and for giving a major provincial city a full-blown contemporary metropolitan tabloid. In terms of newspaper history and development, it was in many ways a trailblazing, innovatory exercise, although deeply flawed in its conception and execution.

1 Alan Finch, Pens & Ems, Rigby, Adelaide, 1965, p.11
Remarkably, even the substance of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* has largely vanished. There are no bound volumes in the great archives and libraries of Australia, nor even in microfilm much less CD-Rom or digitalised on-line. Its more distinguished Sydney metropolitan-Sunday peers (The *Sunday Mirror*, The *Sun-Herald*, The *Sunday Telegraph*) are preserved in hundreds of bound volumes, and white boxes of microfilm. The seminal daily newspapers of Newcastle and the Hunter Valley (*The Newcastle Morning Herald*, *Newcastle Sun* and *Maitland Mercury*), are also amply represented in local history collections. Yet complete files of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* are not to be found in either national or local libraries.\(^2\) The State Library of New South Wales, one of the greatest national collections, has the country and final editions of the *Sunday Mirror* but not any editions of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* which used the *Sunday Mirror* as its core.\(^3\) Nor are there copies of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in the storerooms or basements of News Ltd in Newcastle or Sydney. Hence the title of the thesis: *The Forgotten Sunday: The Newcastle Sunday Mirror 1959-61*.

Almost certainly, the only complete surviving run of the 80 editions of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* is held by the author, Ron Morrison. Probably, isolated copies have survived for reference, information or sentimental purposes, randomly as drawer and floor cover linings, as clippings in libraries and archives, as individual pages, stories and pictures in scrapbooks and photo albums. As an entity, however, the only complete run extant was compiled between November 1959 and May 1961 by Hunter Photographic Agency, the press photographic service (originally owned by Ron and Elizabeth Morrison)

\(^2\) Letters from Newcastle Region Public Library, State Library of New South Wales and the National Library of Australia, Canberra state that bound copies or microfiche of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* are not held by them.

\(^3\) Letter from Laura van Manen for the Manager, General Reference Library, State Library of New South Wales 13 May 1994
which supplied the photographs for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. After May 1961, the paper, still a wraparound, was re-titled *Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial Newcastle Special Edition*. Seven weeks later, on July 16, 1961 it was absorbed into the *Newcastle edition of the Sydney Sunday Mirror* as a conventional inside local supplement.

The obliteration of the newspaper stocks has been accompanied by an equally complete disappearance of written business, advertising, circulation and management records. After the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* ceased publication, the Newcastle headquarters of the Sydney parent organisation, Mirror Newspapers, was moved and the records largely destroyed, as an employee pointed out: “When we moved the *Mirror* from Scott Street to Bolton Street, we only took what we thought was valuable. Stacks of documents were shredded and the old yellow newspaper files were dumped.” According to the head of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, Kevin Plummer, it was company policy not to keep any files of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, the *Daily Mirror* or the predecessor, the *Sydney Truth*, for more than six months:

> We didn’t have the room or staff to look after them - this was Sydney’s job. Anyway our files after a week were hacked about with reporters cutting pieces from them.\(^5\)

It is sad that the recorders of history should themselves pay so little attention to their own history, even to basic templates. As Ellis points out, countless hours of TV footage have been burnt, erased or ruined by neglect, and urgent action is needed to halt the continuing destruction of history.\(^6\) His comments about electronic media were just as applicable to newspapers dumped or shredded:

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4 Jenny Cousins, Telephone Interview, 12 February, 1994
5 Kevin Plummer, Personal Interview, 20 November, 1993
The unavoidable question of what should go and what should stay is pretty hard to answer. A shot of say, a football crowd cheering and chiacking and waving flags may be of immediate interest. If, however, in that football crowd, clearly and lengthily exposed, is the young Robert Menzies, or the young John Lennon or the young Michael Hutchence, or the young Ivan Milat, it suddenly becomes worth having...It is good to have these things. It is foolish to throw them away ...The incinerators of history are waiting, as always, to burn up the good and the bad, the mighty and the trivial, to kill the brain cells of national memory, to pour it all out mercilessly into the void.7

The Newcastle Sunday Mirror could easily have been one of the fragments of history consigned to the incinerator. Its Newcastle rivals were contemptuous of its very existence, and saw no useful point in its preservation, as Newcastle Morning Herald editor, Jim Hooker, observed:

The (Newcastle Morning Herald) library did not keep the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. We kept only the Newcastle Herald, The Newcastle Sun, Sydney Morning Herald, the Sydney Telegraph and Sydney Sun, the Maitland Mercury, and major interstate papers. I do recall that reporters and a couple of subs would bring a copy (of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror) into the general reporters' room on the Monday. Our general impression was that it was sensational and a bit of a 'rag'. It wasn’t until later that I found that quite a few of the Herald and Sun reporters were moonlighting for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.8

The lack of available information has hampered the research for this thesis. But although the Newcastle Sunday Mirror may be forgotten, it should not be expunged completely from the slate. This thesis, therefore, is partly a requiem for a dead newspaper, but also an attempt to disinter, and re-establish, its character, qualities and significance. A former trustee of the NSW State Library, Ernest Sommerlad said of attempts to locate and preserve copies of largely

7 ibid
8 Jim Hooker, Personal Interview, 30 July 1998
forgotten newspapers: “I know at first hand of the value placed upon the library’s files of local newspapers and of the constant endeavours to supplement these files by the acquisition of local numbers.”9 The Australian National Library’s records reveal that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was not collected by any Australian library.10 It is intended here, therefore, to resurrect as far as possible the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and to place it in the context both of Australian newspaper history and the history of its region. Most importantly, the only surviving complete run of the newspaper should be placed in a national newspaper repository. This will ensure that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s contributions to Australian newspaper history and development are retained on the record.

Newspaper History

Much essential newspaper history can be gained from newspapers themselves. In newspaper columns are recorded start-up manifestos, policy declarations, balance sheets, price changes, court actions, sale of assets, amalgamations, closures and wind-up rationalisations. This process of a newspaper chronicling itself applied in concentrated form to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror which was published for less than 20 months. Furthermore, the growth of promotional material in newspaper editorial provided regular information about advertising, and new editorial features. Late in the newspaper’s life, attention was drawn to important changes in format and design, essentially a standard re-vamp emphasising an amended masthead. When, finally, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was abandoned in favour of a standard regional news supplement, it seemed to many to be by stealth. No-one explained its extinction, accounted for its performance or made any valediction in its columns. Its memory was left, like an old soldier’s, simply to fade away.

9 Ernest C. Sommerlad, Mightier than the Sword, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1950, p.112
Although the bones of a newspaper's public face can be etched again from careful scrutiny of newspaper runs, the retention, and preservation, of company records and documentation are necessary to flesh out the picture. Particularly important is how new ventures are capitalised, recruited and organised. For new publications initiated by a functioning company, public and private documentation is essential to estimate likely profitability, potential risk, and re-organisation of assets and resources within the organisation. Australian newspaper companies have generally been neglectful about preserving their records. Even with those that have made some effort, existing archives are under constant pressures from corporate assessments of value and utility. Regrettably, searches for surviving documentation of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s relatively short-lived publication have failed to locate relevant material. This dearth of documentation applies to the four news media proprietaries involved: Truth and Sportsman, Mirror Newspapers, John Fairfax and News Ltd.

A further constraint in researching this thesis has been the absence of contextual studies of the Australian news media. For example, there is no general narrative account of the evolution of the Australian Press since its inception, with the establishment of the *Sydney Gazette*, in January 1803. Of the major newspaper proprietaries, only two have been well-served been through the historical studies by Souter of John Fairfax and Griffen-Foley of Consolidated Press. Souter’s two volumes cover some 170 years of Fairfax history. While he touches on the O’Connell Publications period of 1959-60, it is not a major theme and does not include any account of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. There are several biographical studies of the News Ltd proprietor, Rupert Murdoch, but none considers his brief association with the

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Newcastle Sunday Mirror or, indeed, the Sunday Mirror while he controlled it. Ezra Norton has not found a biographer, and the rich press history of the Daily Mirror, Truth and Sunday Mirror under his proprietorship has not been explored.

Beyond the immediate context of the major Australian news companies, there is a lack of general histories of the Australian news media useful for establishing broader social and industry contexts. There is an urgent need for a contextual history on the lines of Frank Luther Mott’s classic American Journalism, which covers the unfurling of news media practice in the US from its inception in 1690 until 1960. Lloyd’s histories of the Australian Journalists Association, and the Federal Parliamentary Press Gallery are useful until the late 1980’s, but need updating. Much research has been done on the development of Australia’s regional press in recent years, particularly in Queensland and Victoria. (See Cryle, Kirkpatrick and Morrison) There is no comparable work on the NSW regional press, (including the Newcastle Region and the Hunter Valley), although such a history by Rod Kirkpatrick awaits publication at the time of writing. Despite the proliferation of communications, cultural studies and media studies in Australian universities in the past 20 years, minimal attention has been given to the Australian context of key communication concepts such as audience. In total, there is only limited guidance in the existing body of Australian news media literature for an analytical study of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

14 Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism 1690-1960, Macmillan, New York, 1962
Concepts and Terminology

Some questions of conceptual definition are relevant here. The first is *audience*. In basic terms, a newspaper *audience* is essentially the reach of its distributive power, the circulation that the newspaper can accomplish with its established forms of production and distribution. An *audience* need not be constrained in any way by a specific locale. It may be universal; for example, the *audience* for CNN which, because of global technology, is virtually universal. An *audience* may also be national, with the potential to reach, by its productive and distributive mechanisms, virtually everyone within specific national boundaries. This does not mean that every member of the *audience* buys a national newspaper, but they are capable of doing so.

*Audience* may also be delimited by constraints such as state boundaries, regional boundaries, metropolitan boundaries, and urban boundaries. Traditionally, newspaper *audiences* have tended to follow such differentiations, mainly administrative and geographic, but also artificial such as designation of local government and suburban boundaries. There are also logistical limits to newspaper distribution: the availability of transport; accessibility to delivery nodes by train, air and road; technological limitations to the number of copies that can be printed; and competing demand for copies between sub-groups within the audience, for example, metropolitan and country, or between large towns and small towns. *Audience* is also a concept which has wide-ranging cultural and behavioural implications which are not primary concerns of this thesis, although given some attention. For this thesis, the *audience* is very much confined to the regional catchment of Newcastle city and its immediate hinterland to the north, south and west, emphasising particularly the coalfields, the Lake Macquarie local government area, and the Lower Hunter Valley
including the major provincial cities of Maitland and Cessnock. (The theme of a Newcastle audience is taken up specifically in Chapter 2.)

The concept of audience, differs from two other important communications concepts relevant for newspaper supply and demand. Circulation broadly means the actual number of newspapers distributed. Generally, this is much the same as the number printed, taking account of copies withdrawn for defects or other discrepancies in the print run. Circulation also takes account of unsold copies returned to the publishers. It may also make allowance for anticipated increases or reductions in copies sold due to special promotions, the tapping of new markets, and seasonal factors. Circulation always exceeds readership which is the actual number of copies sold through agents, together with limited provision of freebies for civic, contact and charitable reasons. By definition, circulation and readership fall well short of audience which is the notional total of the optimum number of newspapers that might be sold in a specified geographical area. (Circulation is taken up specifically in Chapter 7).

Conceptually, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was a hybrid because it comprised two elements: a provincial/regional wraparound, and a metropolitan core newspaper. In the newspaper lexicon, a wraparound is a smaller outer section incorporating a more substantial inner-section. Effectively, the outer section is wrapped around the inner section, much in the way that a parcel may be wrapped in layers of packaging. Wraparounds are usually used for special, and specific, purposes such as major, even transcending, news occasions: for example, Anzac Day, the millennium celebrations, and the Olympic Games. They may also be promotional spin-offs designed to highlight popular and attractive themes likely to generate circulation. Or they may commemorate an important event such as a city centennial or anniversary of a newspaper’s first publication.
Full page advertisements appeared in the *Maitland Mercury* (Friday, 6 November, 1959, p.4) and the *Newcastle Morning Herald* (Saturday, 7 November, 1959, p.1). The only difference in the advertisements was in the *Maitland Mercury*, the “Newcastle’s First Sunday Paper” was replaced with “Your First Local Sunday Paper”
Wraparounds are not generally used for publishing routine news regularly, as did the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. Essentially, it was a Newcastle provincial newspaper wrapped around a bigger Sydney metropolitan newspaper.

Another primary term here is “Sunday”. There are significant conceptual differences between Sunday and daily newspapers, although there is overlap. The basic of the daily newspaper is the coverage of the news of the day. This is also a responsibility of the Sunday newspaper but with an important overlay of less urgent, even timeless, material. Effectively a “Sunday” newspaper is a duality incorporating functions of daily news gathering and presentation with a substantial entertainment/information component. Thus, it differs from the traditional weekly or periodical which has no discrete responsibility for presenting the news of the day. The “Sunday” has evolved as a distinctive blending of daily news and broader information and entertainment material relatively detached from specific context in time and space.

This leads to the vexed category of the tabloid newspaper. Historically, all newspapers were tabloid or about half the page size of the traditional broadsheet. A scarcity of newsprint, combined with restricted printing capacity and small audiences, dictated a limited format. The broadsheets were largely the product of rapid audience growth from the mid-19th Century, in conjunction with better printing technology and increasingly sophisticated distribution systems. Underpinning the advance of the newspaper press was the revenue deriving from greater volumes of advertising. By the late 19th Century, the rise of mass public education had produced an increasingly diversified audience, with twofold demand for a more erudite, eventually elitist press, and newspapers designed for mass readership.
It is easy to break this audience differentiation into crude models of *tabloid* popular press and *broadsheet* elitist press. The actual process of news presentation was not quite so simple. Many “quality” newspapers continued to appear in traditional tabloid format; many broadsheet formats were populist, even sensationalist, in content. Gradually, the distinction was blurred although there were conspicuous exceptions in both categories. In its origins, the *tabloid* label denoted compressed or concentrated format of the conventional writing tablet. (It was analogous with the compression of drug preparations from *tablet* to *tabloid*, although the *tabloid* designation has largely disappeared from pharmacy). In news terms, the Oxford dictionary defines a newspaper *tabloid* as usually popular in style, printed on sheets of half normal size. (As noted above, the half normal size was once the standard size). The acceptance of broadsheet as the normal size is more a value judgment than an historical reality. Unquestionably, though, *tabloid* has come to identify a newspaper in an abbreviated format, strongly popular in concept, context and content.

Two final points of usage warrant explanation, the industry term *masthead* is used from time to time. Technically, the masthead is the distinctive strip or panel running mostly across the top of a paper’s front-page or, occasionally, down the page. It usually contains the paper’s name, the date, price, a logo (or emblem), and perhaps pointers to material inside, or brief information such as the weather. In newspaper parlance, *masthead* has more than a symbolical significance because it is used to denote the proprietary interest of a particular newspaper. Thus, reference is made to the sale of a *masthead* or *mastheads*, value or performance of a *masthead*, addition of a new *masthead*.

An artificial other usage here is the designation of *regional Newcastle* as the fundamental geographical unit of the study. As Australia’s largest city outside the capital cities, it would be reasonable to describe Newcastle’s audience as
urban. News-media industry usage in Australia would also designate it as “provincial” for example Newcastle’s daily newspapers were commonly described as “provincial dailies”. In the parameters of this thesis, neither urban nor provincial is satisfactory. The term, regional Newcastle therefore is used to define not only the city of Newcastle but its adjoining local government area of Lake Macquarie, the coastal area north to Port Stephens and the lower Hunter Valley hinterland. The label is not completely satisfactory but it does avoid the confusion of terminology which would limit the audience solely to the city of Newcastle.

The Newcastle Sunday Mirror - an enigma

What can be said about the Newcastle Sunday Mirror on the basis of this overview of terms and concepts? It was produced mostly within the limits of the “Sunday” genre: in short, popular in audience orientation, tabloid in content and format. The main problem in audience and presentational senses is conceiving a hybrid comprising a provincial/regional wraparound packaged around a traditional Sunday newspaper. The core was targeted largely to a Sydney metropolitan audience, although partly diluted by broader entertainment elements. This core was wrapped in a miniature “Sunday”, targeted to a provincial/regional audience. The conundrums and contradictions inherent in this complex hybrid do much to explain the successes and failures of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

By the standards of its time, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was innovative in an era when the architecture of the newspaper, particularly the tabloid newspaper, was extremely tight. The newspaper was largely an integrated product with little segmentation, a print product presented in an essentially
holistic way. Important, and conventional, news blocks, such as finance, features and sport, were differentiated by display and design mechanisms, but the newspaper remained a unity. Mostly, the only element that could be lifted out of this entity was the comics, generally placed in the centrefold. Other sections could only be abstracted by tearing out whole sections and single pages, or by clipping individual stories and pictures. By contrast, the contemporary newspaper, particularly the weekend and Sunday newspapers, is loose and fragmentary. Pick one up and it falls easily into a collection of segments, some in magazine format. The old newspaper core remains but, apart from its traditional objectives of presenting news, it also serves as a portmanteau enclosing disparate elements, mainly entertainment and lifestyle.

With two strong elements separable from each other, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was arguably the first Australian newspaper to pursue two distinct audiences in one news product. Admittedly, there was an element of overlap. It is reasonable to assume, though, that the provincial readers of the Newcastle wraparround would also have been enticed in varying degree by the news, information and entertainment in the core Sunday Mirror. It is improbable, however, that core Sunday Mirror readers, predominantly a Sydney metropolitan audience, would have been seduced by regional news, even from a major provincial city.

Regrettably, little is known about how the Newcastle audience approached the hybrid product. Did they read through it from the front page, sampling first the Newcastle segment, and then the major Sunday Mirror component? Did they separate the product into its two components, removing the Newcastle wraparround and effectively treating it as two separate newspapers? In this case, did they read the Newcastle newspaper first? If not, why not? These are the sort of crucial questions that contemporary audience research would
Reliance on fallible human memory some 40 years ago is not a reliable substitute, even if a suitable sample could be collected for qualitative research. Did they distinguish between the two or read it as an integrated product? In the absence of even the most basic information, it difficult even to speculate.

There is another element of newspaper presentation and style which should be considered in building up even a conjectural profile of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror for conceptual analysis. It was very much a pictorial newspaper, even beyond the generally high quotient of illustrative material included in newspapers like the Sunday Mirror. The pictorial newspaper was essentially a product of technological advances in the last 19th and early 20th Centuries which allowed the reproduction of photographs in newspapers. The essential technology was photo-engraving, which replaced traditional systems of reproduction by laborious etching of black and white tones onto a block. Photo-engraving was introduced into Australian print production from the United States in the 1880’s. The Sydney Mail in 1888 was the first newspaper to use process blocks for illustrations.

Photo-engraving enhanced the presentation of broadsheet newspapers, while transforming tabloid formats which could allocate a whole page to a picture spread or even a single picture. After the initial experimentation with newspaper design sparked by pictorial reproduction, both broadsheet and tabloid formats settled down to a relatively balanced approach. This incorporated a strong visual element without serious challenge to the traditional ascendancy of text. Some newspapers, though, adopted a news philosophy based on flexibility between picture and text, allowing each to predominate where appropriate. Thus, the designation pictorial was incorporated into their title and masthead.
The most important Australian example was the *Sun News-Pictorial*, published initially in the early 1920's by Hugh Denison's Sydney Associated Press empire as the Melbourne *Sun*. Denison's *Sun* was more pictorial than other local tabloids, but the visual approach predominated when Keith Murdoch's *Melbourne Herald* company took it over. The *Sun News-Pictorial* thrived as a high-circulation middle-brow tabloid for more than 50 years. When Rupert Murdoch took over the *Melbourne Herald* group in the late 1980's, it was merged with the broadsheet Melbourne *Herald*, the absorption largely diluting traditional pictorial elements. *Pictorialism* was extremely important in the *Newcastle Daily Mirror* saga because its final issues were wrapped around a revamped *Sunday Mirror* with the new masthead of *Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial*.

*Pictorialism* was extremely potent in the approach and design of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. According to its former news editor, Ron Ford: "Everything we looked at, we looked at in photo terms because that was our kind of journalism - we were the forerunners of television really."¹⁷ The analogy is interesting but a little hard to sustain. The *pictorialism* of the Newcastle wraparound was mainly a derivative of the *tabloidism* fashionable in Sydney afternoon papers after World War II. Television, which began in Australia in 1956, did not significantly influence the layout and presentation of pictures in popular tabloids. It is likely, however, that it influenced selection of pictures used, particularly on the front pages of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*.

**Structure and History**

The period 1958 to 1961 was a tumultuous period in the Sydney metropolitan newspaper industry, a culmination in many ways of an era of rapid change.

¹⁷ Ron Ford, Personal Interview, 30 December 1993
Examples of early front pages of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror - top left issue No 2, November 15, 1959; top right issue No 8, December 27, 1959; bottom left issue No 5, December, 1959 and bottom right, issue No. 9, January 3, 1960.
which began immediately after World War II. In 1945 the industry seemed solid and secure in familiar patterns of operation and ownership. The Sydney press was dominated by four major companies. John Fairfax published the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Australia’s oldest and most prestigious broadsheet daily. In the late 1940s, Fairfax launched the *Sunday Herald*, a quality broadsheet with a distinct appeal to the conventional *Sydney Morning Herald* readership, Associated Newspapers published the *Sydney Sun*, an evening daily and the *Sunday Sun*. Consolidated Press, published the *Daily Telegraph* (a morning newspaper) and the *Sunday Telegraph*. Truth and Sportsman published the weekly *Truth* which was printed on Sundays and the *Sydney Daily Mirror*, an evening newspaper. The traditional rivalries of the Sydney proprietaries had subsided during the war because of their need to present a common front to government over scarce newsprint supplies, access to labour and capital, and censorship.

Newcastle, Australia’s largest provincial city, had been a vital cog in the war effort, and its population and market strength were reflected in publication of a morning newspaper and an afternoon newspaper. Its figurehead was the venerable *Newcastle Morning Herald*, a traditional broadsheet, stodgy in style, elitist in its target audience but not self-consciously a quality newspaper in aspiration or achievement. It began life in 1858 as the *Newcastle Chronicle*, merging in 1878 with the *Miner’s Advocate*, (first published in 1873) as the *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner’s Advocate*. The lower Hunter Valley up-river from Newcastle also boasted another daily newspaper, the *Maitland Mercury*, a daily founded in 1843, the oldest provincial newspaper in New South Wales, and probably in Australia. Newcastle also had an evening newspaper, the *Newcastle Sun*, first printed in 1918 by the Associated Newspaper proprietary, which produced three editions each day.
Although the foundation of the *Newcastle Sun* in 1918 had brought the Sydney company influence into Newcastle via Associated Newspapers, the emerging pattern of newspaper control was firmly localised. In particular, it rested on the investments and family-estates of two prominent local families, the Berkeley and Johnston families. The *Newcastle Sun*, was acquired by a company administering these family interests in 1936. During World War II, a holding company was established to run both the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and the *Newcastle Sun*. In the late 1950's, this family company had evolved as Newcastle Newspapers Ltd. In 1961, John Fairfax acquired a 45 percent shareholding in Newcastle Newspapers Ltd, and this substantial holding was converted into full ownership in 1978. The *Maitland Mercury*, an evening daily, was independently owned by the Maitland Mercury Newspapers and Printing Co. Pty. Ltd. until Sir Frank Packer's Consolidated Press Holdings obtained a majority interest in 1960. Thus, the period of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s existence was also marked by significant change in newspaper ownership. Very largely, the Sydney companies had moved inexorably towards control of the Newcastle press by the early 1960’s. This dominance was diluted by the brief entry, then withdrawal, of News Ltd via Mirror Newspapers, but this impact was short-lived.

By the early 1950’s, the entrenched framework of the Sydney metropolitan press had begun to crumble. John Fairfax acquired the Associated Newspapers company, adding the evening *Sydney Sun* to its stable of newspapers. This led to the merger of the broadsheet *Sunday Herald* and the tabloid *Sunday Sun* into a new Sunday newspaper, the *Sun-Herald*, tabloid in format and inclined to the populism of the *Sunday Sun* rather than the more rarefied virtues of the *Sunday Herald*. The Sunday market as three newspapers (*Sun-Herald, Sunday Telegraph* and *Truth*) now contested the lucrative Sunday market while maintaining the established patterns of morning newspapers, *(Sydney
A comparison of the front pages of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, the Newcastle Morning Herald, The Newcastle Sun, and the Maitland Mercury of March 27/28, 1960. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s layout is more sensational and graphic than the other three local papers.
Morning Herald and Daily Telegraph) and evening publications (Sun and Mirror).

Further change was triggered when Ezra Norton, the proprietor of Truth and Sportsman, decided to re-mould the image of his Sunday Truth newspaper, by tradition a sensational, even salacious, tabloid. Ezra Norton had inherited Truth from his father, John Norton, who had bought Truth in 1896, six years after it was launched in Sydney. Under Ezra Norton's idiosyncratic leadership, Truth had been profitable although tarred with the brush of a disreputable reputation. As he aged, Ezra Norton became increasingly preoccupied with shedding the sensational traditions of Truth. Marrying late in life, he had a young child and was anxious to project a more respectable image. The reshaping of Truth into the Sunday Mirror was a crucial part of that process. In practice, the launching of the Sunday Mirror largely failed as a marketing venture while doing little to refurbish Norton's raffish reputation. Consequently, Norton sought buyers for his Truth and Sportsman proprietary.

Stability in the Sydney newspaper market in the post-war period had been ensured by traditional agreement among the established newspaper companies, (John Fairfax, Truth and Sportsman and Consolidated Press), to keep interlopers out. No matter how much they might wrangle among themselves and bid to outwit each other, the three perennials locked together to keep intruders off their turf. This mostly meant keeping out the Melbourne newspaper baron, Sir Keith Murdoch and his Melbourne Herald network which dominated every metropolitan market save Sydney. By the late 1950's, Sir Keith was dead and while the Melbourne Herald proprietary kept a watchful eye on Sydney, it was unable to batter its way into the Sydney market. Another Murdoch threat to the Sydney market had emerged with the installing of Sir Keith Murdoch's son, Rupert Murdoch, as the thrusting proprietor of News Ltd, an Adelaide-based
company built on the *Adelaide News*. In the late 1950's, Rupert Murdoch was searching for a way into the predominant Sydney market, his first foray picking up Cumberland Newspapers, a thriving stable of suburban newspapers based at Parramatta in Sydney's west. With Norton anxious to sell and Rupert Murdoch eager to buy, this placed both John Fairfax and Consolidated Press in a quandary.

In the event, Norton approached Fairfax, partly influenced by his long-standing enmity with Frank Packer, the boss of Consolidated Press, and the mutually suspicious co-operation that he had established with John Fairfax's managing director, Rupert Henderson. According to Souter, acquisition of Truth and Sportsman, presented serious problems for John Fairfax: a direct purchase by John Fairfax Ltd would expose it to accusations of monopoly, and the *Daily Mirror* and *Truth* were not the sort of newspapers it was accustomed to publish. In logically, it could have bought Norton's company and merged the *Daily Mirror* with its afternoon paper, the *Sun*, potentially maximising profit in the evening market:

[Fairfax] believed however that, that in the public interest Sydney should continue to have two competitive afternoon papers. But who would regard such competition as genuine if were generally believed that both papers were controlled by John Fairfax Ltd? The solution, so the company decided, was to give the Mirror the appearance as well as the reality of independence by disguising to some extent its actual involvement with the Mirror.

In November 1958, Ezra Norton's Truth and Sportsman publications, the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* were bought by O'Connell Pty Ltd, a shelf company owned by John Fairfax's solicitors. Although a financial front for Fairfax, the intention was to maintain a semblance of independence for the new acquisition. The month before the sale, Norton had re-launched *Truth* as the

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18 Gavin Souter, *op.cit.*, 1981, p.528
19 ibid
Sunday Mirror. H.E. Scotford, the managing director of Truth and Sportsman (a John Fairfax Ltd appointee), acted quickly to re-constitute Truth and Sportsman as Mirror Newspapers Limited.

The Sunday Mirror had an initial circulation of over 490,000. By early 1960, under the new owners, circulation had fallen dramatically to 382,700, a drop of about 110,000. The taint of Truth’s reputation had a continuing effect on retail advertisers even though, as Souter points out, “Scotford had tightened the moral and aesthetic limits within which it operated”.20 In addition the new, more respectable paper was less popular than the earlier prurient Truth which had catered to a different readership than the long-established “sanitised” family newspapers, the Sunday Telegraph and The Sun-Herald.

Mirror Newspapers, under the editor-in-chief, Lindsay Clinch (the former executive editor of Fairfax’s Sydney Sun), established the Newcastle Sunday Mirror wraparound in November 1959 in an attempt to steady, at least in Newcastle, the Sunday Mirror’s falling circulation and increase advertising revenue. There is no evidence that organised market research was carried out to test the viability of any innovatory way of presenting regional news. Two Sydney staff members, Ron Ford, an accomplished exponent of Fleet St. tabloid journalism, and an experienced advertising representative, Harry Johnston, were sent to Newcastle to inaugurate news gathering and canvass advertising.

Although the new paper maintained sales in the Hunter region, the overall circulation of the Sunday Mirror continued to plummet. Heavy losses, combined with John Fairfax’s demand for investment in television, contributed to Rupert Henderson’s decision to sell Mirror Newspapers Ltd to Rupert Murdoch’s News Ltd.21 It is likely that Henderson underestimated the younger

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20 ibid, p.344
21 ibid
Murdoch’s ability because of his huge regard for Sir Keith Murdoch, perceiving the son as little or no threat. The sale was opposed by the Company Treasurer and is generally considered as Henderson’s biggest blunder, a disastrous mistake which eventually cost the Fairfax group millions of dollars. The decision had been taken without Warwick Fairfax’s knowledge, and in later years when the competition between the Sun and Mirror intensified, Warwick Fairfax justifiably rebuked Henderson, saying: “Well, it’s all your fault; you brought him into Sydney”.

After the acquisition in May 1960, Rupert Murdoch immediately introduced changes to both the Daily and Sunday Mirror and replaced Lindsay Clinch with the editor of the North Shore Times, Ian Smith. A former editor of the Daily Mirror who had fallen out with Ezra Norton, Smith was steeped in the Sydney tabloid tradition. Murdoch began cost-cutting in both Sydney and Newcastle. Ron Ford and Harry Johnston were recalled to Sydney leaving the Newcastle office to oversee the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

Hit heavily by the 1960’s credit squeeze, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror survived until 21 May, 1961. The Sydney Sunday Mirror, the revamped Truth, conceived under Norton and then sold to Fairfax, ended its days in the Murdoch stable in 1979. Renamed the Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial on 28 May 1961, it changed to the Sunday on 1 May, 1977 and eventually ceased publication in September, 1979. Seven years earlier, Murdoch in a painless stratagem had gained control of the Daily and Sunday Telegraph from Kerry Packer. A casualty of this acquisition was Murdoch’s quality broadsheet the, Sunday Australian—never particularly successful—it was merged into the Sunday Telegraph. After 1979 Sydney again had only two Sunday newspapers: Fairfax’s Sun-Herald and Murdoch’s Sunday Telegraph.

22 ibid, p.346
The changing structure of newspaper ownership in Sydney ramified through press control patterns in Newcastle. As noted above, Sydney interests dominated Newcastle's regional dailies (including Maitland) by the early 1960's. Having sold the Mirror Newspapers to Murdoch in 1960, the Fairfax group in the 1960's acquired an interest in Newcastle Newspapers Pty. Ltd, the holding company which had been formed in 1958 to oversee the production of the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and *The Newcastle Sun*. In 1959 the holding company was controlled by the Johnson and Berkeley family estates which included the Wansey family who were residuary beneficiaries of the Berkeley estate. The Berkeley estate comprised 55 per cent of the shares in the company. Overtures were made by John Fairfax to acquire all the shares held by Newcastle Newspapers.

Earlier in 1959, both Consolidated Press and News Limited had made unsuccessful approaches to obtain the shares. Sydney Wansey opposed the sale of the Berkeley shares but approved the Fairfax group acquiring 45 per cent from the Johnson family in 1961. After the sale, Wansey who had lived in Bermuda since 1945, returned and became chairman of the Newcastle holding company. He never fully inherited the Berkeley shares as he died in 1970 while the shares were still held in trust for another family member. The remaining 55 per cent of the share-holding were sold to Fairfax in the late 1970's. John Fairfax, having made the mistake of selling the Mirror Newspapers to Murdoch, were now favourably poised to keep News Ltd out of Newcastle and its rapidly-developing environs. Thus, publication of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in 1959-61 sounded the knell of local newspaper ownership and control, even though the venture ultimately failed. From the late 1970's John

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23 *Newcastle Herald* supplement, 25 July 1998, p.31
Fairfax controlled the press, converting regional Newcastle to a one–daily–newspaper paper town after it closed the evening *Newcastle Sun* in 1980.

**Ethos and Influence**

An intriguing consequence of the distinctive regional branding of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was the clear differentiation in ethos between it and the metropolitan *Sydney Mirror* which it encompassed in format. The *Sunday Mirror* failed because of a fundamental inability to establish a clear persona for itself in a changing metropolitan market. This was largely due to the inherited character and content of *Truth*, the paper it supplanted but whose bawdy reputation it could not quell. *Truth* was sensational, salacious, and populist, heavily reliant on traditional ingredients of crime, courts, and sport. In particular, it shrewdly calculated the prurience of its *audience*, exploiting the protection of a legal system which permitted detailed reporting of courts, particularly the crime and divorce courts. The paper also had a very strong tradition of investigative journalism. With no formal ombudsmen, and only very limited avenues for complaint about abuse of process and corruption, taking a grievance to *Truth* was a very real means of redress. Thus, the paper had a genuine basis for its populism in public perception that it interpreted the public interest as helping the ‘battlers’, intervening on behalf of victims of injustice, exposing corruption, and creating discomfiture among the corrupt, the complacent, the venal and the tyrannical. There is an old maxim that the purpose of the press is to comfort the afflicted, and afflict the comfortable. For *Truth*, this homily was not mere lip service. It was part and parcel of the newspaper’s ethos and practice. *Truth* was a genuine muck-raker, serving a pronounced public interest as well as drawing a healthy profit through much of its life.
The old Sydney *Truth* was a hard act to follow, even in its fading years, and the *Sunday Mirror* wasn't up to the job. There was a clear market opportunity for the new paper. The lusty era of the 1940's and 1950's, reflecting reconstruction and readjustment after World War II, was the heyday of *Truth*. Just as Ezra Norton had aged and assumed family responsibilities, so also Sydney was becoming more sedate and conservative as Australia set about handling the tasks of managing the long boom and educating the post World-War II baby boomers. This flavour of social change was endemic in the late 1950's, reflected also in increasing concerns with privacy and the curtailment of court reporting which gradually sapped the crude robustness of *Truth*’s columns. Regrettably, the *Sunday Mirror* was unable to capitalise the opportunity to create new audiences by more diverse mixes of news, entertainment and information. Its *wraparound*, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, did, however, show what might be done to produce a lively, *pictorialism*-oriented Sunday newspaper which retained some of the *Truth* spirit for investigative journalism and protection of the public interest.

It is contended, therefore, that the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* preserved in part the traditional public interest role of *Truth*, certainly in greater measure than the core *Sunday Mirror*. It also accepted responsibility for as full a degree of local Sunday news coverage as space and other resources permitted. It also pointed to innovative ways of presenting news mainly reflecting Fleet St influences. For its readership, however, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was an enigma from the very first edition, It was different to what Newcastle readers expected in their local papers, metropolitan in approach but provincial in content. The style was flamboyant and aggressive in marked contrast to the conservative broadsheet, the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, and the *Newcastle Sun*, a tabloid in format only. It relied more on pictorial content than accustomed newspapers. It attacked state government, local councils and authorities, church and other
hallowed institutions with the public interest fervour of the old *Truth*. Like *Truth*, it championed the 'battlers'.

**Impact and Influence**

One criteria of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s impact was the response of other regional newspapers to its innovations and promotions. At first the conservative *Newcastle Morning Herald* ignored the existence of the upstart newspaper. The inclusion in the new paper of four pages of sports results and a page of wedding photos a day earlier than the *Herald’s* Monday edition, necessarily prompted a re-assessment. As a concession, the handful of diminutive wedding photos in the *Herald* was increased to a full page of wedding pictures in the first twelve months of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s appearance. The racy style and presentation of the new “Sunday” had no impact on the traditional approach of Newcastle’s morning broadsheet whose style had been summarised succinctly by a News Ltd executive as “turgid”. Reacting to increased Sunday competition, the *Sun-Herald* increased its Newcastle content. The *Sunday Telegraph* in August 1960 introduced a special Sunday Newcastle edition, exposing the impact of the new paper by the basic technique of emulation. Without doubt, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s two rivals felt the sting of its competitive zeal, at least for part of the 20 months it was published.

The former editor-in-chief of *The Newcastle Herald*, John Lewis, evaluated the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* as “moderately successful in the Hunter area”. He described it as “a very interesting spin-off in the story of Australian journalism”.

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24 John Lewis, Personal Interview, 16 June, 1998
Roster dispute to stop some buses Monday

A dispute over rosters will stop some Newcastle Government Buses tomorrow.

The dispute in the first few days of August has led to a stoppage of work which is expected to continue for the next few days. This has resulted in the suspension of the Saturday service.

The Commissioner of Transport, Mr. J. Berry, has said that the strike is the result of a disagreement between the transport company and the union over the scheduling of work. The dispute has been going on for several weeks, and the company has not been able to find a solution.

The Commissioner has defended the decision to strike, saying that the company has had to make difficult decisions in order to maintain the safety of the workforce.

The union has accused the company of not being flexible in their approach to the dispute. They have also claimed that the company is not paying enough attention to the needs of the workforce.

The Commissioner has said that the company is not planning to increase the number of buses, but is instead looking at other options to try to resolve the dispute.

The Roster Dispute has been ongoing for several weeks, and it is expected to continue for some time. The company is not planning to increase the number of buses, but is instead looking at other options to try to resolve the dispute.

To compete with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, on August 18, 1960, the Sunday Telegraph commenced a ‘Special Newcastle District Edition’ with news, social, weddings, sports and more local photos. Some Newcastle advertising also appeared in later editions.
edition, was tried again twenty years later when the *Newcastle Sun* closed in 1980 and the *Sydney Sun* was still operating:

The *Sydney Sun* kept quite a substantial Newcastle staff from the old *Newcastle Sun*. They had a Newcastle wrap-around and they persisted with it for quite sometime. In fact the *Sydney Sun* had a similar masthead for its Newcastle edition to that of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in 1959.25

This suggests that the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* had an enduring influence over 20 years, and a respected place in the memory of proprietaries which had been its bitter rivals.

**Structure and Rationale**

For reasons outlined above, this thesis relies heavily on four primary sources: the 87 issues of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* (including 7 issues of the *Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial*, Newcastle district special) held by the author; the files of contemporary Australian newspapers; taped oral histories of employees and associates of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*; and the filed negatives of Hunter Photographic Agency's assignments undertaken for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* during its publication. Many reproductions of front and inside pages of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* have been used to illuminate analysis of style, content and design. Photographic reproductions have been employed extensively in Chapter Six which covers photojournalism and design.

Before outlining briefly the content of this thesis, attention should be drawn to an important point of style which may have become apparent already. It is important to differentiate clearly between the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* and

25 ibid
The last edition of *The Newcastle Sun* which closed on Friday, July 4, 1980.

The Newcastle edition of *The Sydney Sun* which commenced on Monday, July 8, 1980. Similar to the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* twenty years earlier, the printed red “Newcastle” was criticised as temporary.
the Sunday Mirror which was presented to the readership as a single package. Accordingly, Newcastle Sunday Mirror has been used throughout to designate the wraparound, and Sunday Mirror or core Sunday Mirror to designate the metropolitan newspaper inserted within it. This is a clumsy device, leading to much repetition of titles. It is considered essential, however, that the distinction be clear and unequivocal.

Following this introductory first chapter detailing the aims, objectives and methodology, Chapter 2 shapes a profile of the regional audience accessible to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. This is based on historical, demographic, economic and social factors, considered in the context of contemporary communications concepts of audience, media performance, and public interest.

The third chapter sets the historical context of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, looking particularly at the history and style of the Truth and Sportsman proprietaries and its legendary owners, John and Ezra Norton. Particular attention is given to the Sydney newspaper milieu of the late 1950’s, leading to the disastrous launch of the Sunday Mirror in late 1959, and the sale by Ezra Norton of Truth and Sportsman to John Fairfax via the shelf company, O’Connell Pty. Ltd. This was the catalyst for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s establishment in November 1959. Chapter Four describes, and analyses, the processes by which a news organisation was established in Newcastle with editorial, advertising, production and circulation aims to get a metropolitan-based newspaper to a regional audience.

Chapter Five is very largely devoted to the content of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, looking at it in terms of influences, style, diversities, and innovations. The dominant paradigms used are the traditional Truth and Sportsman model, based on sensationalism, investigation and public interest (Nortonism), counter-
poised against a softer, Fleet St model emanating particularly from the London
*Daily Mirror* and its Sunday version, the London *Sunday Pictorial* (Fleet St
*tabloidism*). An extended content analysis is made of the 87 front pages of the
*Newcastle Sunday Mirror* and its periphrastic, short-lived successor, the
*Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial*, Newcastle District special, with the object of
teasing out these primary influences and other subsidiary factors.

Chapter Six focuses on the pictorial coverage of the *Newcastle Sunday
Mirror*, emphasising historical and technical development of press photography
but also looking at the conceptual elements of the pictorial newspaper
(*pictorialism*) and how they are represented in the newspaper. Although never
designated specifically as a pictorial until its last few issues, the strong visual
content puts the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* firmly in this tradition. The
pictures for the newspaper were provided by a local press agency, Hunter
Photographic Agency, an innovation in conventional newspaper practice. The
chapter’s other major theme is the impact of design (layout in the traditional
newspaper terminology) on pictorial presentation, emphasising the inter-
relationship of pictures with typography and textual components.

Chapter Seven deals with the commercial side of the *Newcastle Sunday
Mirror*: the way in which its advertising services were organised, how advertising
revenues were generated, and the impact of the newspaper’s advertising on
Newcastle’s distinctive *audience*. Questions of newspaper promotion are
considered at some length, because the newspaper was extremely innovative
by Australian practice in devising attractive promotions, and exploiting them as
local news sources.

Chapter Eight considers the demise of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in the
context of Rupert Murdoch’s entry into Sydney news production by News
Ltd’s acquisition of the former mastheads of the defunct Truth and Sportsman. It assesses the impact of the newspaper, particularly its innovations, on how Australian newspapers evolved from the early 1960’s, emphasising particularly the Newcastle regional press. Finally, the thesis assesses the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* venture as a possible template for the subsequent development of *tabloidism* by Rupert Murdolch’s News Ltd company, both in Australia, London’s Fleet Street and the United States.
CHAPTER TWO

AUDIENCE AND METHOD

Introduction

Creating a profile for a largely-vanished newspaper audience is a difficult exercise, taking account of more than 40 years of substantial change in the Australian news media industry. It is necessary, though, to assemble a snapshot, however crude, of the potential audience of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror during its publication from November 1959 to July 1961. This chapter, therefore, has three broad objectives. Firstly, it seeks to apply theoretical audience concepts, as far as possible, to an audience specific in space and time; namely, Regional Newcastle from late 1959 to mid 1961. Secondly, it tries to outline the principal historical, social and economic factors which shaped this distinctive regional audience. Thirdly, it tries to provide a demographic profile of this audience so far as it can be defined from surviving statistical and commercial data.

Part 1: The Audience Phenomenon

According to McQuail, the historical roots of the audience phenomenon contribute much to an understanding of contemporary meanings of the concept. The initial audience was passive in intent, an assembly of spectators to watch an activity by participants: the first Olympics; Greek drama; the Roman Colosseum, public hangings and beheadings; bear-baiting. As audiences have grown more affluent and sophisticated, these pastimes have been extended to include opera, the theatre, cinema, the paralympics. The notion

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of *audience* as an aggregation of spectators is a pre-news media phenomenon although, of course, it has co-existed with news media and, in many ways, has been absorbed into news media structure and practice. The decisive impact in transforming a passive spectator *audience* was the invention of the printing press. This created the concept of *audience* as a consumer, firstly with books and then, from the early 17th Century, with newspapers and periodicals.

**Five Ages of the Press**

McQuail has defined five phases in the rise of print news media. From its inception, the newspaper had been an actual, and potential, adversary of established power, both in *audience* perception and its own. Thus, the newspaper appointed itself as representative of its *audience*:

> Potent images in press history refer to the punishment of printers, editors and journalists, the struggle for freedom to publish, the activities of newspapers in the fight for freedom, democracy and working class rights. Established authority has usually reciprocated the self-perception of the press and has often found it irritating and inconvenient, although often malleable and in the extreme very vulnerable to power.

McQuail’s second phase covered the emergence of a newspaper reading public, the phenomenon known broadly as *readership*. Access to the press extended beyond a literate, educated elite oriented towards government, politics, business and the learned professions. Rising literacy was an important source of *readership* although improved technology, lower prices, and popular demand for print news and entertainment were other important factors. Advertising had been an indispensable buttress to newspaper production from the beginning, and it flourished in conjunction with the growing *audience* and market penetration of the commercial press.

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2 ibid, p. 10
With newspaper readership established and growing, McQuail detected the rapid development of a "political" press, with newspapers founded by political parties and used by them for political promotion and advancement. McQuail acknowledged that this kind of newspaper was largely a European phenomenon, with only negligible influence after the 19th Century on the British and North American press. These were the principal influences for development of the Australian press which has been influenced only tangentially by this sort of "political press".

McQuail locates the origins of the modern newspaper in the emergence of what he calls the 19th Century "bourgeois newspaper", a "high if not a turning point" in press history: "... it has seemed to contribute most to our modern understanding of what a newspaper is or should be. ..." The "high bourgeois phase" of press history lasted from about 1840 to the turn of the 19th century. It was marked by the "triumph of liberalism", the ending of direct censorship in most countries, greater access to capital, emergence of a progressive entrepreneurial class, increasingly professional cadres of journalists and printers, enhanced distribution systems through better roads and new railway networks, rapid technological advance and vigorous social change. All of this contributed to the efficient development of a proliferating regional press and an increasingly profitable metropolitan press.

McQuail defined a number of attributes of this "elite" press. It was formally independent of the state and open vested interests. It was accepted increasingly as a major political and social institution. It stimulated professional journalism dedicated to objectivity, ethical standards and social responsibility. It provided copious opinion, and identified itself as a watchdog of the national interest. Current expectations of what constitutes a good newspaper reflect

3 ibid. p. 12
these ideals, providing a basis for criticisms of press performance perceived as deviating from the ideal; for example, partisanship or sensationalism.\(^4\)

The final phase of the rise of print media, as conceived by McQuail, was the commercialisation of the newspaper press. This does not mean that the press was not hitherto commercial. It was commercial virtually from its origins, depending on subscriptions and advertising even when ostensibly presented as an official government gazette. A more accurate description would be the rise of the mass newspaper. In McQuail’s influential formulation, the commercial newspaper was akin to the mass newspaper for two reasons: it operated as a profitable business enterprise controlled by a few firms; and it was heavily dependent on product advertising for its revenue. It was critical, therefore, for the commercial newspaper to build a mass readership. Thus, an increasingly monopolistic industry, mounting advertising volume, and the moulding of a mass readership influenced both newspaper structures and newspaper content. In particular, commercial aspirations and ethos diverted newspapers towards a populism dictated by the demands of a mass audience. Commercialisation produced a new kind of newspaper: “. . . lighter and more entertaining, emphasising human interest, more sensational in its attention to crime, violence, scandals and stars, having a very large readership in which lower incomes and education groups are over-represented.”\(^5\)

McQuail’s model of newspaper evolution is admirably suited to placing the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in a context of newspaper history and practice. In particular, it emphasises the dominance of popular newspaper forms and readership in many countries, particularly North America and Europe. McQuail also suggests that such newspapers assert status by clinging to the high-

\(^4\) ibid

\(^5\) ibid, pp. 12-13
bourgeois form, particularly by retaining emphasis on current political and economic reporting. Thus, a newspaper can be popular in approach and tabloid in format, yet remain a serious newspaper. It can avoid the stylistic excesses, sensational content and entertainment orientation identified with tabloidism. This judgment was certainly true of the Australian newspaper industry in the late 1950's when the *Sunday Mirror* was published. Two distinctive examples were the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* and the *Melbourne Sun News-Pictorial*, both substantial newspapers despite popular form and tabloid format. A feeble newspaper in popular form and tabloid format, the *Newcastle Sun*, also avoided tabloidism. While the existence of such newspapers is acknowledged, they are not germane as a genre to the analysis presented here. Crucial is the proposition that the *Sunday Mirror*, and particularly the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, reflected tabloidism in their ethos, format and content. (See Chapter 4)

At the other extreme was the *elite* press, the direct descendants of the "high bourgeois" press of the 19th Century.

**Mass Audience, Plural Audiences?**

A fundamental problem in discussing *audience* concepts is the processes by which *audiences* change from passive spectators to active participants. Or do they change at all? There are two possibilities. The *audience* is a collectivity formed in response to initiatives taken by the media. Alternatively, the *audience* is formed by initiatives taken through independently functioning social organisations. Thus, the *elite* press was formed by literate, professional, relatively affluent groups uniting and imposing a demand for information of politics, economics and society essential to preserving their *elite* status. Conversely, the popular newspapers build a much larger, diversely constituted collectivity by increasing orientation to tabloidism. A popular *audience*
emerged by bonding groups and individuals whose only affinity was the newspaper they bought. Audience as a concept has an inherent duality in that it may be formed by responding to news media, by responding to independently existing social forces, or by responding to both. At the height of mass newspaper production, heavily influenced by commercialisation and a relentless quest for readership, newspapers largely recruited and shaped audiences according to their own strategies and interests: “It reinforced the concept of audience as an aggregate defined by a set of interests rather than a social group able to act autonomously.”

Just when the peak of mass readership occurred varied according to country and news tradition. Thus, in the United States where television attracted a mass audience immediately after World War II, this peak was probably reached by the mid-1950’s. In the United Kingdom, where mass television audience evolved more tardily, mass newspaper readership was more sustained. Very likely, it did not peak until the 1970’s. In Australia, where television was not introduced until 1956, mass newspaper readership was under strain by the mid-1960’s. By the mid 1960’s television audience and reach were expanding rapidly. Already, it was issuing a stern challenge to the ascendancy of newspapers as the principal medium of mass communication in Australia. During the period the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was published (1959-61), newspaper circulation already was starting to level out and, at least, in sight of the peak. Indeed, it is possible that the spectacular failure of the Sunday Mirror’s launch in late 1958 was a portent of the inevitable. In retrospect, it seems that the predominance of the mass newspaper in Australia lasted from about the mid-1930’s until about the mid 1960’s. By then the newspaper

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6 ibid, p. 215
7 ibid, p. 217
ascendancy had started to buckle under television’s remorseless encroachment on the *mass audience*.

**Newspapers and Mass Communications**

The mass newspaper *audience* in Australia peaked at a time when increasing inroads were made into its traditional dominance by other mass media of communication. As noted earlier, this phenomenon was largely driven by electronic broadcasting, particularly television. The mass newspaper *audience* became part of a mass communications *audience* based on electronic broadcasting, particularly television. In later years, new technology saw further enhancement and diversification of the mass communications media. Newspapers declined in importance as the loci of the mass *audience*, although they retained influence, advertising power and a traditional *audience* of some significance, although ageing. The mass communications *audience* was vast, heterogenous, dispersed, anonymous, and lacking in social organisation. It could be localised up to a point but its effectiveness rested overwhelmingly on national content and *audience*. The mass communications *audience* was neither consistent nor sustained in its composition, fragmenting and coalescing in different configurations. Where once a national *audience* had been inconceivable, the mass media eroded local *audiences* at the expense of an homogenised *audience*. This took increasing toll of newspapers, but the process of decline was exceedingly drawn-out. Even by the end of the century, the long-proclaimed death of the newspaper was still far from fulfilment.

The advent of the mass communications media in Australia largely coincided with a revolution in ways of theorising and conceptualising media. The eventual product was a vast body of media theory, conceptual analysis, and
practical application known collectively as mass communications theory. The influence of mass communications theory on scholarly interpretation of media began to grow in Australia from the early 1960's. Mass communications theory has its place and value in the study of newspapers, particularly audience which has been the principal focus here. It would be fallacious, however, to engage in retrospective application of this theory to a regional Sunday newspaper published for 20 months in the late 1950's and early 1960's.

Newer approaches to mass media of communications have used different techniques and emphases of analysis, notably cultural studies and media studies approaches. Perversely, these often radical approaches sometimes supported traditional interpretations of key communications concepts such as audience. For example, Moores applied an ethnographical, culture-studies-based approach to audience interpretation, finding that there was no stable entity which could be isolated and identified as “the media audience”:


\[\text{. . . (A) single object that is unproblematically “there” for us to observe and analyse. The plural, audiences, is preferable - denoting several groups divided by their reception of different media and genres, or by social and cultural position - yet even this term presents conceptual difficulties. . .It becomes harder to specify exactly where media audiences begin and end. The conditions and boundaries of audiencehood are inherently unstable.}^8\]

Shorn of the jargon, this is essentially postulating that audiences concepts make more sense than audience concept. In short, better to speak of audiences for film, print, radio, television, or the internet, rather than affirm a cohesive mass media of communications audience. In recent years, McQuail has also acknowledged as acceptable a straightforward, commonsense approach to what are audiences, and what is an audience:

[Audience] also designates one branch of the subject matter in the study of mass communication and one main field of empirical research. It is a term that is understood by media practitioners and theorists alike and it has entered into everyday usage, recognised by media users as an unambiguous description of themselves.  

Thus, "audience" is used here as a plain, widely-intelligible term to designate the potential readership in the catchment area of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror between late 1959 and 1961. It means the ability of the newspaper to reach and attract readership within its factors of production, its ability to gather news and present it, to publish news and distribute it. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror venture was made at the beginnings of both the mass media communications era and the learning of mass communications learning revolution. Accordingly, it has been considered inappropriate to use in any but a passing sense, conceptual analysis largely designed for later media technology, production and merchandising.

Similar usage applies to media content, another major element of mass media communications theory. The emphasis here is on the production of content rather than its reception and impact on the reader, the widely used media effects in mass communications theory. Thus, little attention is given here to how newspapers are received, read and applied by readership. No data has survived from the Newcastle Sunday Mirror's consumption to warrant even a speculative analysis. In looking at the production of content, reliance has been placed on three relevant factors in McQuail's eight-pronged model of approaching content analysis. These are:

- the systematic performance, in terms of quantity or types of content of a media organisation;
- the producers and their intentions,

9 Denis McQuail Audience Analysis, Sage Publications, California, 1997, p.1
• the media organisation and its way of working.

The content analysis in Chapters 5 and 6 is focused narrowly on outcomes as stories, pictures and published pages as presented in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. The essential approach is set out in the first of McQuail’s three production emphases: systematic application of certain standard types of content by an individual media organisation. Chapter 3 also deals at some length with the publishers of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and how they approached gathering and presenting news content in the context of a major region. (This covers the essential ground of McQuail’s related second and third points above.) There is some limited consideration of content impact on audiences, but this is incidental rather than systematic.

One further key concept of mass communications theory and analysis has also been used, particularly in Chapter 7. The concept of media audience as a market is essentially a statement of the economic basis of mass newspaper production and distribution (or circulation). In simple terms, media producers compete with each other to sell a commodity to a potential readership. Potential and actual readerships constitute markets. Such markets can be targeted either as integrated towns, cities, regions, states and nations. Or they can be directed at demographics, a data-based blueprint of an audience segment such as baby boomers, women in their early 20’s, male retirees from the workforce, pre-teenagers. Newspaper marketing is the principal revenue foundation of newspapers - the unit purchase price and paid advertising. Neither source by itself usually suffices to sustain a mass circulation newspaper. As the term market is used here, McQuail’s definition of audience as market is helpful: “an aggregate of potential consumers with a known social economic

profile at which a medium or message is directed.\textsuperscript{11} Chapter 7 considers the stock commercial aspects of mass newspaper circulation and advertising, but looks particularly at how a newspaper promotes itself and its news to the readership. This promotion function is largely neglected in mass communications studies.

**Part II: Newcastle – An Historical Snapshot: 1797-1961**

Although Newcastle is the second city of New South Wales, having a history only a decade or so shorter than Sydney, it has been overshadowed by the much larger city. Like Sydney, Newcastle emerges in the documented history of European settlement as an entry in Captain James Cook's journal for 1770. Cook described Newcastle's signature landmark, Nobby's, as a "small lump of an island lying close to the shore". Cook also noted the great natural harbour of Port Stephens, north of Newcastle and, in the late 1950's, still on the fringe of regional Newcastle.\textsuperscript{12}

Newcastle's origins are to be sought in a combination of punishment and coal. British colonial policy in the late 18th Century dictated that Sydney was founded as a penal settlement. Almost ten years after the establishment of the Port Jackson colony, on 9 September, 1797 an exploration party lead by Lieutenant John Shortland discovered coal at Newcastle.\textsuperscript{13} In pursuit of runaway convicts, Shortland explored the coastline north of Sydney and landed at the mouth of a "a very fine river" which he named after Governor John Hunter.\textsuperscript{14} With his report, Shortland included an "eye sketch" which he made during his brief stay:

\textsuperscript{11} ibid, p. 221.
\textsuperscript{13} Alan Farrelly and Ron Morrison, *Newcastle*, Rigby Limited, Adelaide, 1968, p.8
\textsuperscript{14} Quoted in Eric Lingard (ed), *New Sights for the Newcastle-Hunter Region*, Newcastle Chamber of Commerce, Newcastle, 1978, p.3
Newcastle and harbour highlighting the famous landmark, Nobbys, and the breakwater. The photo also shows the surrounding beaches and the central business district. (Pic taken in 1960s)
Vessels from 50 to 250 tons may load there with ease and completely landlocked. I dare say in a little time this river will be a great acquisition to this settlement.\textsuperscript{15}

The mouth of the 'Hunter was charted by Shortland and the coal discovered “so near the waterside as to be conveniently shipped” became the foundation of Newcastle’s settlement and industrial might.\textsuperscript{16} Several good seams of coal were discovered, and convicts were assigned to mine the coal. In October 1801, Newcastle was proclaimed as a settlement in the County of Northumberland. According to Governor King, these names were chosen because there was “some analogy to those places in England”.\textsuperscript{17} Presumably, this meant a resemblance in geographic and mineral configuration with northern England, particularly regional Northumberland. This settlement was short-lived, abandoned in 1802, but the insurrection by Irish convicts at Castle Hill near Sydney in 1804 brought its re-establishment as a punitive institution. Newcastle gained a reputation as a brutal outpost of the convict system, comparable in severity with Norfolk Island.\textsuperscript{18} Coal mining was resumed, and regular shipments made to Sydney. Mining technology and techniques methods were primitive, producing only poor-quality coal for many years.

Newcastle was ill-favoured by nature with the river breaking near the mouth into channels through marsh, morass, low-lying mud islands, and mangroves. This restricted coastal expansion to the north, and fostered a preoccupation with water supply and drainage extending through much of the city’s history. According to Docherty, lowness was the outstanding feature of the site, particularly the estuarine harbour:

\textsuperscript{15} Quoted in Eric Lingard (ed), ibid
\textsuperscript{17} Quoted in Alan Farrelly and Ron Morrison, op.cit, p.11
\textsuperscript{18} J.C. Docherty, *Newcastle, the Making of an Australian City*, Hale & Iremonger, Sydney, 1983, p.2
the harbour was prone to silting; as well its [narrow] entrance was bad enough to pose a hazard to shipping. . . .In short, the harbour demanded a level of investment far beyond local resources. . . .Successive governments invested heavily in improving the harbour for the sake of the coal trade and, later, heavy industry. . . .More than anything else, the poor harbour prevented Newcastle from ever becoming a serious rival to Sydney.19

In the early 1820’s, the spread of settlement away from Port Jackson and the Cumberland Plain brought free settlers into the lower Hunter Valley. For many years, expansionary settlement by-passed Newcastle, which was declared a free-town in 1824. Morpeth, on the Hunter River, near the limit of navigable water for sea traffic, was the preferred port. Development of Morpeth spurred the growth of nearby Maitland, near the Lower Hunter Valley. Maitland soon eclipsed Newcastle as the developmental hub of the region. By 1856, Maitland’s population was more than four times that of Newcastle’s 1534. According to Docherty, Newcastle grew by only 157 between 1841 and 1854.

Coal shaped Newcastle’s topography, economy and society through the 19th Century and remained an important influence through much of the 20th Century. Early development of the coal mines passed to the Australian Agricultural Company, formed in London in 1824 to engage in pastoral enterprises in New South Wales. Instead, it monopolised Newcastle’s coal trade until the late 1840’s. Its operations were based on control of government coalmines, with a land grant covering much of inner Newcastle. It surrendered its monopoly in 1847, and rival companies moved into coal-bearing sites.. They got freehold title and built settlements for their workforce on nearby allotments. A constellation of dispersed mining townships formed in a dispersed pattern around the historic urban areas adjoining the Newcastle port. Lack of access to clean water and sanitation were further impediments to Newcastle’s growth.

19 ibid, p. 2
Gradually, Newcastle overcame the disadvantages of locale which had stunted its early growth. A direct rail link with Sydney in 1889 improved communications and commercial links between the two cities, establishing a strategic base for participating in the rapid development of the lower Hunter Valley. A new railway up the valley by-passed Morpeth port, which had taken a major share of freight and passenger revenue to the region. With comparative advantage reversed, Newcastle soon supplanted Morpeth as principal regional port. The strength of coal-mining underpinned the urban growth of the city, by 1890 sustaining every part of Newcastle city. Mining also produced economic and social distortions leaving a difficult legacy for later urban development. It bequeathed a regional city substantial in area but with low population density, its radial pattern of dispersed townships gradually moving together was a nightmare for profitable public transport. Much of the available urban land for development was held by the mining companies and a handful of powerful local families. According to an Australasian atlas published in 1886, Newcastle in the late 19th Century was famed rather for its commercial importance than its beauty: “Utility is the foremost consideration, and the whole city is eloquent of its staple product (coal).”

If coal drove Newcastle’s development in the 19th Century, steel provided the propellant for industrial growth through the 20th Century. Incorporated in 1885 as a mining company at Broken Hill in far western NSW, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) moved to Newcastle in 1913 and opened its first steelworks. In March, 1915, the blast furnace was “blown in” and the first steel was streamed on April 9. BHP did well from World War I production although too late to catch the full momentum. By 1919, BHP and the new State Dockyard nearby had a combined labour force of 7,300. In the early 1920’s, the steel industry was reorganised by Essington Lewis, BHP’s

21 The Broken Hill Proprietary Company Limited, B.H.P. 75 years, BHP, Victoria, 1960, p.18
BHP steelworks at Port Waratah with the island reclamation scheme in the background. (Pic taken in 1960s)
legendary steelmaster. Lewis expanded production to meet a buoyant demand, and encouraged overseas firms to establish steel processing plants. He acquired collieries and ships and, by the 1930s, was producing some of the world’s cheapest steel. The steelworks and steel fabricating industries generated sound urban growth, with strong demand from steelworkers in search of homes near their plant. Housing of steelworkers and their families turned the well-to-do residential enclave of Mayfield into a working class suburb of nearly 9,000 inhabitants by 1921. By 1929 virtual ‘steel’ suburbs had also emerged at Waratah and New Lambton close to the plant and dockyards. The almost spiritual status of the ‘steelworks’ was given symbolic expression when an industrial church service replaced the traditional harvest festival sheaves with steel products.

**The Population Mix**

Coal and steel formed the spine of Newcastle’s economy over more than 130 years, moulding a peculiar population mix rather different from the norms of Australian demography. Borrowed names may have had something to do with it. As noted above, Newcastle and Northumberland had traditional affinities with mining and heavy industries in the old country. As the gold booms of the mid-19th Century petered out, miners looked for steady jobs. Immigrants from British mining towns tended to follow kith and kin who had taken the plunge earlier. For example, miners from Ayrshire in Scotland immigrating to Queensland in the 1870’s and 1880’s sought out the mines where Ayrshire miners had settled earlier, such as the Burrum and Gympie mines in Central Queensland. Other segments of the Scottish diaspora of the late 19th Century followed their fellows to Newcastle. English and Welsh miners moved to the Newcastle fields drawn by similar ties of family and community. The impact of

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22 ibid, p.74
Welsh miners was evident in names of native townships such as Cardiff and Swansea, and in the flourishing of folkways such as the eisteddfod. Docherty even suggested that the most enduring legacy of British immigration was, perhaps the large number of people with Celtic racial characteristics, especially red hair and fair skin: "Far more than most parts of Australia, Newcastle's people have sprung from British stock, a fact which helps explain some social features of the modern city."\(^{24}\)

With high proportions of Scottish, Welsh and English, there was a lower representation of Irish-born than in many other areas of colonial Australia where heavy immigration occurred. This may have been a cumulative impact. If early immigration rates of Irish were low, then there would have been fewer links of kinship and community to lure the Irish to Newcastle. It might also be argued that Ireland was not a major coal producer and lacked the bonds and traditions of mining communities. Much of the Irish settlement in the region by-passed Newcastle and went to Maitland or to smaller farming communities in the Hunter.

These quirkish patterns of immigration and settlement also influenced the religious patterns of Newcastle society. The non-conformist creeds were well represented, particularly Methodism, with its north of England origins, and Baptists and Congregationalists from the Welsh valleys. Conversely, Catholicism was under-represented relative to the whole of Australia. Much of the Catholic Irish inflow went to Maitland, where the first Catholic diocese was established, not Newcastle, and the imbalance between Catholic and Protestant continued well into the 20th Century.

\(^{24}\) Docherty, op. cit., p 16.
War and Militancy

As Australia's leading industrial city, Newcastle inevitably played a crucial role in World War 11 (1939-45), although one that was studded with industrial conflict. Apart from the stresses of war, including a shelling by the Japanese Navy, social and industrial unrest was common. While high productivity was mostly achieved in providing the sinews of war, frequent disputes erupted over wages and conditions:

...the peak of raw steel production occurred in 1941 and the northern colliers reached their highest output in 1942, but in that year 226,000 working days were lost in disputes and 600,000 days were lost in 1944 from the same cause...

Despite serious industrial problems, the unique circumstances of war-time production opened opportunities for social betterment through higher incomes and greater participation of women in the workforce.

The immediate aftermath of the war was disastrous for coal mining, and the coalfields were riven by dissension and lengthy strikes. Both the Miners' Federation and the Federated Ironworkers' Association which covered steelworkers had periods of predominantly communist leadership. In 1949, a huge strike in the Hunter lasted seven weeks, a gigantic national disaster which forced the National Labor Government to put troops into the coalfields. This strike "created a national burden of endurance and deprivation which the nation would take a long time to forget, or forgive". The enormous bitterness engendered lasted for many years, eroding the long-established traditions and close-knit organisations that mining had brought to Newcastle.

26 Brian Cogan, quoted in John Turner, op. cit., p.109
The port of Newcastle played a crucial role in the industrial development of postwar Newcastle, despite the problems of site, marshland, channels, and silting which had long reduced its effectiveness. After disastrous floods in 1949 and 1955, to remain competitive the harbour was deepened, breakwaters extended, and silt removed to maintain the port's competitiveness.\(^{27}\) Despite its shortcomings, the port was ranked third behind Sydney and Melbourne in national productivity.\(^{28}\) The port was one of the bright spots in a generally mixed pattern for Newcastle industry as war-time production moved back to the demands of an orthodox economy.

Total industrial employment rose sharply after the war but levelled out by the early 1950's. Both male and female employment also peaked, most notably for women whose job opportunities had risen strongly during the war. BHP employment actually fell slightly during the war and remained steady in the years immediately after. The most buoyant sector was manufacturing industry which grew steadily between 1950 and 1960, the decade of the "long boom". Although Newcastle benefited from the boom, the population growth and the buoyant national economy through the 1950's, it lagged behind the major cities and other important regions where the boom was much more pronounced. In particular, retail sales figures suggests that the City of Newcastle declined gradually in economic prosperity between 1949 and the early 1960's. While the Lake Macquarie local government area (the other major component of regional Newcastle), was not booming during these years, retail sales figures indicate perceptible growth.\(^{29}\)

With its traditional resource and industrial base languishing, Newcastle could reply on a strong maritime industry, although built on a second-rate port, and

\(^{27}\) John Turner, op.cit., p.120  
\(^{29}\) Statistical material here has been abstracted from tables in Docherty, op. cit., particularly at page 69
an improving but still tentative manufacturing sector to build its future prosperity. It had to look to growth industries, particularly merchandising in services, and to diversification of its industrial base. The region entered the tertiary education sector in December 1951 when the Newcastle University College was opened as a branch of the New South Wales University of Technology. (Previously Newcastle had been served by a technical college which offered a range of diplomas.) After the disastrous Hunter Valley floods of 1955 the Hunter Valley Research Foundation was founded to gather regional data to allow proper planning and utilisation of resources. These were innovations of some encouragement, although not producing short-term results.

**Sydney and the Bush**

Without question, the Newcastle ethos has been diminished by an historically querulous relationship with the great Sydney conurbation encroaching constantly on its southern borders. That it has been able to resist this insidious influence and retain a distinctive community and culture has been a measure of the city's resilience. Turner has detected in the Newcastle experience an "eternal distrust of Sydney interests":

More than mere prejudice must lie behind such an attitude. To nearly all Novocastrians, Sydney is the hated, self-centred place down south which never recognises the value of this, the second city of New South Wales. It is the source of all the city's ills, taking (particularly revenue) but never giving, or at least never giving enough. It is not only the State government which is at fault, but the head offices of companies which own many of Newcastle's major businesses. The fact that many of those companies, particularly BHP, are headquartered in Melbourne rarely seems to strike the Newcastle consciousness.  

30 Alan Farrelly and Ron Morrison, op. cit., p.110
31 Quoted in John Turner, op.cit, p.119
Was there ever an alternative to Newcastle’s subordination to Sydney? One possibility was the New State Movement which sought from 1915 to create a northern state in New South Wales. The movement was essentially agrarian and was extremely reluctant to embrace Newcastle either as its port or its capital. Clearly the “large industrial, Labor-voting city” was a concern to the politically conservative, rural communities. Newcastle, on the other hand, showed little affinity with the New State movement, ultimately rejecting its pretensions decisively at a referendum in 1967.

Newcastle Spirit

The Newcastle ethos, as filtered through the prism of history, is difficult to capture. It would be wrong to paint a picture of unrelieved gloom. Newcastle has not been a joyless city, nor has it been madly hedonistic. It has savoured its pleasures and mostly endured stoically long periods of privation. It has never subsided into despair or hopelessness. For more than 150 years it has been an important international port. This has given it a vibrancy offsetting in some measure the grim, grainy textures of the mines and mills. Its contribution to the nation’s sporting heroes, cultural identities, science, culture and scholarship has been substantial.

Newcastle life has been enhanced, and softened through its history by ready access to splendid physical and recreational resources, great sweeps of beach and coastline, saltwater lake systems, verdant vineyards, a fine river and its noble valley, towering mountain ranges. Its communal life has been highly localised because of urban growth largely deriving from the gradual convergence of traditional mining villages and the city core into a “Greater Newcastle”. It has produced, nonetheless, a community and civic culture with

32 ibid
(above) Telephoto picture showing Newcastle race course, Hamilton and Mayfield industrial area with BHP in the background.
(below left) Portrait of a mineworker contrasting with (below right) the vineyards of Pokolbin in the Hunter Valley illustrating the diversity of Newcastle.
much richness and diversity. Its older public buildings, churches, residential
districts and cityscapes are among the finest in Australia.

With all of these qualities, Newcastle has earned its reputation as a hard city,
in some ways insular and with an ingrained resentment over meagre returns
from distinguished contributions. In 1900, Alexander Lindsay, a resident of
Merewether, noted that the population was comparatively poor. Certainly,
Newcastle entered the 20th Century in often dire poverty, even by the
standards of the time. Even at its most prosperous, the city has been tinged
with poverty. It suffered cruelly in the great Depression of the 1930’s. Indeed,
it is arguable whether any part of Australia did it tougher. In the late 1950’s,
the city was relatively affluent but still conscious of past neglect, exploitation
and deprivation. According to one of its sons, Jim Docherty, who wrote a fine
study of Newcastle’s social evolution, poverty and injustice were endemic in
Newcastle’s memory and consciousness:

Ultimately Newcastle’s history raises the question of the equitable
distribution of resources. Since the late 1850’s, Newcastle and its
people have contributed mightily to Australia’s economic
advancement but have received less than their fair share in return.
Outsiders, both public and private, have treated Newcastle like a
private possession. They have reaped the rewards and they have
decided what sort of a place it should be. 33

Certainly, the traditional Australian dichotomy of them and us has been
inculcated into the Newcastle culture more deeply than in any other Australian
industrial city. Unquestionably, this has produced attitudes of divisiveness and
bitterness. It has also produced a reliance on collectivism which has been a
saving grace for the city in hard times. The major expression of this collectivism
has been Newcastle’s staunch trade unionism. This has committed it politically
to the Australian Labor Party, a loyalty which has rarely faltered, even though

33 J.C. Docherty, op.cit., p.166.
the ALP has often been neglectful of Newcastle. Collectivist principle has also been exemplified in support for co-operative institutions such as building societies and, particularly, co-operative shopping services. Indeed, an adherence to co-op retailing of food, clothing, furniture and household goods survived into the 1960’s. (See Chapter 7)

As Newcastle approached the 1960’s, the main glimmer of new economic opportunity lay in tourism. As noted above, there was considerable local tourism, mainly focused on the saltwater Lake Macquarie and the beaches. This was based largely on access by local families to holiday shacks either through ownership, rental or co-operative clubs and societies. Favourable opportunities for tourism were also emerging in the traditional viticulture and wine-making of the Hunter Valley, in the late 1950’s only little touched by contemporary marketing. During the 1950’s, the rapid development of Florida-style tourism on the Gold Coast of south Queensland had shown what might be accomplished. Estate developments were beginning to sprout along the coast and around the lakes.

Overall, though, as the Australian economy began to slow down as the “long boom” evaporated towards the end of the 1950’s, the prospects for Newcastle were unprepossessing. While the region had shared in the economic growth of the 1950’s, it had done so in a subdued way, more as a residual of growth than a prime beneficiary. By 1960, the national economy was moving towards recession, the curbing of inflationary pressures hinging on credit restraint. The so-called “credit squeeze” slowed economic activity rather more dramatically than intended. As usual, Newcastle suffered disproportionately in the subsequent recession which almost destroyed the Menzies federal government. From the viewpoint of economic growth and vitality, 1959-60 was the worst time between 1945 and the mid 1970’s to start a newspaper in Newcastle.
Part III: Profiling an Historic Audience

Mapping Australia’s national demographic has rested heavily on the cumulative impact of taking every seven years a national census of Australian population and housing. Less formal public and private collection, and analysis, of survey information has been used to complement the formal census data. Large data banks, both public and private sector, have been built on which regional and district profiles can be assembled down to street, neighbourhood and individual levels. A pertinent example is the massive data collection undertaken by the principal political parties for electioneering purposes. Private corporations have access to substantial data bases in building consumer profiles and devising marketing strategies. Apart from mass polling and surveys which provide quantitative data in bulk, qualitative research employs small focus groups whose members’ attitudes are probed by skilled analysts. This research permits a more subjective approach to popular attitudes, experience and perceptions which can illuminate the anonymity of sheer numbers. The principal outcome is the delineation of a national audience which, in turn, can be broken down into state, regional and local components. The only major restraint on Australian demographic analysis of this kind is the protection of privacy.

This research has established the main parameters of the broad Australian audience in the early 21st Century: the sheer weight and dominance of the major mass-population metropolitan areas; the prominence of the baby-boom generation (born between 1945 and about 1960) in aggregate consumption and public policy; the impact of increasing affluence and concomitant lifestyle consumption; the skilled analysis of social and economic data into consumer profiles now considered essential to successful product launches, including
(above) General view of the central business district at the east end of Newcastle, with the red arrow indicating the premises of Mirror Newspapers at the corner of Scott and Pacific Streets.

(below) An aerial view of the Newcastle business district and urban sprawl. Both pictures were taken in the sixties.
newspapers and magazines. With the rapid ageing of the baby boomers, demographic analysis has shifted to their successors and inheritors: Generation X, the first generation of Australians to be heavily influenced by electronic news and entertainment; the dramatic changes in taste, outlook and behaviour of the subsequent generation (Generation Y), particularly the impact of the Internet and World Wide Web; the transforming effect on all demographics of decisive changes in media technology and delivery, including news media.

What such research sadly failed to account for, at least until very recently, has been the important residual elements beyond the predominant factors of audience composition, the metropolitan areas of concentrated population, particularly the baby boom and succeeding generations. This residual audience broadly includes, with some duplication, the following: provincial, regional and rural areas; older generations pre-baby boomers; ethnic and other cultural minorities. Even within the majority standard groupings, of course, there are important elements of non-conformity with predominant norms. The analysis that follows is directed to an important residual audience, the people of Newcastle during the 20 months in 1959-61 when the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was published. An attempt is made to profile Newcastle demographics during this period, using data contemporary to that period.

Looking Back

With the manifest difficulties in constructing a profile of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s potential audience, there is one extremely fortuitous circumstance. As noted above, the national census of population and housing is taken every seven years. A national census was taken in 1954 and again in 1961. This provides benchmarks for analysis of economic growth and demographics over a seven-year period. The basic census units used here are the Local Government
 Areas (LGA’s) of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie, the combination of the two forming Regional Newcastle, the broad geographic and demographic concept used through this thesis.

It should be emphasised here that the definition of Regional Newcastle excludes three local government areas which, today, would be considered part of a broadly defined Greater Newcastle. These are the mining cities of Maitland and Cessnock, and the coast and hinterland centred on Port Stephens north of the Hunter River. Thus, an aggregate population of some 74,000 has been excluded. (Maitland 27,353, Cessnock City 35,281, and Port Stephens local government area 12,134.34) Certainly, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* circulated in these areas. Furthermore, the newspapers sporadically targeted *audiences* in them with local news stories, including Page 1 stories. It was considered, however, that at the time each of these three areas had a local identity and established populations different in composition from the configurations of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie outlined below. Maitland and Cessnock also had well established newspapers, particularly Maitland with its daily *Maitland Mercury*. Living patterns and demographics in both cities were still heavily influenced by the coal mining industry. Although starting to show signs of growth, the Port Stephens area was still lightly populated and with strong rural elements. Thus, their inclusion could distort the primary emphases of the demographics in the contiguous, relatively homogenous areas of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie analysed below. As far as can be judged from the meagre evidence available, it seems likely that sales of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in these areas were limited. For all of these reasons, they have not been considered part of Regional Newcastle for this 1961 Census analysis.

In 1961, the established LGA of Newcastle and the rapidly-growing Lake Macquarie LGA represented a coherent, acceptable conception of Newcastle as it existed in the consciousness of its citizens. The analysis is based on official census data, with specific assistance from the statistical analysis of Docherty. This valuable compendium of statistical data also uses NSW census data extending back to the 1880's. Some limited reference is also made to subsidiary statistical data from other sources. Because the 1961 census was held only a few months after the Newcastle Sunday Mirror ceased publication, it provides a demographic profile representative of the potential audience and readership of the newspaper during its 20 months existence. In short, it unlikely that the demographics of the Newcastle region changed significantly between November 1959 and July 1961. When the 1961 census was taken, the infamous “Credit Squeeze” of the early 1960's was well advanced. Unquestionably, this would have had an impact on the jobs and household incomes of Newcastle people. Although this should be taken into account in assessing economic data, the “squeeze” would not have influenced basic population and residential data in any significant way.

**Regional Newcastle — the Demographics**

In aggregate, the 1961 population of Regional Newcastle comprised 142,700 in Newcastle and 92,000 in Lake Macquarie. This represents a total population of about 234,000. The overall figure for urban Newcastle in the 1961 census statistics was about 209,000, a significant discrepancy. This was due to census use of a Newcastle Urban Area classification representing Newcastle city and Lake Macquarie as a “single urban unit”. In short, it eliminates areas not considered “urban”. Very likely, this bloc of some 25,000 missing residents comprised residents in developing beach resorts, the fringes of Lake Macquarie,

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and smaller pockets of rural settlement. In terms of newspaper readership, the combination of the LGA’s is more useful to the purposes of this thesis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City of Newcastle:</th>
<th>1947</th>
<th>1954</th>
<th>1961</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adamstown</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>6.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Carrington</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hamilton</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>17.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lambton</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Lambton</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>12.6</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Merewether</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle City</td>
<td>15.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>11.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stockton</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallsend</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>16.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Waratah</td>
<td>25.2</td>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wickham</td>
<td>11.9</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>8.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total City of Newcastle</td>
<td>127.1</td>
<td>134.1</td>
<td>142.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Macquarie Shire</td>
<td>42.3</td>
<td>64.2</td>
<td>92.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Affected by the transfer of part of Lower Hunter Shire to City of Newcastle in 1958

**Source:** Published and unpublished data from the Census of Population and Housing quoted in J C Docherty, *Newcastle, The Making of an Australian City*, 1983, p.169

In total, the population of Regional Newcastle grew by about 36,000 between 1954-61 an increase of about 18%. The bulk of this increase, however, occurred in Lake Macquarie, from about 64,000 to 92,000, or just under 50%. This growth rate had been much the same for Lake Macquarie between 1947-1961, By comparison Newcastle had grown by only 7,000 (about 5%) between 1954 and 1961, and by only 15,000 (about 10%) between 1947-1961. Taking into
account a transfer of population from the Lower Hunter LGA to Newcastle in 1958, the overall population of the city of Newcastle fell by just over 3000 between 1954 and 1961. Plainly population growth in Newcastle was slowing down, and starting to boom in Lake Macquarie.

Some crude measure of social class can be made by examining the traditional socio-economic composition of the city of Newcastle. (Such analysis is rather more difficult for Lake Macquarie LGA because its development was much more recent, and patterns of relative affluence and predominant working population are difficult to identify. The traditional holiday and transient elements of settlement here also make such analysis more difficult.) By a somewhat arbitrary process, seven suburbs of Newcastle LGA have been designated as predominantly workers’ suburbs, (Carrington, Lambton, New Lambton, Stockton, Wallsend, Waratah/Mayfield and Wickham). Two were designated as professional and/or relatively affluent suburbs: Adamstown and Hamilton. Split 50/50 to each category were Newcastle City and Merewether.

On this basis, the broadly-defined workers’ suburbs had 64% of the city population in 1961, almost twice the population of the more affluent suburbs. These proportions were much the same as for the previous census in 1954, taking account of decline in the residential population of the inner city, and some dwindling in residential population of long established suburbs, both workers and affluent.

The strength of an overwhelmingly industrial working-class core within the traditional boundaries of Newcastle suggests a strong audience potential for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror as conceived with some haste in late 1959. This core was not as pronounced in the Lake Macquarie Shire whose traditional elements were some mining and industrial employment such as electricity generation, but
also farming and traditional tourism. The substantial population growth in Lake Macquarie at this time reflected the downward thrust of urban Newcastle as well as these traditional elements. It also perhaps indicated the first glimmers of commuter growth based on the motor car, enabling new settlers to live on acreage and work in the city.

In terms of place of birth, some 6.1% of Newcastle people in 1961 were of British birth, and 88% were Australian born. These proportions were much the same as in 1954. This suggests that, at most, the proportion of non-British migrants to Newcastle after the war was rather low. In Lake Macquarie, the percentage of British born was a little higher (7.4%) and that of Australian-born a little lower (86.9%). This suggests that the proportion of non-British migration was higher overall, but not significantly. It is reasonable to conclude that Regional Newcastle as a whole was strongly British in origin.

With religious affiliations, the proportion of Anglicans declined by 2.1% between 1954-1961 (from 39.3% to 37.2%). Catholics rose by 2% (20.9% to 22.9%). This reflected long-term trends of gradual increment in Catholic population and gradual decline in Anglican. Methodists were the other prominent religion, showing a dwindling of 0.6% to 14.9% in 1961. The pattern of Anglican affiliation was much the same in Lake Macquarie, but the Catholics were significantly lower, although growing (15.4% in 1954 to 17.3% in 1961). Methodists were steady at about 17%. In Regional Newcastle, the overall proportion of Catholics was below the Australian average. The religious orientation was awesomely Protestant, awesomely so in some respects.

Natural increase (excess of births over deaths) in Newcastle was relatively stable at about 10.5% in 1954-61. With a net population increase of 8% in the same period, there was a net migration out of the City of about 2%, (Net increase
minus natural increase). This confirms the trend of the previous period (1947-54) that the population of Newcastle was tapering. It also links up with a massive net migration movement to Lake Macquarie of 19.2% in 1954-61. Natural increase in Lake Macquarie (8.6 %) was lower than Newcastle but had grown by 3.5% from 1947-54. In terms of sex ratio (number of males per 100 females), Newcastle in 1954-61 showed a preponderance of women (83.7 men/100 women). The proportion of men, however, had risen significantly from 1947-54. In Lake Macquarie men were more strongly represented ( 107.8 men/100 women) and this ratio had risen from 1947-54.

Employment and Housing

In 1961, just over half of the Newcastle city population (54%) were in the workforce. In short, 85.4% of men and 24.6% of women had jobs. These percentages had changed little from 1954. Total participation in Lake Macquarie was lower (51.1%) but had increased by about 1% since 1954. Male participation increased only marginally to 82.5%. Female participation at 18.6% was well below Newcastle, but it had increased by over 2% since 1954. In Regional Newcastle as a whole, about 80% of females were not in the workforce. Males had an overpowering responsibility as breadwinners.

In Newcastle city only 4.5% of the labour force could be classed as employers. This proportion was virtually the same as 1947. This entrepreneurial and managerial presence increased slightly in Lake Macquarie to 3.5%. About 89% of the workforce in each LGA were employees. (Regrettably, the available figures do not allow any further breaking down into types of work). Unemployment was high in Newcastle (3.2%) and Lake Macquarie (4.1%). These levels were well above the generally low unemployment rates to which Australians had been accustomed in the “long boom” of the 1950’s. Since
1954 unemployment had almost tripled in both Newcastle city and Lake Macquarie. A significant part of this increment would have flowed from the "credit squeeze" policies applied by the Federal Government from late 1960. It is a reasonable conclusion, though, that economic activity overall had been slowing down before the credit squeeze, with unemployment probably peaking in 1959-60.

The strength of manufacturing industry was evident in Newcastle, where it absorbed 47.3% of the workforce in 1961, down slightly from 1954. Manufacturing was growing substantially in Lake Macquarie although lower than Newcastle. (31.8% - 37.3% in 1954-61). Mining employment was dwindling in Newcastle, from an already low base. (2.7% - 1.5% in 1954-61). The decline in the mining industry in Lake Macquarie was of staggering proportions, more than half of the workforce vanishing in 1954-61. (From 24.3% to 11.8%). Evidently, a major re-employment of the workforce from mining to other employment occurred in Lake Macquarie over these years. This is partly accounted for by increased manufacturing employment and rising unemployment. It is reasonable to speculate, however, that about 4% found jobs in tourism and other developmental and service industries.

A sectoral analysis of the workforce for a broadly-defined Hunter Valley workforce, also based on the 1961 Census and prepared by the Hunter Valley Research Foundation, also throws some interesting light on aggregate employment in Regional Newcastle. This analysis is presented in full in the table below. It must be stressed that only the first five locales listed are relevant to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror's target audience of Regional Newcastle. (Newcastle, Cessnock, Maitland, Lake Macquarie, and Port Stephens.) The remaining eight census districts constitute an Upper Hunter Valley region. They are included here for contextual and comparative reasons, particularly the predominance of the Lower Hunter in the regional economic configuration.
Further, as noted above, the analysis here has largely focussed on the two major census areas of Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. Cessnock, Maitland and Port Stephens have been excluded from the principal analysis here for reasons explained above. Clearly, Newcastle and Lake Macquarie dominate the workforce as analysed here. The inclusion of the three areas of peripheral audience does give some indication of their relative weight vis a vis the substantial core audience concentrated in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie. In terms of total workforce, the peripheral group (26,202) was about 30% of the joint Newcastle/Lake Macquarie workforce (88,274).

Generally, these figures support the profile of overwhelming manufacturing and service employment in Newcastle, and the growing might of these sectors in Lake Macquarie, although with a significant residual mining segment. Significant mining employment survived also in the traditional coal-city of Cessnock. In Maitland, however, the distribution of employment followed a similar sectoral pattern to Newcastle particularly. This suggests that much of audience analysis applicable to Newcastle would also be relevant to Maitland. It is problematic, however, that this would justify treating Maitland as an extension of the Newcastle audiences. Important regional differences remain, particularly the tradition of independent newspaper production firmly established in Maitland Cessnock, however, is markedly different with a solid mining base although with overtones of strengthening sectorial employment in service industries particularly. The aggregate numbers for the Port Stephens census district running along the coast north of Newcastle are too small to draw any significant conclusions. The predominance of service industries employment, however is worth noting.
### Sectoral Composition of the Hunter Valley Workforce
#### Census at 30th June, 1961

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Primary</th>
<th>Mining</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Tertiary</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Total Workforce</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Newcastle</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>966</td>
<td>23,252</td>
<td>33,195</td>
<td>57,413</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cessnock</td>
<td>3,138</td>
<td>501</td>
<td>3,639</td>
<td>2,909</td>
<td>5,258</td>
<td>11,806</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Maitland</td>
<td>244</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>951</td>
<td>3,625</td>
<td>5,409</td>
<td>9,985</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lake Macquarie</td>
<td>3,025</td>
<td>395</td>
<td>3,420</td>
<td>10,501</td>
<td>16,940</td>
<td>30,861</td>
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<tr>
<td>Port Stephens</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>732</td>
<td>1,299</td>
<td>2,380</td>
<td>4,411</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dungog</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1,144</td>
<td>1,161</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>999</td>
<td>2,355</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muswellbrook</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>401</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>1,413</td>
<td>2,087</td>
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<tr>
<td>Singleton</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>229</td>
<td>201</td>
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<td>1,618</td>
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<td>Merriwa</td>
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<td>606</td>
<td>608</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>449</td>
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<tr>
<td>Murrurundi</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>493</td>
<td>496</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>556</td>
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<td>839</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>484</td>
<td>2,108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shire</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1,254</td>
<td>1,304</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>2,108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patrick Plains</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1,102</td>
<td>1,109</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>1,340</td>
<td>2,728</td>
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</table>

Total Hunter Valley 7,742 8,113 15,855 42,719 70,323 128,897

Excerpt from table in Hunter Valley Research Foundation, *The Hunter Valley Region*, 1968, p.43
Source: Commonwealth Bureau of Census and Statistics, Canberra
By Australian standards of the time, Newcastle was fairly well housed. Virtually all of the houses in both census areas were separate houses, although proportions fell slightly between 1954-61. Provision of flats and other dwelling types was negligible. Owner/buyer occupancy was high and rising: from 71.2% to 78.6% in Newcastle in 1954-61; and 74.6% to 80.6% in Lake Macquarie. Most separate houses in both areas had wooden walls, although the proportion was rather higher in Newcastle (73.3% in Newcastle; 65.8% in Lake Macquarie). From the early 1930’s, there had been a firm trend away from wooden dwellings in Lake Macquarie. Dwellings were more spacious in Newcastle with only 23% having four rooms or less. The pattern was strikingly different in Lake Macquarie where 37.5% had four rooms or less. The proportion of smaller dwellings in Lake Macquarie had declined sharply since 1947 (54.2% ) but it was still substantial. This probably reflects the decline of mining, and also some drift away from conventional holiday shacks in the area. The number of occupied private dwellings rose soundly in Newcastle (33, 300 to 37,500 in 1954-61). In Lake Macquarie it more than doubled from 1947 (10,500) to 23,700 in 1961. With the increase in dwelling quality, this confirms other trends emerging in this analysis that economic growth and social change was much more emphatic in Lake Macquarie than in Newcastle.

A Novocastrian Audience?

The residents of Newcastle delight in the grandly sonorous title of Novocastrians…

Alan Farrelly36

This chapter has sought to apply the concept of audience to Newcastle in the context of mass newspaper readership. It has sought to do this from three

36 Alan Farrelly and Ron Morrison, op.cit, p.6
angles: theoretical, historical and demographic. Much of the evidence and argument here will be referred to in the specific chapters of the thesis that it underpins. In particular, it will be used as the springboard for the conclusions reached in Chapter 8. It is not intended, therefore, to make a lengthy summary of argument and conclusion here. The following comments attempt to bring together the strands of argument above into a generalised picture of the Novocastrian ethos as it might have been epitomised in the late 1950's.

Newcastle has evolved very much in the traditions, conventions and ethos of an industrial city, overwhelmingly working class with its principal entrepreneurial investment and direction from outside. It was overwhelmingly British in its settlement, development and population composition to the late 1950's. Non-British immigration seems to have made only slight impact in these years. It has also been predominantly Protestant. Despite these disproportions, there is little to suggest that Newcastle has been intolerant in either ethnic background or religion. In a climate of fundamental stringency and frequent adversity, it has fallen back on a strong sense of community, unity and, where necessary, militancy. It has been neither puritanical nor overly hedonistic, savouring its pleasures and indulgences while respecting the human decencies. It is a city of ingrained, and justified, grievance, but it has mostly sought redress in acceptable ways and through conventional channels. It has shown a strong collectivist spirit in its unionism, its politics, its community support services and its household consumption. An historic loathing of metropolitan Sydney has not prevented it from accepting innovation and, albeit grudgingly, political direction from the south. It has a reputation for dourness, parochialism and insularity belied by a strong civic culture, respect for scholarship, cultural excellence, aesthetic quality, and the international vitality inseparable from a big port. Its contribution to Australia's national wealth, preservation and security has been immeasurable. It has many flaws and many virtues, had much ill luck and some
good. It has been a neglected city, but never negligible. By any criteria, it deserves an honoured place in the Australian pantheon.
CHAPTER THREE

THE CREATION

For a while, so long as its life lasts, a Sunday newspaper is almost a piece of the furniture. A daily paper is taken to the factory or the office and soon pitched into the wastepaper bin or left under the commuter-train seat; if it stays in the house it is likely to be wrapped round potato peelings by teatime. But the Sunday paper lives right through Sunday...

Paul Barker1

An Invocation

On Sunday, 8th November, 1959 the first edition of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was circulated in the Newcastle region. As was customary with a new paper, this first issue included a brief manifesto describing briefly why the publishers had decided to risk a new venture. This was printed on Page 3, the editors apparently concluding that Page 1 was too precious to accommodate even the intrusion of a ringing proprietorial pronouncement. This statement is printed in full here, complete with typographical embellishments as far as possible. It was written in a hard news style common in Australian popular tabloids, but with a pronounced ring of Fleet St., particularly the influential London Daily Mirror. It was economical in its phrasing, a bare 127 words.

As a manifesto proclaiming the birth of a newspaper, this is somewhat unusual. It is more an endorsement of locale and audience than a plausible explanation of just why Mirror Newspapers had entered an unfamiliar market, in a hazardous commercial venture. There was no statement of policy, emphasising of special features, indeed of anything that might give the readership a hint of

what they might expect. Newcastle residents were told only that they were getting a Sunday newspaper because they deserved one. Furthermore, they deserved a Sunday newspaper that would grow with the city. This growth had been formidable as the paper pointed out with some hyperbole. The statement would have served equally well as a piece of boosterism for a local council, or a puff sheet for potential advertisers. It was a cry to local patriotism, evoking in basic terms the complex factors that had produced a fine contemporary city from the humblest of origins. Whatever its limitations, the manifesto had qualities of freshness and novelty distinguishing it from the over-ripe rhetoric often used by newspapers trying to explain themselves.

To-day for the first time in its history of 160 years, Newcastle City has its own SUNDAY PAPER.

Newcastle has itself to thank for this important development.

Since the war ended Newcastle has gone ahead in swift strides.

In 1947 Greater Newcastle’s population was 127,000. In 1959 it is 200,000.

An increase of more than 70,000!

It has grown from an industrial city to a city of wide business and commercial interest.

From a city of cottages and smoke to a city surrounded by pleasant suburbs and graceful homes with nearby tourist attractions.

Today Newcastle is an important Australian city with a thriving and expanding shopping centre, its own Stock Exchange and wool sales organisation.

Newcastle has earned a Sunday paper that will grow with the city.2

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2 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 8 November 1959, p.3.
Why Newcastle?

Chapter 1 provided a brief contextual account of the historical and commercial imperatives that produced the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* on November 8, 1959. This chapter covers much the same period in greater amplitude, bringing together thematic strands relevant to both national and local history, but particularly to the evolution of Australian news media and journalism. The origins of the newspaper are to be found in the tribal complexities of the Sydney press over the preceding 60 years. This is the first major theme developed here.

In particular, it is fundamental to background two of the titans of Australian newspapers, the Sydney Truth and Sportsman and John Fairfax Ltd proprietaries. The birth and short-lived apotheosis of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was essentially the product of a momentous conjunction of circumstances involving both organisations in the late 1950's. Although not predominant in the absorption of Truth and Sportsman into John Fairfax, the emergence of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* would not have occurred without it. It is a fascinating story both for interpreting Australian news media history and understanding the personal and professional quirks of its newspaper proprietaries.

A Popular Press

The central figure in the chain of events which produced the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was Ezra Norton, the erratic, eccentric but extremely astute proprietor of Truth and Sportsman. Norton’s sale of the Sydney *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* to John Fairfax sparked the eventual publication of
Newcastle’s first, and only, Sunday paper. Ezra Norton had inherited Truth and Sportsman from his father, John Norton. *Truth* was first published on August 3, 1890 in Sydney, quickly dominating the popular market and expanding with the publication of *Truth* newspapers in other state capitals. John Norton had begun work on *Truth* as a journalist, but gradually brought it under his control, some writers suggest by fraud, libel, seduction, and suicide. However he did it, the larrikin Norton “was ultimately acknowledged - perhaps more by default than by intent - as sole proprietor and publisher of *Truth.*”

The first issue of *Truth* was described by an opposition newspaper, *Democrat*, as a “puling little rag ... that circulated widely round the Bondi sewer and was much execrated by the rats therein”. Another scandal sheet, *Innocents of Sydney* depicted it as “the promulgators of piddling, babbling, frothy, doting nonsense...”. Norton may have been a vainglorious, egomaniac reprobate with little respect for conventional morality. He was also a superb newspaperman with an unrivalled eye for popular taste and the limits of what was publishable. Although much of Australia’s newspaper tradition flowed from the responsible journalism of models such as the London *Times*, there was also a raffish side. Popular journals devoted to sport, police news and sensational court material had existed in Australia since the 1830’s. A strata of publication which was mildly pornographic had also emerged, particularly in Sydney, in the late 19th Century. In the early years, Sydney sport had been mostly horse racing, hunting, bowls, athletics, rowing and other pastimes inherited from the old country. By the late 19th Century, sport was diversifying with greater popular interest in horse racing and greyhound coursing, and spectator sports such as cricket, football, boxing, and wrestling. These attracted an *audience* response vented enthusiastically in the mainstream press and

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increasing numbers of specialist sporting journals which brought new *audiences* to entertainment journalism. The popular press grew increasingly inclined to sport and entertainment as well as the staple fare of crime, courts and politics.

The diversity of social activity and popular entertainment had grown enormously by the turn of the century. Music and dance halls, chop houses, oyster bars, theatres, operas, circuses, zoos, touring celebrities, lectures, smokos, soirees, coffee houses, magic lanterns, stereoscopes, postcards, art galleries, museums, the first creaky moving pictures, election campaigns—all were grist to the mill for popular newspapers. John Norton’s proclivities for the colour and vivacity of society, his penchants for both creating scandal and reporting it, elevated *Truth* to the heights of weekly popular journalism.

What Norton tried to do with *Truth* had parallels links with rapid change in other newspaper markets, particularly the United Kingdom and the United States. In London, Alfred Harmsworth, (later Lord Northcliffe), was transforming newspapers by devising format and content compatible with a vast new market created by rapidly-growing public education. Harmsworth’s approach had less gusto and more respect for conventional morality than *Truth*, but its thrust for the attention of the common man and woman was comparable. He generated new markets for news and entertainment which would have been unthinkable in more sedate years when highly-educated, cultivated and affluent *readerships* dipped into *The Times*.

In the United States towards the close of the 19th Century, two other trends emerged analogous to Norton’s press. The first was the rise of the so-called ‘yellow press’, commonly associated with lurid, sensational reporting of crime, political and social scandal. The reputation of the ‘yellow press” is not
altogether deserved. Its name may have derived from a popular comic strip character called the “yellow kid.” The ‘yellow press’ also represented significant changes in newspaper design, headline styles and size, type faces and the increasing use of pictures (or pictorialism). The objective was no longer to lure the readership by the remorseless reiteration of proven formats, but to grab them by the throat with animated design and vivid headings and writing. Such sensationalism was often identified with the great American newspaper magnate, W. R. Hearst, a proprietor of inordinate ambition and intrinsic instability, but also a richly-gifted newspaperman and entrepreneur.

The early years of the 20th Century American press also brought the reforming and crusading journalism designated historically as ‘muckraking’. The origin of ‘muckraking’ was an allegorical figure in John Bunyan’s Pilgrim’s Progress who sought to purge the world’s filth with a muckrake. ‘Muckraking’ was directed particularly at the excesses and corruption of big business. It founded an honourable tradition of journalism inquiry and exposure directly linked with what was later known commonly as “Investigative Journalism”.

It would over-dignify the disreputable figure of John Norton to place him directly in the lineage of Harmsworth, Hearst and muckrakers such as McClure’s magazine. In his better years, he did have comparable qualities of larger-than-life persona, immense energy and flair for gauging public taste and representing it in viable newspapers. His writing and presentational skills were considerable, particularly his mastery of alliterative epithets which translated readily into unforgettable headings. His personal courage was matched by his contempt even for the British monarchy, subjecting Queen Victoria to withering criticism. He was a great muckraker, contemptuous of rank, affectation and pretence, a democrat and champion of the rights of the afflicted and the battlers.
Ezra's Empire

John Norton's son, Ezra, was partly a victim of his father's domestic instability, drunkenness, and rumbustious living. Some saw him as a "strange" man or "not popular but with one or two endearing qualities". A biographer of Rupert Murdoch, Simon Regan, described him as a "peculiar little man who possessed an inherent evil streak which seemed to ooze out of him at every pore." Certainly, Ezra was a hard man but he could, on occasions, be genial and generous. He had a pathetic childhood, his legitimacy denied by John Norton who sought to disinherit Ezra and his mother, whom he had divorced. Ezra secured sole control of the Truth empire in 1922 after a six year battle to win back his inheritance. In many ways reclusive, Ezra lacked his father's flamboyance and flair, but was a superior entrepreneur. For many years, he confined his empire to Truth and the allied Sportsman, a lucrative racing sheet. With state editions of Truth in Brisbane, Melbourne and Adelaide as well as Sydney, he was a proprietor of a news network with some national influence, although lacking the aspirations, scope and dynamism of Sir Keith Murdoch's Melbourne Herald group.

Ezra Norton ran Truth as a populist, often outspoken weekly, maintaining the broad marketing formula of sensationalism and public interest. He toned down the "eccentric opinions and frequently outrageous editorial tantrums which had been his father's individual hallmark." According to one account, Norton's father had given him "astringent advice regularly to pour 'a bucket

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5 As well as the sources listed below, the account of Ezra Norton and his management of Truth and Sportsman draws at several points on Valerie Lawson's short biography in the Australian Dictionary of Biography, Vol. 16.
7 David McNicoll, Luck's a Fortune, Sun Books, South Melbourne, 1980, p.245
8 Simon Regan, Rupert Murdoch: a Business Biography, Angus & Robertson, London, 1976, p. 60
9 Geoff Gaylard, op.cit, p.7
of shit' over people who showed signs of being uppity"\textsuperscript{10}, and this advice he partly followed. Reclusive, and shy of personal publicity, Ezra largely kept his private life and personal excesses out of the public eye. His dominion of his newspapers, their content and finances, was absolute, although largely exercised by tyrannical control of his editorial executives who passed it on in heaps to his news reporting and production staffs. Thus, his newspapers were produced with ruthless efficiency, leanly staffed and budgeted frugally.

In 1941, Ezra Norton sensed that the opportunity existed for a second evening newspaper in Sydney, and he established the Sydney \textit{Daily Mirror}. Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, gave him a licence to produce a daily newspaper, although the nation was at war, with manpower and resources strictly controlled. On Monday, May 12, 1941 the first issue of the \textit{Daily Mirror} priced at 2d. hit Sydney streets. Its masthead incorporated the icon of the Sydney \textit{Daily Mirror} and later the Sydney \textit{Sunday Mirror} - a press photographer looking through the viewfinder of a large-format camera.

In its foundation years, the layout of the \textit{Daily Mirror} was influenced by the successful Melbourne \textit{Sun News-Pictorial} with photographs or press art on just about every page. This format, moving away from a type-heavy presentation, had some novelty to the Sydney reader and the \textit{Daily Mirror} became an instant success - it was one of the few newspapers to make a profit in its first year\textsuperscript{11}, and Norton's expanded newspaper chain increased in overall worth to more than one million pounds.\textsuperscript{12}

Through this early period, the \textit{Daily Mirror} was essentially a basic news tabloid, populist in approach but not explicitly sensational. Norton was

\textsuperscript{10} William Shawcross, op.cit., p.103
\textsuperscript{11} Christopher Wright, \textit{Over One Hundred and Fifteen Years of News from the Daily Telegraph Mirror}, Adrian Savvas, Sydney, 1995, p.13
\textsuperscript{12} Geoff Gaylard, op.cit., p.7
(1) An enlarged version of the press photography icon featured in the Daily and Sunday Mirror mastheads showing a press photographer looking through the viewfinder of a Speed Graphic large format camera.

(2) and (3) (inserts) The first issue of the Sydney Daily Mirror under Norton’s ownership dated May 12, 1941 with the new masthead and the Sydney Sunday Mirror dated October 12, 1958 (after the last issue of Truth of October 5, 1958) still featuring the masthead with the press photographer image. When Truth and Sportsman was purchased by O’Connell Pty. Ltd from Norton in December 23, 1958, the image was omitted from the masthead, however, the policy of extensive picture coverage was continued.
assisted in obtaining newsprint and staff concessions by an ALP Government with which he was broadly sympathetic. The restraint of the *Daily Mirror* was countered by the enduring larrikinism of *Truth*. After the war, the tone of the *Daily Mirror* rapidly changed as Norton sparked a major circulation war with the Sydney *Sun*, also a full-blown populist tabloid in the proprietary of Associated Newspapers. It was a newsworthy era geared to tabloid, sensationalist presentation which the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sun* exploited to the hilt.

The consequence was a memorable circulation war played out at full belt until the late 1950's. In terms of economic and efficient news gathering, presentation and production, the effectiveness of both newspapers through these years has never been bettered in the Australian experience. It was characterised by much good traditional journalism directed to investigation and public interest. Regrettably, the competitive struggle produced a sensationalism which went beyond the tabloid colouring and pointing-up of news presentation to stretching, then distortion of fact, sometimes to the point of fiction.

*Truth* had always been regarded as a scandal sheet, and it maintained its reputation through these years as flagship of Truth and Sportsman. As Michael Mitchell, a circulation clerk at its Newcastle office, recalled:

> When I first started at Truth and Sportsman, I can remember my mother and father talking about what image it projected and if anyone sort of got written up in the *Truth*, it was a bit of hot gossip, and scandal . . . people would not have the *Truth* and even if they did read it, they wouldn’t admit to it - it was downmarket.  

The *Truth*’s reputation as a sensational tabloid catering vicariously to baser instincts in society was exemplified by story headlines such as . . .

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13 Michael Mitchell, Personal Interview, 27 September, 1995
January 26, 1958  Bodgies In Sex Orgies
February, 2, 1958  Yanks Get It Up!
April 13, 1958  Larrikin Sex With Teenagers
June 8, 1958  Police Uncover Huge Vice Ring
June 15, 1958  They Posed For Filthy Photos
June 29, 1958  Confession: I Killed And Got Away With Murder
July 27, 1958  2 Women Slain In Shooting
July 27, 1958  Big City Hunt For Crazed Gunman
October 5, 1958  Weird Voodoo Killing Trials (last issue of Sydney Truth)

Truth followed the eternal premise that crime and the criminal eternally fascinate. According to Elton, criminality rather than politics supplied the journalist’s bread, at least in a tabloid sense:

Our popular newspapers fill their pages with crime because that is what sells copies; the 18th century avidly read the Newgate Calendar (as sordid a publication as ever was the Daily Thingummy or the London Moon), gaped at prisoners through bars and attended executions...”

Important ownership changes occurred in the 1950’s, firstly with the Associated Newspapers proprietary and then with Truth and Sportsman. John Fairfax Ltd bought the Associated Newspapers print production stable, including The Sun, in 1953. This had no immediate change on the circulation war. Indeed, it intensified and the Sun became more sensational after John Fairfax took over. More directly, the change of proprietary impacted on the Sunday newspaper market where Truth had a traditional niche. In the early 1950’s, Sydney had been well served with four Sunday newspapers: Truth, the Sunday Sun, Sunday Herald and Sunday Telegraph. Although the post-war population of Sydney was booming, and the Sundays were keenly competitive, it was doubtful whether four newspapers were sustainable, particularly with television on the horizon. John Fairfax lost little time in amalgamating its

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Sunday Herald, a broadsheet format, with the tabloid Sunday Sun into the tabloid Sun Herald, reducing the number of Sundays to three.

While Truth and the Daily Mirror remained profitable, and highly competitive, Ezra Norton was experiencing something of a sea-change. As noted earlier, he had married again late in life, had a child and become more domesticated, although retaining his dictatorial oversight of his newspapers. He became increasingly sensitive about the scurrilous reputation of his newspapers and its possible impact on his family. Ezra also grew apprehensive about the reputation of his father who had become something of a legend as an Australian reprobate. This is one possible explanation for the introduction by the NSW State Labor Government in 1958 of legislation re-defining criminal libel to include defamation of the dead. This was designed to overturn the long-established common law principle that it was impossible to make defamatory imputations about the reputation of a deceased person. Speculation was rife in Sydney that Norton had lobbied hard to secure this legislation because of fears that historical books about John Norton would reflect badly on him and his family. This probably was important in his decision to kill Truth, replacing it with a softer newspaper, an exercise which now would be called re-branding or re-badging.

Apart from his personal life, other factors influenced Norton's decision. In 1958 Norton was known to be concerned about the impending Matrimonial Causes Act which threatened curtailment of traditionally liberal reporting of divorce. Truth circulation had declined, and its revenues suffered because advertisers were seeking media more suited to the booming economy and rapid social change of the 1950's. Truth's traditional advertising had a musty flavour of obscure medical quackery, horse liniment and classified advertising for personal products such as trusses. Influenced by Fleet St, the "Sundays" were
becoming uniformly softer and blander, much more conscious of greater affluence, buoyant consumption and the enthusiastic family formation of the “long boom”.

According to Gaylard, two major developments sparked Ezra Norton’s decision to re-vamp *Truth*: the pending prohibition under the *1959 Matrimonial Causes Act* of the publication of divorce evidence, and signs that long-lucrative sensationalism was no longer appealing to “image conscious corporate advertisers”. Gaylard states:

...the future of newspapers clearly lay in adopting a less flamboyant approach which would enable them to be welcomed into any home and be an acceptable advertising vehicle for any company. Potential commercial gains were inevitably forcing all newspapers to aim for near-saturation circulations, which would allow them to carry a higher advertising content at higher profit rates.

The importance of family entertainment and family-oriented advertising was also accentuated by the growth of television which had started in 1956. Although still in its infancy, the “tube” was revealing glimpses of its potential influence and power for both content and advertising.

**The Sunday Miracle**

The *Sunday Mirror* first appeared on October 12, 1958 replacing *holus bolos* the Sydney edition of *Truth*. (The name *Truth* was retained in other state editions for some years.) *Newspaper News* blamed the change in masthead from *Truth* to *Sunday Mirror* for falling sales of Sunday newspapers in Sydney from March 1957 to March 1958 (1,714,000 to 1,673,000). *Truth* accounted for more than half of this loss.

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15 Gaylard, op.cit., p.7
16 ibid
17 *Newspaper News*, October 17, 1958, p.1
circulation showed a decline in *Truth*'s circulation from 1 October 1957 to 30 September 1958 of 11,709 (491,476 to 479,767).\(^\text{18}\) Overall, *Truth*'s circulation fell from 536,374 in September 1955 to about 490,000 early in 1958.\(^\text{19}\) No newspaper proprietor could afford to ignore the drift inherent in these figures, certainly not one as astute as Norton.

The change in formula was heralded across two columns down the front page of *Truth* in its last issue on October 5, 1958. It publicised the *Sunday Mirror* for the whole family:

> Next Sunday, Truth and Sportsman Ltd. will publish a NEW newspaper, the SUNDAY MIRROR, which will incorporate TRUTH.

> Today’s is the last issue of TRUTH, which was first published on August 3, 1890.

> The SUNDAY MIRROR, Sydney’s newest, newsiest paper, will be packed with features of absorbing interest to every member of the family.\(^\text{20}\)

Readers were promised that the *Sunday Mirror* would provide the “biggest and best” cover of sports events and personalities; for women, “a fascinating section to interest housewife, career girl and grandmother”; and for the young reader “the children’s section will provide entertaining reading plus comics”.\(^\text{21}\) Two complete pages were devoted to publicising the new paper, inviting Sydney residents to “read the Mirror 6 days a week ...and now Sydney’s newest newspaper SUNDAY MIRROR, 6d. every Sunday N.S.W.” It reinforced the message that the paper was designed for family reading, the “Sunday Mirror is a family affair”.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^\text{18}\) Figures supplied by Audit Bureau of Circulation, 100 Arthur Street, North Sydney

\(^\text{19}\) *Newspaper News*, op.cit., p.1

\(^\text{20}\) *Truth*, 5 October, 1958, p.1

\(^\text{21}\) ibid

\(^\text{22}\) ibid, pp 12/13.
Changes in name, ownership and style between January 5, 1958 to February 1, 1959.

(1) Sydney Truth with its reversed black letter gothic or old English masthead under Ezra Norton (January 5, 1958)

(2) Sunday Mirror (December 21, 1958) after Norton’s change of masthead from Truth to Sunday Mirror. The boxed rectangular masthead similar to London’s Daily Mirror varied left to right on the page dependent on the headlines and the layout. This practice continued until January 25, 1959. Under the Sunday Mirror masthead “incorporating Sydney Truth” appeared.

(3) The Sunday Mirror (February 1, 1959) after the sale to O’Connell Pty Ltd at the end of December, 1958. The masthead no longer included “incorporating Sydney Truth” and was featured across the page ending any resemblance to the London Daily Mirror.
The emphasis on family values and family life in the promotion was clearly based on the market research conducted for the re-vamping and re-launching of the newspaper. As noted earlier, regrettably this crucial data cannot be traced. Two other factors are worthy of note. By getting into the “family way”, so to speak, the *Sunday Mirror* was also making up for lost time. The transformation of the Sunday market with the acquisition of Associated Newspapers had already taken it well along the road to blander, family-oriented news gathering and presentation. (See above) Four distinctive, differentiated Sunday newspapers had been replaced by three newspapers which moved increasingly towards an homogenous product. The old *Sunday Herald* was unquestionably a quality newspaper in the contemporary sense, very strong in its coverage of books and the arts as well as conventional news features. The *Sunday Telegraph* had a strong middle-brow news appeal, and a particular emphasis on robust magazine-style presentation. The *Sunday Sun* attracted a loyal audience through regular news and feature sections which had changed little in essentials over the years but maintained consistent quality. Its orientation hovered somewhere between middle-brow popular, with an emphasis on a greater diversity of entertainment material. *Truth* had very much stuck to its conventional model dominated by the excellence of its crime, court and sport reporting, and its maintenance of an investigative, public interest tradition.

The merger of the *Sunday Herald* and the *Sunday Sun* diluted their idiosyncratic qualities, and the hybrid *Sun-Herald* veered much more directly to a syrupy, family content and values approach. The *Sunday Telegraph* moved in the same direction, steered by market research and also because it could not ignore a rapidly-diversifying advertising market. Thus, the two other Sunday newspapers were re-positioning themselves even before even the first glimmers of television’s impact. Although *Truth* was slower to respond, tardiness was
not necessarily to its disadvantage. Its abrupt change of direction was dramatic when it came and it attracted a favourable public reaction. In effect, *Truth* was trumpeting a market revolution which its rivals were approaching rather more sedately.

Certainly, the change of format and style was taken very seriously by its rivals, and was praised by the trade press. *Newspaper News* on October 17, 1958 featured the birth of the Sydney *Sunday Mirror* as its main front story:

> With Napoleonic shrewdness, Mr Ezra Norton timed the appearance of his new “Sunday Mirror” in Sydney to catch the rising volume of ads between now and Christmas and to gain maximum reader interest during the Federal election campaign and a crescendo of summer sports which this year includes the cricket tests and Davis Cup. . .The organisation of the new style paper which has replaced the 68-year-old “Truth” in New South Wales was supervised by the newly appointed Editorial Director, Mr. F.E. Baume, the Editor-in-Chief, Mr. J. Blunden, and the Advertising Director, Mr. R. Walker.23

The reference to ‘Napoleonic’ may have been a subtle thrust at Ezra Norton’s father, John, who was renowned by his collection of busts and other memorabilia of Napoleon Bonaparte.

The *Newspaper News* noted that the three competing papers in Sydney on the previous Sunday had produced a total of 344 pages - *Sun-Herald* 128 pages, the *Sunday Telegraph*, 112 pages and the *Sunday Mirror*, 104 pages. Advertisers sensing a potential of larger sales, “eagerly booked into the ‘Sunday Mirror’s’ first issue”,24 particularly as advertising was offered at the same rate as the old *Truth*. *Newspaper News* quoted Editor-in-Chief, Eric Baume that Norton’s decision to publish the *Sunday Mirror* would repeat the sensational launching of the *Daily Mirror* in 1941.25 The *Sunday Mirror’s*

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23 *Newspaper News*, op.cit., p.1
24 ibid
25 ibid
nativity was widely publicised and promoted. Before the launch, Baume appeared at the Orange Flower Festival as part of a week long intensive publicity campaign. All major radio stations were included and ‘a “favourite jingle” modelled on a popular song, “Six days a week and now on Sundays,” written to emphasise the now seven-day appearance of the “Mirror”’.

The first issue of the *Sunday Mirror* on October 12, 1958 was 104 pages including a 24 page shopping guide. The last issue of the *Truth* on the previous Sunday had been only 24 pages, and its advertising was extremely thin. Blazoned over the masthead was a seven column banner, *The Sunday newspaper for the whole family*. The front page carried stories on the United States’ second moon rocket and fears of a horse doping ring in Melbourne before the Cup. A large three-column photo down the page, with caption, heralded the arrival in Australia of the Queen’s dress designer, Norman Hartnell. In keeping with the policy of “the *Mirror* seven days a week”, the *Daily Mirror* camera icon appeared in the masthead between *Sunday* and *Mirror*. The front page also highlighted what the readers were offered on the inside pages: Features, Sport, Women, Pictorial, Children, Motors, Your Home, Records, Finance, Answer Man, TV and Radio, This I Believe, (a comment piece by Eric Baume) and Films.

A traditional first-issue manifesto proclaimed that the *Sunday Mirror* would have an independent policy on politics; it opposed communism; favoured closer ties with the United States; wanted uniform taxation abolished; and did not believe in the United Nations. The policy further covered homes, jobs, cartels, Communist China, immigrants, the Commissioner of Taxation, hire purchase and sport. It makes an interesting contrast in its scope and detail with the

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26 ibid
27 *Sunday Mirror*, 12 October, 1958, p.1
28 *Newspaper News*, op.cit., p.1
equivalent document in the first issue of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, published thirteen months later.

Compared with *Truth*, the Women’s Pages were greatly increased. A double-page pictorial coverage of weddings was included under the title “The *Sunday Mirror*’s camera at Saturday’s marriages.” In the sixth issue on November 16, 1958, nine weddings were included in the double page spread and one full page wedding photo nominated as “Bride of the Week”. The photos overall were much larger than previously in the *Truth* and included a *Sunday Mirror* pictorial page depicting Sydney highlights. The *Sunday Mirror* also published free each week announcements of marriages, engagements, births, christenings and anniversaries. The seventh issue saw a change of masthead with the *Sunday Mirror* now appearing in a rectangular box on the left hand side of the paper, similar to the London *Daily Mirror* and the London *Sunday-Pictorial*. Depending on the layout, the masthead in later issues varied from left to right hand sides. With the sale to O’Connell Pty. Ltd. the masthead changed to a bold sans serif horizontal *Sunday Mirror* minus both the cameraman icon and “incorporating Sydney *Truth*”. (See below) Changing the masthead, effectively the paper’s *imprimatur*, was strong evidence that the paper was already in trouble.

Fifty-five years before the *Sunday Mirror* in Sydney, Lord Northcliffe, the owner of the *Daily Mail* hailed the launching of his London *Daily Mirror* (sub-headed “the first daily newspaper for Gentlewomen”) on November 2, 1903:

> No newspaper was ever started with such a boom. I advertised it everywhere. If there was anyone in the United Kingdom not

29 *Sunday Mirror*, 16 November, ps.22 and 67
30 ibid, p.21
31 ibid, p.68
32 ibid, 23 November, 1958, p.1
Examples of masthead and front page layout of the London Daily Mirror 1957-58 which were adopted by the newly named Sydney Sunday Mirror under Ezra Norton in November 1958.
aware that the *Daily Mirror* was to be started, he must have been deaf, dumb, blind, or all three.\(^{33}\)

The first issue of the London *Daily Mirror* was an immediate success with a circulation of 265,517 copies. The second issue “exceeded 143,000”, the seventh was only 100,000 and “within three months the elegant customers had dwindled to a garden party of 24,000”.\(^{34}\) Ezra Norton’s *Sunday Mirror* followed a similar dismal trajectory: by the end of March, 1959 its circulation had fallen from *Truth’s* 479,767 in September, 1958 to 405,000, a decline of about 15 percent.\(^{35}\) The *Sun-Herald* in comparison increased by 5,300 in the same period and the *Sunday Telegraph* held its circulation. Thus, the *Sunday Mirror* had generated an overall decline in Sunday news circulation of some significance.

**What went wrong?**

Why did the *Sunday Mirror* bomb out so spectacularly? There was no lack of good intentions. The new paper appeared to be doing all the right things to establish itself as a family newspaper. It was in line with current trends, and there was no reason to suppose that it had not adhered closely to positive market research for family themes. The emphasis on family content, the appeal to women readers neglected by *Truth*, the prevalence of wedding pictures - all suggested a more feminised approach. Although the newspaper had presented itself as incorporating *Truth*, the distinctive orientations and flavour of the old yellow-press “thunderer” were gone forever. The editorial policy showed an occasional touch of Norton eccentricity, notably the opposition to the United Nations, but was otherwise unexceptional. What went wrong?

\(^{33}\) Hugh Cudlipp, *Publish and be Damned!*, Andrew Dakers Limited, London, 1953, p.8
\(^{34}\) ibid, p.10
\(^{35}\) Audit Bureau of Circulation, op.cit
Lacking the records of the *Sunday Mirror*, any analysis of its establishment must be necessarily speculative. It is possible that at least some of the files that would illuminate the mysteries may yet appear. With the wisdom of considerable hindsight, there is some value in trying to make some judgments about its performance. There are two plausible explanations. Firstly, it is reasonable to conclude that in its first issue at least, the new paper did hit a viable target *audience*. The content that it offered, however, was not considered up to scratch. In fact, it was so poorly perceived that a significant number of those who bought the first issue did not buy the second or subsequent issues. Secondly, it could be argued that the *Sunday Mirror* was perceived as a case of the leopard not changing its spots. In short, the *Sunday Mirror* was not sufficiently differentiated from the old *Truth* associations to convince enough of the *audience* that it was a genuine family alternative to its two rivals. Both arguments warrant further investigation.

**The Bitter Truth?**

The fact that the first issue of a newspaper is a rousing failure does not automatically mean that it has no future. There are many examples of news publications failing in terms of content and early market-building, yet ultimately succeeding, whether through astute revision of initial approach, dogged perseverance, or successful promotion. In some cases, a change of management or substantial re-moulding of the editorial staff have done the trick. A classic example here is the London *Sun*, an initial failure which soared to spectacular circulation and profitability under Rupert Murdoch. In the Australian experience, the Melbourne *Sun* was sluggish in circulation and popular appeal when owned by a Sydney proprietary, but became Australia’s most successful newspaper when re-vamped after a change of ownership. There is no shortage, however, of new publication ventures which have foundered beyond
redemption in their early stages and have been closed as soon as decently possible. With the *Sunday Mirror*, however, early closure of the paper was not an option because of the conjunction of proprietorial and marketing circumstances.

Accepting that the marketing, advertising and promotional factors were about right, and that the content of the early editions, particularly the first, was the overwhelming cause of failure, could this serious defect have been rectified in a hurry? Probably not! It seems likely that Ezra Norton committed the bulk of the money to promotion and marketing. For its content, he relied largely on the editorial management and staff of the former *Truth* and, to some extent, the *Daily Mirror*. Although Norton terrorised this faithful band of retainers, he commanded their loyalty for reasons which are hard to discern in contemporary management theory. Norton did not lack personal charm and, on occasions, generosity. Those who could not work with Norton or were easily cowed by him mostly did not last very long. Those who formed a rapport of sorts with him found the tyranny endurable, albeit precarious. Some even returned to his colours after abrupt ejection; for example, Eric Baume who was a foundation executive of both the *Daily Mirror* in 1941 and the *Sunday Mirror* in 1959. Options for senior news executives were mostly sparse in Sydney newspapers of the time, and their careers were influenced by Norton’s often contemptuous patronage.

In professional terms, the editorial leadership of Norton’s loyalists had virtues which were attractive to Norton. They produced the sort of newspapers he liked, combining hard news with eccentricity; they were capable of producing profitable newspapers, although, by this time, more in daily mode than weekly. And most of them had been on staff for some years and did not involve extra expense. (The principal exception was Eric Baume who had returned to
Norton’s employ after an interval of more than a decade). In an era when bylines were as scarce as hens teeth, a check of the limited identification of content in the Daily Mirror, Truth and the early Sunday Mirrors suggests little, if any, recruitment of additional editorial staff. Nor is there any major indication in the promotional material that Norton had hired new writing talent or pulled in well-known columnists or specialist writers from his competitors.

To put it plainly, the editorial management team were well equipped to produce newspapers in the populist/sensationalist tabloid mode of the Daily Mirror, and the public interest/sensationalist/crime “Sunday” model of the traditional Truth. Their credentials for producing a family-oriented newspaper were not apparent, indeed highly dubious. The outstanding exception was Eric Baume whose part was central in the sorry saga of the Sunday Mirror.

Eric, or Little by Little

Of New Zealand origins, Eric Ehrenfried Baume, the Editor-in-Chief, had been a towering figure in Sydney journalism since the early 1930’s.36 Baume had been a successful editor of the Sydney Sun and a pioneer of radio news comment on Sydney broadcaster 2GB. Ezra Norton had hired him in August 1939 as European Editor for Truth and Sportsman. Despite Norton’s notorious stinginess, Baume conducted his war-time newsgathering from the Savoy Hotel, drawing around him a gifted group of Australian journalists and entertaining on a prodigious scale. With the launching of the Daily Mirror in 1941, Baume became a dominant figure in covering the European War for Australian audiences. With characteristic immodesty, he appropriated much of the credit for the successful launching of the Daily Mirror, attributing it largely to his war coverage. It was a claim that had some merit. Baume was a superb foreign

36 The following account of Eric Baume draws in general terms on Arthur Manning, Larger Than Life: The Story of Eric Baume, Reed, Sydney, 1967. Specific usage is footnoted.
correspondent, obtaining a world scoop by successfully predicting that Hitler’s
armies would invade Russia and indicating the timing well in advance. Baume
returned to Sydney in late 1949 and became Editor-in-Chief of the *Daily
Mirror*, a period which he later described as the worst in his journalistic life:

> The trouble was his complete inability to get along with Ezra
> Norton... All the praise which had been heaped on the London
> staff during the war years had been forgotten, and Norton was in
> what Baume described as “a sacking mood.”... Frequent and
> violent clashes between him and Norton were inevitable.37

Baume’s sacking was bitter and recriminatory. In later years, he described
Norton as a man who, if he cried, would shed “tears of glass”. In the 1950’s
Baume became a national institution as a radio broadcaster with *This I Believe*,
a tub-thumping current affairs commentary which verged on self-parody but
caught the public mood. Another radio commentary, *I’m on your side*, brought
to radio some of the public-interest, pro-battler qualities of the old *Truth*. By
the mid-1950’s he was known as the “Golden Boy” of Australian journalism.
He joined ATN7 in late 1956 as Australia’s first successful television
commentator, a medium described as “[fitting] his personality like a glove.” He
was known variously in the TV magazines as “Mr TV” or “an idiot of a man.”38

Seemingly at the pinnacle of his career, Baume’s acceptance of an offer from
Ezra Norton to return as Editorial Director is extremely curious. As part of the
deal, he relinquished his television commentary but continued on radio and
wrote a *This I Believe* column for the *Daily Mirror*. In a story headed “Eric,
Not Little by Little,”, TV News said that Norton paid Baume “probably” the
highest salary ever paid in Australia to a journalist:

> ...between £12,000 and £15,000 a year... would not be out of the
> question in view of the many interests Baume is relinquishing. His

37 Manning, op.cit., p. 133.
38 ibid, p. 135
This I Believe session on TV alone must have earned a top bracket return and his daily column in the Sun was also highly paid. 39

Baume, who was nearing 60, said that he been warned about the dangers of over-exposure by US TV personalities. He had given up deliberately a successful career because “I believe I am serving myself and the public by not becoming a bore any more than I have been.” It seems more likely that Baume had been humiliated by Norton’s earlier rejection and welcomed the self-vindication brought by the restoration to favour. The pair had re-established an amicable relationship which bordered on the sentimental at some points. It seems that Baume had some inkling that the new paper was in the offing, giving him perhaps the last chance to display his legendary newspaper skills. Extraordinarily, his contract with Norton set out the policy of the Truth and Sportsman group at some length. One of the main jobs Norton gave him was transforming Truth into the Sunday Mirror.

According to his biographer, Arthur Manning, Baume approved the much-discussed change although there was some doubts in the organisation about killing Truth. Baume had been successful in bridging the circulation gap between the Daily Mirror and the Sun which had a handy circulation lead when he took over. Baume had toned down the sensationalism and did what he could to steer the paper towards greater moderation. This gave him a degree of credibility when he began to conceive a new Sunday. Baume had spent much of his newspaper prime in London, and he admired the tabloid strengths of the London Daily Mirror, the best of the British tabloids and one of the best in the world. He chose the Sunday Pictorial, the Sunday version of the London Daily Mirror as a model that could be adapted to Sydney tastes. 40

This choice is interesting for the future course of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror which was also influenced by the London Daily Mirror, but not through

39 ibid, p. 146
40 ibid, pp. 150-51
Baume's direction. (See Chapter 4) Furthermore, the pictorial emphasis was to emerge strongly in the Newcastle paper.

The other principal news executive associated with the launch was John Blunden, a former Editor of *Truth* with a sound, if not brilliant, print production background behind him. He was astute in judging Norton's moodiness and eccentricity, the senior of a small group of senior executives who had been closely associated with Norton for several years. Solid enough as an administrator and enunciator of Norton's policies, he lacked the flair and modishness needed to animate the *Sunday Mirror*. With the possible exception of Baume, the team was akin in many ways to the Hollywood stereotype of the gang of hardened criminals who, illogically, find themselves caring for a week-old baby. The heart and intentions were in the right place, but the execution was sadly astray. And with the *Sunday Mirror* editorial leadership, there was to be no happy twist at the end.

The failure of the *Sunday Mirror* to produce seductive, timely content was partly responsible for the second source of abject failure. This was the inadequacy of Norton and his chief executives in burying the lurid reputation of *Truth*. There was a *readership* problem here because *Truth* retained a core of loyal readers, probably mainly in the aging demographics. The new paper offered little to traditional *Truth* readers. Conversely, a new *readership* which scorned *Truth* found little enticement to regular purchase in the inaugural *Sunday Mirror*. The *Sunday Mirror* needed to insinuate into the consciousness of a volatile *readership* the urgent perceptions that it was a lively, good family read. Its failure to do this left it highly vulnerable to the inevitable comeback of its competitors that it was merely dehydrated *Truth* with warm water added. The promotion was good but the product turned out a turkey, as Baume acknowledged:
The first *Sunday Mirror* was a failure from the hour it left the streets. It was a nothing. Even the front page which should have been the shop-window of the paper was a nothing. I well remember sitting up in my office, looking at the first edition and wondering if I was seeing correctly. If ever I was sorry for Ezra Norton I felt sorry for him then. 41

Baume mistrusted the influence of dummy-runs for new papers and assured Norton they were unnecessary. It is possible, however, that a couple of trials might have exposed the paper’s glaring weaknesses. Baume praised the planning, the generous financial backing Norton provided, and the lavish advertising. He claimed the staff had been increased but made no comment about the lack of big names or journalistic quality of the new blood. It seems incomprehensible that everything should be done right but the all-important content. He admitted that the make-up of the London *Sunday Pictorial* might have made a difference but could not explain why it had not. Baume noted also that there was a lack of things about, and for, Sydney, inexcusable in launching a new tabloid. Baume had made his greatest mistake in 40 years of journalism. Ruefully, he admitted that he couldn’t shift the responsibility. 42

In the extensive post-mortems following the first edition, it was generally overlooked that retention of the linkage with the *Daily Mirror* in the masthead might have been a mistake. This certainly impeded any differentiation in product between what the *readership* got on a Sunday and what it got on the other six days. Despite Baume’s efforts to make the *Daily Mirror* more conventional and maintain its strong core *readership*, it was still felt to be sensational. Although the *Sunday Mirror* could be described as the total reverse of sensational, the association might have deterred a family *readership* disposed to be supportive. It is doubtful, though, that the debut *Sunday Mirror* would have fared any better if it had been called the *Sunday Globe*, the

41 ibid, p 150.
42 ibid, p. 151.
Fascinating as are Baume's subsequent reflections on the failure of the *Sunday Mirror* in its first and early issues, they do little to explain his own personal failure. Why did such an accomplished, experienced and versatile journalist get it so wrong? Was he excessively involved in the promotion at the expense of thorough preparation? Able to use his commanding aura and authority to build up huge reading and listening *audiences* for his own journalism and commentary, why couldn't he translate these great gifts into an *audience* which was receptive to the new paper and bought its first issue in large numbers? Why didn't he realise before the paper left the presses that the paper had failed to jell, that it had failed to capture the elusive alchemy of a successful newspaper in a changing era? Why didn't he sense that innovatory journalism, fresher entertainment, and stronger presentation were needed, combined with the *Truth's* traditional emphasis on the public interest? There are no ready explanations.

In Baume's favour it must be said that he was denied any chance of redemption by settling in for the long haul needed to re-invent the newspaper and bring it to popular esteem. A clue may lie in Baume's admission that it was the second time he had seen a new paper open up as a fiasco: "The other time had been with the old *Guardian* (in the late 1920's) and the first edition of the *Guardian* had been even worse than that of the *Sunday Mirror.*"\(^{43}\) Baume may have been too tough on the *Guardian*. It is virtually impossible to conceive that the first edition of any newspaper ever published could have been worse than the *Sunday Mirror*.

\(^{43}\) *ibid.*
A New Company

Before the seventh issue of the *Sunday Mirror* on November 23, 1958, Ezra Norton sold his newspapers to O'Connell Pty. Ltd., a shelf company financed by John Fairfax Limited. This suggests that he had written off any prospect of short-term success from the *Sunday Mirror* and was reluctant to face the long haul involved in establishing it in a recalcitrant market. According to Baume, Norton was disheartened at the failure. He was sick at the time and his doctors advised him to sell out:

He left without sending a farewell message to his staff and it was a loyal staff too. He sold and left. That was the end of the association between Norton and myself. We didn’t speak after that... That was the end of it between us. I had no resentment against him; I just didn’t want to know him... The fact that Norton is now dead makes no difference to my feelings. We had not spoken for a long time and I didn’t write to his widow when he died.

It is worth speculating how Baume would have reacted to Norton’s death if he had felt any resentment towards him. In later years, Baume described Norton as not a great newspaperman. He was brilliant in business and with machinery but he wasn’t a journalist.

Norton probably contemplated sale of his newspaper assets before the *Sunday Mirror* was launched. Indeed, he may have considered it as a contingency option for some time. According to one account, Norton had considered selling his mastheads to the Daily Mirror group in the United Kingdom as early as 1948, and had also flirted with the Herald and Weekly Times company in Melbourne: Any sale to the powerful Melbourne-based group built up by Sir Keith Murdoch would certainly have galvanised Norton’s traditional rivals in

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45 Manning, op.cit., p.151
Sydney, Rupert Henderson of John Fairfax Ltd and Frank Packer of Consolidated Press. Both had a vested interest in keeping Herald and Weekly Times out of Sydney. Indeed, there was a long record of collaboration between the Sydney proprietaries in ensuring that Murdoch never got a toehold in Sydney. This largely explains why John Fairfax was eager to acquire Truth and Sportsman’s mastheads. According to Souter, in November 1958 when Norton approached John Fairfax, to buy his papers, Henderson concluded that despite traditional animosity, he could deal with Norton and keep Sir Keith Murdoch out of Sydney.\textsuperscript{46}

Apart from the Murdoch press, there was another rival to Fairfax closer to home, Frank Packer. If Fairfax rejected Norton’s offer of sale, Norton would conceivably transfer it to Packer. Norton and Packer were bitter enemies, Norton never forgiving Packer’s establishment in 1939 of the \textit{Sunday Telegraph} which took sales away from \textit{Truth}. The pair had waged a public fist-fight at Sydney’s Randwick Racecourse, and Norton had used \textit{Truth} to vilify Packer, notably over his delays in embarking on military service in World War II. Despite this venomous relationship, there was little doubt that the two would strike a deal if this were mutually advantageous. It was common knowledge that Packer, the owner of the \textit{Daily Telegraph} and the \textit{Sunday Telegraph}, would welcome an afternoon paper to maximise his presses. Thus, he could maintain the \textit{Daily Mirror} in its traditional rivalry to John Fairfax’s \textit{Sun}, on Sydney’s afternoon streets. He could give it resources long-denied by Norton and perhaps strengthen its advertising revenues. Packer could also merge the \textit{Sunday Mirror} with the \textit{Sunday Telegraph}, strengthening his hand against the \textit{Sun Herald} in a two-newspaper Sunday market.

\textsuperscript{46} Souter, op.cit., p.342
Faced with these daunting scenarios, John Fairfax decided to buy Norton's two mastheads and keep them running in a quasi-autonomous framework. According to Leapman the main motive for Henderson and the Fairfax management purchasing Norton's papers was an obsessive fear that "one of their two dreaded rivals would move in...".\(^{47}\) *Newspaper News* on November 28, 1958 reported that rumours of the Truth and Sportsman sale had been circulating in stock exchange circles for weeks. These rumours had come into the open on November 14 when the *Daily Telegraph*’s finance editor reported that financial authorities believed that John Fairfax Ltd was negotiating to buy a controlling interest in Truth and Sportsman Ltd. This would merge the *Daily Mirror* with the Sydney *Sun* to give Fairfax a monopoly in the evening field, and the *Sunday Mirror* with the *Sun-Herald*, leaving Sydney with only two Sunday papers. The following day the *Daily Telegraph* claimed the deal had been concluded with 200,000 ordinary shares at £5 a share sold by Ezra Norton to O'Connell Publications. According to this story, the controlling interest had been offered 18 months before to the Melbourne *Herald* at approximately £4/10/- per share, an offer which was rejected.\(^{48}\) According to another report, Norton sold the papers to John Fairfax for £885,150, paid to O'Connell Pty. Ltd., nominally owned by John Fairfax's solicitors, Stephen, Jaques and Stephen.\(^{49}\) This suggests that if 200,000 shares were sold, the price was closer to £4/10/- than £5.

There were some intriguing aspects to the deal. Fairfax chose not to absorb Truth and Sportsman into its established group, but to run it as a separate entity. The use of O'Connell Pty Ltd as the vehicle for the purchase has interesting associations as O'Connell St in downtown Sydney was the site of Fairfax's long-term headquarters. It had moved from the CBD to a new, custom-built

\(^{48}\) *Newspaper News*, November 28, 1958, p.1
\(^{49}\) Souter, op.cit., p.342
office off Broadway on the western fringe of the city after its amalgamation with Associated Newspapers in the mid-1950's. It also reflected Fairfax's legal and financial links with the "top end of town."

The Managing Director, Herbert Edward (Bert) Scotford had been secretary and a director of Associated Newspapers. At the time of his appointment he was Chief Accountant of John Fairfax. In later years he was Sales Manager, Secretary and a Director of that company. Interestingly, his entry in *Who's Who of Australia* (1985) described him as Managing Director of Truth and Sportsman between 1959 and 1961. This is peculiar because Truth and Sportsman, of course, had been sold to O'Connell Publications in late 1958. There is no mention of either O'Connell Pty Ltd or Mirror Newspapers in Scotford's curriculum vitae. In seems that even a quarter of a century later, some sensitivities may have lingered about how Truth and Sportsman was liquidated. The Chairman of Directors of O'Connell Pty Ltd was an eminent chartered accountant, Ronald Arthur Irish, in later years a captain of Australian industry and knighted in 1970. Scotford and Irish were superbly equipped to run the business side of a news media company or a firm of chartered accountants. They had little expertise in journalism, the closest connection being that Scotford's father-in-law had been the popular Australian historical novelist, E.V. Timms. The old board was removed except for its solicitors. Production of both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror* was maintained at the established Truth and Sportsman offices in Kippax St, Surrey Hills.

Initially, the new proprietary seemed prepared to accept Baume as its principal news executive:

At a meeting of editors the Chairman and the Managing Director expressed their hopes for the future, Baume said he hoped petty intrigues would cease and the staff would work as one man. There
was a great deal of promise about the start and Baume was looking forward to producing the papers entirely his own way.50

Abruptly, the new proprietors decided to drop Baume, and this they did in a peremptory, even contemptuous way. He was advised that although he would remain an executive Director, he would be stripped of all powers because of the bad results obtained. His role was passed to a new Editor-in-Chief, Lindsay Clinch, who was a skilled tabloid practitioner, generally accredited with the success of the *Sydney Sun* in its circulation battles with the *Daily Mirror* in the late 1950’s. Clinch and Baume had been colleagues and there is nothing to suggest any animosity between them. Clinch probably was poached from John Fairfax by O’Connell Publications. There is no evidence that he was planted in the new company by John Fairfax which would have fought to keep his services for *The Sun*. According to Manning, Baume became the emptiest of figureheads, his contribution confined to producing his daily column. In what was clearly a battle to force Baume’s resignation, the nominal Editorial Director stoically toughed it out, refusing to be provoked and sitting quietly through meetings like the ultimate “man of war without guns.” His secretarial services were removed, as was his office car, and even his electric typewriter. He was asked to write a report on the *Sunday Mirror* but, interpreting this as a ploy to get him to expose differences with Norton and his colleagues over policy, he produced a homily on the principles and ethics of journalism. By sticking to the letter of his contract, he eventually won a handsome settlement, getting all of his pay entitlement for five years. He was also allowed to keep his column going for a year after he left Mirror Newspapers. Then, he wrote newspaper columns and did television and radio work for Frank Packer who sacked him after he refused to read radio news as well as commenting on it. In later years, he became a television star with a panel show called “Beauty and the Beast”,

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50 Manning, op. cit.p153.
appearing with four beauteous women in what was essentially a spoof of the genre, with more than a hint of self parody.

Although Connell Pty Ltd worked assiduously to create the impression that it was free of Fairfax control and influence, it is difficult to accept that it was completely autonomous. Much was done to create the impression that Clinch's recruitment was made without the authority of John Fairfax. The columnist, Jim McDougall, reported that Clinch had been "callously weaned" away from Fairfax, further proof of the complete independence of the news management: "Their action in lifting Mr Clinch from under the very noses of Messrs Henderson and [Warwick] Fairfax was audacious in the extreme." McDougall concluded, however, that all the "mad independence" just didn't add up somehow. The new proprietors were "a bunch of reckless mountain boys if ever I saw one."51 His information was that Rupert Henderson was still the boss and Clinch kept his superannuation benefits from *The Sun* and John Fairfax.

McDougall was right. It just didn’t add up. It may have been hyperbole to call Irish, Scotford and their team a "bunch of mountain boys" but there was an edge of truth to it. Chartered accountants, of course, had their place but not for giving leadership to a major news organisation. Clinch would certainly have provided proven tabloid skills to the stricken Sunday and languishing daily. It was probably reasonable in the circumstances to conclude that he could relinquish his duties with *The Sun*.

Because the new organisation could not trade persuasively under the O’Connell label, the choice of Mirror Newspapers as production arm was appropriate. Although Rupert Henderson and the Fairfax Board retained

51 ibid, p.154
control of the ultimate destiny of Mirror Newspapers, the papers were left largely unfettered in their daily operations. The semblance of arms-length was adroitly preserved, at least until the strategic future of John Fairfax over-rote it.

John Fairfax's justification that by keeping the *Daily Mirror* and *Sunday Mirror* going it served the public interest was essentially correct. If it had merged either or both newspapers into its publications, public choice would have been severely restricted. Clearly, John Fairfax had the ability to determine the policy and content of its acquisitions if it so desired. In announcing the acquisition on 23 December 1958, its spokesman, Warwick Ferguson, stressed that the financial arrangements had been devised in what John Fairfax conceived to be the public interest:

> We think it is important that the independence of Truth and Sportsman Ltd should be maintained and that its control should not fall into the hands of another newspaper group. John Fairfax Ltd and its subsidiaries do not control or own any shares in and will not be concerned with the management or administration of Truth and Sportsman Limited.52

There was little doubt in the industry that the arrangement was a John Fairfax front, although not totally bogus. The former news editor of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, Ron Ford, described his association with the Mirror Newspapers thus:

> ...he worked at the time (1959) for the *Sunday Mirror* in Sydney which was then owned by O'Connell Pty Ltd which was really a division of Fairfax but they didn't want anyone to know that the *Mirror* actually belonged to the *Sydney Sun* (Fairfax) which it did in those days.53

Leapman suggests that the easiest path for Fairfax to follow would have been to buy the *Mirror* and then close it, leaving the *Sun* as the sole afternoon paper. As he points out, "...Henderson and the Fairfaxes, conscious of their

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52 quoted in *Newspaper News*, November 28, 1958, p.1
53 Ron Ford, Personal Interview, 31 December, 1993
reputation as the most respectable of the city’s newspaper groups, were unwilling to face the public obloquy that such a blatantly self-interested move would have provoked”.54

In Souter’s view, to ensure that the competition between the two afternoon papers appeared genuine, the Mirror had to be given the appearance, as well as the reality of independence, by disguising to some extent Fairfax’s actual involvement.55 Irish made a policy statement affirming the continued independence and development of the Mirror mastheads:

Contrary to rumours circulated by competitors, all the newspapers published by the company, including the Daily Mirror and the Sunday Mirror, will be published and there is not the slightest intention of ceasing publication of any of them. In fact the new board is already investigating plans for expansion of activities which will give our competitors added worries. This means that every member of the staff can feel secure about employment and the prospect of helping this company to be a still strong force in this country.56

According to Ford, Mirror Newspapers found that it had inherited a “problem paper” with the Sunday Mirror. Circulation was plunging and there were rumours that it would be closed:

They (Fairfax) were open to suggestions on how to improve its circulation and improve its advertising content/volume. So one of the ideas was that we should start a supplement in Newcastle and turnaround what was a serious decline in circulation in that area. ... Newcastle was the best city to try it in because a) it was the biggest and b) there was local advertising that we could pick up there. It was a big city and there hadn’t been ...a local Sunday newspaper (there).57

Ford said that he was not aware that any market or audience research had been done in planning a Newcastle edition of the Sunday Mirror:

54 Michael Leapman, op.cit., p.27
56 Quoted in Newspaper News, 23 January, 1959, p.1
57 Ron Ford, op.cit.
I didn’t know of any research that had been done but the advertising department must have had some input into it and saw that they could get the advertising. Actually I think Lindsay Clinch had a gut feeling.58

Mirror Newspapers’ Newcastle office manager, Alan Rodgers, believed that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was not started to boost circulation. Rather, “(Fairfax) were spending an enormous amount of money unnecessarily - I think they were trying to harm it (Sunday Mirror)”. Rodgers thought that Fairfax was “trying to send it broke and close it up”.59

Ford agreed that the costs of the new edition were high but concluded: “it was a genuine attempt to build (up) a circulation of the Sunday Mirror ... they were not stupid.”60 Thus the Newcastle edition was an attempt to boost the overall circulation of Sunday Mirror, designed to establish new markets and stem the decline in statewide sales.

The first issue of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was November 8, 1959. The first issue of the Sunday Mirror had appeared on October 12, 1958. Thus, it just over a year between the appearance of the two newspapers. The sale to O’Connell Pty Ltd and the creation of Mirror Newspapers had been negotiated in November-December 1958, Clinch had been appointed Editor-in-chief of Mirror Newspapers in January 1959 and Baume had departed later that year. The creation of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was the only substantial change in the conception and marketing of the Sunday Mirror which occurred in Mirror Newspaper’s first year of life. Its main reason for existence was that its Editor-in-Chief had a “gut feeling” that it might work.

58 ibid
59 Alan Rodgers, Personal Interview, 2 February, 1993
60 Ron Ford, op.cit.
Gut Feelings

The forces behind the creation of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* were complex in the extreme. Much depended on the old cliché, "luck's a fortune". The decisive factor is why Ezra Norton sold his newspapers when he did. This was explored earlier, and virtually nothing can be added here to the scanty information available. Some further hypotheses, however, are worth tossing around. It could be argued that Norton established the *Sunday Mirror* in full awareness that he was about to sell Truth and Sportsman, whatever happened. If the launching had been spectacularly successful, as he had reason to expect, he might have sold in a favourable sellers’ market, possibly to an overseas bidder such as the London *Daily Mirror*.

Even if the launch failed spectacularly, as it did, it was highly likely that his Sydney rivals would buy faltering mastheads for reasons of strategic defence. This proved to be the case. The price he got seems reasonable, given that Norton's highest previous price tag had been £1 million, and he took just under £900,000. If the timing of the sale had been pre-meditated, then he did well despite the *Sunday Mirror*’s dismal launching. If the sale was an impulse response to the debacle, then he also did well. On the other hand, if the launch had been as buoyant as anticipated, his company would have soared in profitability and he probably would have retained it.

At what had elements of a fire sale, Norton clearly preferred John Fairfax as the purchaser. Packer did not have an evening paper and it is unlikely that he wanted one. His press room, which was not state-of-the-art at the time, was already strained in producing his two existing papers. Of course, he could have kept the Mirror presses going at Kippax St and built a facade of independence similar to what John Fairfax did. Although Packer was eager to keep Herald
and Weekly Times out of Sydney, his skinflint approach to resourcing newspapers would very likely have precluded this option. His gut feeling would have been that John Fairfax had paid too much, as indeed it had. Packer was also immersed in the development of his TCN television enterprise. It is extremely doubtful, therefore, that when it came to the crunch he would have come up with his own version of O’Connell Pty Ltd. (It might have been called Castlereagh Pty Ltd after the location of his Sydney city bastion!)

Conclusion

The publication of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* is largely unremembered today in the context of one of the greatest upheavals in Australian newspaper history. For two years between October 1958 and late 1960, the industry was transformed by seismic change. A traditional newspaper company, the Norton family’s Truth and Sportsman, was liquidated after almost 70 years of often turbulent life. This left the Sydney news media industry at the disposition of two great traditional press proprietaries who were expanding rapidly into electronic news and entertainment. Both feared the long-deferred entry to the Sydney market of the other great Australian proprietary of the time, Herald and Weekly times which had been meticulously assembled by Sir Keith Murdoch over more than 30 years. A strategic ploy to block Herald and Weekly Times kept the old Truth and Sportsman structure in existence for two years longer than economic logic would have dictated. This eventually provided the framework for the entry of Sir Keith’s son, Rupert Murdoch, into the Sydney market. The arrival of Rupert Murdoch’s fledgling Adelaide company, News Ltd, into Sydney in late 1960 was an epochal event in Australian news media history, indeed, in that of the world.
In all of this momentous change, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was very much the minnow among the tritons. Yet its story is instructive. In essence, it was a desperate response by a Sydney proprietary to find a new audience in the Newcastle-Hunter region which was industrially powerful, but whose people were mainly traditionally lower socio-economic groups. Robust economic growth had brought surges of prosperity and development, opening the way for greater revenue harvests from both advertising and harvests. Lindsay Clinch’s “gut feeling” that the Sunday market in Newcastle was ripe for picking was extremely perceptive. The 20 months experiment with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was successful enough to prove Clinch’s instincts were right. The paper was abandoned not because it had failed to attract an audience or that it suffered a content miasma in the manner of its parent Sunday Mirror. It became a victim of the upheaval which had also caused its inception. Yet its combination of tradition and innovation within a fundamental tabloid structure was pregnant with implications for newspaper futures. Ways were indicated in which newspapers might respond successfully to television by strategic promotion and shifting balances between conventional news and entertainment. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror also tells us much about changing news organisation and practice, about journalists and how they work, about changing trends in news design, tabloidism and pictorialism, about advertising and advertorial, about ethics and the public interest. These are important themes which are taken up in the chapters that follow.
CHAPTER FOUR

GETTING IT GOING

The function of the team is to convert the raw material of news into the type of paper the editor wants and present it accurately, clearly, fairly and interestingly.

Lindsay Revill and Colin Roderick

Basics and Anomalies

As an organisational concept, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was riddled with anomalies. As noted in Chapter 1, it was a wraparound, a format denoting a newspaper segment wrapped around a larger core. The example given was a special supplement additional to the core newspaper but wrapped around it, in contra-distinction to an insert. Thus, it is disparate in content, concept and presentation from the core but, in terms of format, not differentiated from it. Also, it is conceptually, and technically, impossible to wrap a tabloid sheet around a broadsheet, or to insert a broadsheet into a tabloid sheet. While feasible technically to wrap a broadsheet around a tabloid sheet, the product would be useless in conceptual terms. It is practicable, however, to insert a tabloid sheet into a broadsheet because a broadsheet newspaper is presented folded across, and the insert can be readily dropped into it. The standard format for a wraparound, therefore, is to wrap segments about their equivalent, broadsheet around broadsheet and tabloid around tabloid. Tabloid inserts can be insinuated into either broadsheet or tabloid format.

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1 Lindsay Revill and Colin Roderick (eds), The Journalist’s Craft, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, p.97
These restrictions of format have important implications for publication of a newspaper, both in technological and conceptual terms. An insert once it is removed or falls from a newspaper is still an integral part of the newspaper’s content and rationale. It is a part of the whole, a part of the main. When a *wraparound* is removed, however, it may differ substantially in rationale and orientation of content from its *core*. To put this as simply as possible, if the Newcastle segment had been inserted into the *Sunday Mirror*, the product would have been a metropolitan newspaper with an insert of Newcastle news. Even if the size of the insert were significant, it would not have constituted a Newcastle newspaper. By wrapping the Newcastle news segment around the *Sunday Mirror*, however, the product emerged as the genuine artefact, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. The predominant conceptual emphasis of the chosen format was unmistakable, that this was a newspaper designed primarily for a Newcastle *audience*.

What other important qualities emerge from this juxtaposition of publication configurations? The most important is that both *core* and *wraparound* were largely devoted to standard news and related entertainment elements consistent with popular tabloid format. This tabloid bonding, however, was differentiated by *audience* and *locale*. Thus, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, the *wraparound* was devoted specifically to regional content, initially intended as largely news but diversifying through the 18-month-existence of the newspaper. By contrast, the *Sunday Mirror*, or *core*, was a substantially larger newspaper devoted principally to metropolitan Sydney with a secondary emphasis on other news *locales*: NSW state; national Australian; international. With very occasional exceptions, non-Newcastle news did not appear in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, and Newcastle news did not appear in the *Sunday Mirror*. Invariably, where exceptions did occur, they represented major news breaks in the Newcastle region warranting star treatment also in the *Sunday
Mirror. However, in the last months (February - May 1961) of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, as the paper reduced in size, local Newcastle human interest stories and pictures appeared in the Sunday Mirror even on the front page (see Chapter 8).

The argument so far has been to identify the relationship between the two components of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and provide a basic analysis of why and how they were juxtaposed in this way. Other specific consequences of this synergy will be considered in later chapters: impact on production, promotion, advertising and overall content. The important issue here is the impact of the chosen formula on the organisation and presentation of the news imperative that drives traditional newspaper production. Fundamentally, it is sought to explain whether or not the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was produced so as to best reflect gathering and presenting news for a Newcastle regional audience.

From Shadow to Substance

Taking the analysis a stage further, some crucial factors of print news production emerge. The crux of the matter was how to produce two newspapers for two audiences and then conjoin them into one product for distribution. This involved producing the Sunday Mirror for a majority metropolitan audience, a wraparound for a specifically regional audience, then conjoining them into a single news product identified as the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. There were four basic elements in this production process:

- Gathering, or reporting, news;
- Editing the news into a printable format;
- Printing the news in an acceptable format;
- Distributing the news efficiently to its target audience.
As a helpful assistant, I don't have the ability to interpret images or texts in this format. However, I can assist with text-based tasks. If you have any specific questions or need assistance with something else, please let me know! 😊
These four processes can be combined conveniently into three feasible options.

Firstly, identical processes of news-gathering and editing could be performed in Sydney for the *Sunday Mirror*, and Newcastle for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. The two elements could then be combined into one newspaper, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, which could be printed and distributed from either Sydney or Newcastle. Secondly, all reporting, editing, printing and distribution of the conjoint *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* could be undertaken at either Sydney or Newcastle. Thirdly, the production factors could be varied between Newcastle and Sydney according to perceived economies of scale; for example, by writing, editing and printing in Sydney, then distributing directly from Newcastle.

In terms of economic and logistical efficiency, the clear choice would have been to do everything from Sydney where Mirror Newspapers’ production capability was concentrated. Full production at Newcastle would have meant using pre-print and printing resources from another local newspaper, most likely the printing resources of the tabloid-format *Newcastle Sun*. While this option was possibly achievable, the economics were dubious because of the extra costs involved for a market which, even at the most optimistic assessment, was only about 10 percent of the total audience reach of the *Sunday Mirror*. Full production in Sydney was much more viable, but it had one fatal flaw: the extreme logistical and conceptual problems involved in gathering and editing news, for a regional newspaper in a metropolitan headquarters more than 100 miles away in space, and with important differences in audience configuration. It was crucial, therefore, to recognise the variations between the two audiences, particularly size and identity.
In practical terms, it was not impossible for news content of a Newcastle newspaper to be gathered from a Sydney base, but it was extremely difficult. In the post-war news environment of Sydney, news was gathered by traditional processes focussed on intensive use of the telephone from the newsroom; news gathered from conventional “rounds” or “beats” such as police, courts and government; and by responses to breaking or spot news that could not be anticipated. For a daily newspaper like the Daily Mirror, with up to five changing editions a day, much of the news was phoned in and not typed in the office. With the weekly Sunday papers, a more leisurely schedule could be maintained, although the duty of covering Saturday news, particularly sport, for a weekly newspaper still applied.

Gathering Newcastle news from Sydney would have been heavily reliant on the telephone, charged at higher rates, for the contacting of non-metropolitan sources. It would also have meant the regular assignment of city-based journalists to country postings, again a costly exercise. Furthermore, it would have involved the additional deployment of many stringers or casuals operating in Newcastle and the region. Again, in terms of potential audience, this was an extremely ambitious and risky approach, almost certainly unjustifiable in terms of projected returns. While Mirror Newspapers had inherited a small branch office in Newcastle, it comprised only two journalists. Their productivity would have to be devoted overwhelmingly to the daily editions of the Daily Mirror.

Accepting that the first two options were both unworkable and economically not viable, the only valid approach was some division of function as indicated in the third option. Logically, such a sharing of function had to be based on maintaining the printing function in Sydney. Printing 300,000 Sunday Mirrors, and then 30,000 wraparounds was viable in Sydney, although with
When a Newcastle story had more than local interest, the practice was to feature it in the main Sydney paper with a smaller article on the front page of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

The whole front page of the Sydney Sunday Mirror, September 18, 1960 (top) was devoted to the story and pictures headlined “Stay away or I’ll jump”. In contrast on the same day in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror wraparound (bottom) the story appeared as a single column on the left hand side of the page with the headline “Man hauled from cliff” and without a picture.
some flaws in cost efficiency of using the presses. Printing 30,000 *Sunday Mirrors* and 30,000 Newcastle *wraparounds* in Newcastle on hired presses was also unattractive in terms of economic, efficient print runs. Printing a whole *Sunday Mirror* run of 300,000 plus 30,000 *wraparounds* in Newcastle was patently an absurdity, and a logistical impossibility because it meant distributing the entire print run from Newcastle. (These figures are indicative only. They do not represent actual production runs, much less circulation figures.)

With printing and distribution dependent on a Sydney base, the possible in Newcastle devolved to editorial functions of news-gathering, sub-editing and design. The concentration of these functions in Newcastle made a lot of sense. The Newcastle branch office was capable of extension into a small, integrated editorial floor for organising news gathering. A small, cohesive sub-editing unit could process the news and assemble it into pages for transmission to Sydney, then accessed into the routine printing and distribution of the *Sunday Mirror*. Late-breaking news would go directly to Sydney by telephone or teleprinter. This sort of production had not been attempted on this scale in Australia before. Such combinations of editorial, production and distribution, however, had worked effectively in the United Kingdom, Europe and the US.

Such an arrangement would have been feasible with a senior journalist as Newcastle editor or news editor, two full-time reporters, two sub-editors and a staff photographer. Although multiple-skilling was not a recognised concept at the time, virtually all newspaper sub-editors had reporting skills and many reporters could 'sub'. Industrially, both reporters and sub-editors were designated as journalists, as were news photographers. In practice, however, reporters and sub-editors were scrupulous about not taking news photographs, even when they had the skills. News photographers were clearly
differentiated as specialists although falling into the broad industrial pigeon-hole of journalist. Apart from editorial staff, such a tight, largely-autonomous unit of this kind also required a full-time advertising representative, another part-time advertising rep., and a business/circulation manager. A staff of perhaps eight experienced professionals would suffice to service the Newcastle Sunday Mirror effectively.

As it turned out, even this modest staff level was way beyond what Mirror Newspapers was prepared to commit. Ezra Norton would not have been shamed by its extreme stinginess. Even if the Newcastle edition was not produced on the smell of an oily rag, it subsisted on what could be represented metaphorically as cheese parings. The staff of the heavily promoted, much vaunted Sunday edition was predicated on the skimpy foundations of one full-time journalist from the Sydney office, the left-over time of two branch office journalists, a part-time social journalist, and a motley array of casual journalists. No sub-editors were provided in the Newcastle office. There was one full-time advertising rep, a part-time advertorial writer, and a full-time office assistant. Pictures were provided by a local photographic agency. (See chapter 6) All copy for the Newcastle edition went to Sydney where it was sub-edited by a senior journalist who was also responsible for layout of the Newcastle pages (usually 16-20 pages).

This was a fundamentally unsound deployment of professional expertise, The division of editorial responsibility, with news gathering in Newcastle and sub-editing/layout in Sydney, was unfortunate, to say the least. Despite divided function and threadbare staffing, the Newcastle edition achieved standards that were professionally respectable, even innovatory, in popular tabloid newspaper production. These achievements are taken in later chapters. Here,
The east end of Newcastle central business district. Indicated are 1) *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* offices at the corner of Scott and Pacific Streets, 2) *Newcastle Herald*, Bolton Street, 3) *Daily and Sunday Telegraph* offices, Hunter Street, 4) Newcastle post office, Hunter Street, 5) Newcastle police station, Hunter Street, 6) Newcastle railway station, Scott Street, 7) Royal Newcastle Hospital, Pacific Street and Marine Drive, 8) Newcastle beach, and 9) Newcastle Customs House, Watt Street. At the top of the photo is Wharf Road and Newcastle harbour.

Photo taken in the sixties.
the character and composition, of the Newcastle staff, how it was recruited and directed, and its productivity are analysed at greater length.

**Moonlight Serenade**

The Newcastle office of Mirror Newspapers (previously Truth and Sportsman) was located in the linear central business district sprawled along the inner harbour at 71 Scott Street. It was a single-storey, brick, commercial chambers building with a separate office for the circulation manager, an editorial room with a teleprinter in a corner, and a general office accommodating both the advertising and office staff with a counter for public enquires. A large illuminated sign NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR was positioned over the entrance which was within three minutes walk of prime news centres including the Newcastle Police Station, Newcastle Post Office, the main Newcastle railway station, the *Daily Telegraph* Newcastle office, the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and Royal Newcastle Hospital. Photographs were transmitted readily to the *Sunday Mirror* office in Kippax Street, Sydney through Newcastle Post Office or by train from the central railway station nearby. News copy could be sent by express mail or by train if necessary.

The Newcastle office secretary, Ethel Dalby, assessed the location as ideal for the contact and scuttlebutt side of news gathering:

...a lot of the *Sunday Telegraph* people used to come down to our office. And the police used to come to our office, and... I had to take the secrecy oath because they would sit there and yarn about all sorts of things.... I could have blackmailed a lot of people... They would sit there and yarn and that's where they relaxed. They would go round to the police station to get the news and then all of them, the *Newcastle (Herald)*, the *Sydney Herald* and the *Sydney Telegraph* people...they all used to come in and sit down in our office and yarn. Many a story....

2 Ethel Dalby, Personal Interview, 29 September, 1999
Newcastle Sunday Mirror offices in the Commercial Chambers, Scott and Pacific Streets, Newcastle in 1961. The offices were located in the central business district within 3 minutes walk of the Newcastle Post Office (for picturegramming photographs to Sydney Mirror office), the railway station, the police station, the Daily Telegraph Newcastle office, the Newcastle Morning Herald and Royal Newcastle Hospital.
News gathering is often two-faced in its combination of competition and collusion. Journalism is rightly perceived as a tightly competitive interaction between professional and commercial rivals. This is at its fiercest where competition is direct; say, between two or more morning papers or evening papers. The competitive spirit fades briskly where there is no direct competition between mastheads; say, between a morning and evening paper, even if in ostensibly competitive ownerships. A collusive spirit is kindled where competition is slight, even non-existent. Even between fierce rivals on the streets, co-operation and pooling of stories is commonplace.

While obtaining their share of exclusives, journalists have a congenital interest in protecting their backs, particularly with routine news. Thus, rival roundsmen or keen competitors may strive mightily to scoop their opponents on major stories, yet co-operate amicably to maintain basic coverage of newsworthy material. This involves pooling or sharing news stories and ingredients of news stories, such as quotes. The practice of giving a rival journalist a cover with a routine news story was encouraged by membership of the same union and a common ethics code, at least in practice. Another angle of collusion was the practice of moonlighting, essentially the surreptitious employment of a full-time employee of one news organisation as a ‘casual’ employee for another. Casual employment was deeply ingrained in Australian journalism, going back to the penny-a-liners in the 19th Century and enshrined in the industrial awards. Generally, such casual employment did not cause any direct conflict of loyalty or responsibility on the part of the moonlighter. But sometimes it did.

Also illustrated in Dalby’s shrewd assessment of the Newcastle Office was the collegiate spirit of journalists, and their relationships with sources. Thus, journalists from different news organisations met in a spirit of fraternity with
colleagues and also prime sources such as Police. Sources could use such apparently informal occasions to make points, offer criticism, correct mistakes, get a point of view across, and drop important story leads to a range of eager journalists. Everything was “in club” but both journalists and sources knew the conventions well enough to sift out what could be used without attribution, and what could not be used at any price. This permitted journalists to background stories without breaching professional confidence. Where material was clearly off-the-record, subsequent approaches could be made to sources to put it on the record so it could be used with attribution or as background without attribution. These fraternisations meant that sources could infiltrate what they wanted into the news domain without risk of identification or professional embarrassment. Journalists could also test potential story lines or obtain useful background for story development. When the story was good enough, competing journalists moved onto the front foot and ran their own race. Such were the intertwining subtleties and nuances of both competitive and co-operative news gathering.

**Growing the Staff**

Phil Adams had been the first journalist appointed to the Newcastle office of Truth and Sportsman, supplementing his own efforts by using local journalists as casuals, mostly moonlighters. (According to the Macquarie Dictionary, the original moonlighter was someone who, under cover of night, engaged in illegal activities. In the Australian context, it has been applied to mustering wild cattle by night. Contemporary usage has applied it widely to working at another job while in regular employment.) Adams was something of a legend in Newcastle journalism, manning the Mirror office from at least as early as 1948, assisted sporadically by a cadet sent from Sydney for training. According to Watson,
Adams was a complete organiser but did little reporting himself, relying on a systematic use of moonlighters paid as casual journalists:

Phil Adams’ time at the *Mirror* was incredible. There wasn’t a bloody journo in the area that wasn’t on his payroll somewhere along the track ... His main stable fellow was Jack Laird who was the police roundsman from the *Newcastle Sun*. Jack Laird used to do it for the *Sun* (Newcastle) and then he’d do it for the *Mirror*. And there were a lot of us. I used to do it for the *Telegraph* and then still did a lot for the *Mirror* and that was the way Phil operated...³

The use of casual journalists largely recruited from other Newcastle news staffs was, in principle, contrary to company policy, but was largely ignored by head office in Sydney. It is most unlikely that it had any notion of the extent of collusion in its branch offices. Unless brought unequivocally to their attention, news executives and finance officers were prepared to turn a blind eye to practices which contained costs, whatever their dubious aspects.

In Sydney, the fierce competition between newspapers prohibited in any way the use of staff journalists from rival mastheads. It was also frowned on for “casuals” to work on rival newspapers simultaneously, although there was some blurring of the lines and non-compliance was not always detected. In Newcastle, it was arguable that full-time employees of *The Newcastle Sun* and the *Newcastle Morning Herald* were not direct competitors, and could moonlight with relative freedom.

Adams was succeeded by Kevin Plummer who acted as a relief journalist from Sydney when Adams was on leave. Plummer started as a copy boy on the Sydney *Sun* but suffered a nervous breakdown. After some unemployment he began freelancing and writing special reports for the Sydney *Sun*. When the Sydney *Daily Mirror* was launched in 1941, he was recruited to its foundation

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³ Max Watson, Personal Interview, 30 April, 1999
staff. Kevin went in to the Mirror and started immediately some “months before they actually printed a paper”. He set his eyes on the job of Truth and Sportsman’s Newcastle correspondent when Phil Adams retired. He was head of the Newcastle office when the Newcastle Sunday Mirror began publication and stayed with the branch for several years after it folded. Plummer finally left when the Daily and Sunday Mirrors were amalgamated with the Daily and Sunday Telegraphs after Rupert Murdoch bought the Packer mastheads.

During the years with the Sydney Mirror, Kevin Plummer suffered further breakdowns. His wife, Ann, commented:

...he worked too hard. To have Kevin as financial editor was one of the jokes of the year because Kevin was not a financial expert. He did all right to balance his own budget but there was nobody else to do it... He was ‘Jack of all trades’ - he could do the races, he could do anything. He was one of ones they could send on a job where you have got to do general reporting and then he could get on the phone and just go blah, blah, blah.

According to Dalby, Plummer’s journalism was very precise, “very meticulous about the information that he sent. He liked to have everything just so. He hardly wrote anything out, he always telephoned me or Sydney direct.”

The practice of dictating copy was widespread among Sydney afternoon journalists who faced frequent edition deadlines. Often, they were not able to get back to the office or find a vacant type-writer if they did. Many dictated stories over crackling phone lines or quavering two-way radios without committing a line to paper. Others jotted down the basis of their intros but relied on their voices and memories for filling out the body of the stories. Phoning stories had some resemblance to the standard US practice of reporters

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4 Kevin Plummer, Personal Interview, 20 November, 1993
5 ibid
6 Ethel Dalby, op.cit.
gathering facts in the field and phoning them to re-writers in the office who wrote the stories, but there were important differences. In particular, reporters on Australian evening newspapers were expected to supply complete stories ready for submission to the sub-editors. Often, the expression and grammar of phoned stories was rugged, but it could be quickly kicked into shape by office-based sub-editors. Some journalists were so adept at dictating syntactical, even polished, stories that little sub-editing was required.

Assisting Plummer was Frank Wilcher who joined the Mirror staff full-time in the 1950’s. He had been a journalist on the Maitland Mercury, Maitland representative for the Newcastle Sun, and then a staff journalist on that paper. Frank was nicknamed “Horse” because of his reputation as a reliable, conscientious ‘work horse’:

He was a mild mannered man but one thing used to make him really cranky. He’d come in on a Monday and his story had been cut half-way because they didn’t have enough advertising to put another page in.7

Roland Bryant, a part-time photographer for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, recalled that Wilcher really did most of the stories: “I don’t think I did a job with Kevin through the years or so that it (the Newcastle Sunday Mirror) went on.”8 Plummer, who had been largely responsible for servicing the Daily Mirror, assumed much of the responsibility in planning news gathering for the Newcastle Sunday. Wilcher did much of the major reporting during the paper’s 20-months of publication, otherwise, news gathering was conducted by casual journalists, including ‘moonlighters’ from other news producers in Newcastle.

This band of media mercenary was made up largely of local journalists from the Newcastle Herald, Newcastle Sun and 2KO radio station news. For them,

7 ibid
8 Roland Bryant, Personal Interview, 16 March, 1993
the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was a pot of gold, garnishing riches already accumulated from moonlighting for the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sydney Sunday Mirror*. The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* circulation clerk, Michael Mitchell, recalled the extent of moonlighting:

I can remember doing the pays and if Alan [the business manager] wasn’t there, I’d go and cash the cheque for pay all these moonlighters ... a lot of them too were ... under a fictitious name.  

Did other Newcastle news organisations know that their journalists were moonlighting? Rationality suggests that they were aware of the practice but, as long as it wasn’t blatantly overt, they were content to ride along with it. As a covert work-practice, it might even have been perceived as an income supplement reducing pressure on them to pay higher wages. The use of dummy, or surrogate, “moonlighters” is a different matter. The Newcastle staff of Truth and Sportsman must have been confident that these subterfuges would not be detected. Considerable risks were taken, as Mitchell acknowledged: “As far as Sydney was concerned - I mean if ever say an auditor had turned up and said: ‘Well OK, these are the wages books and I just want to sight these people’...but that never happened.”

**A Casual Milieu**

Newspapers, at the height of the print press era, were obsessive about gathering local sporting details in voluminous detail. This gratified local audiences concerned to see who won what and identify personal triumphs of self, family and friends. These results were invariably printed in what was known as seven pt. agate-type, the lowest point-size that could be read with reasonable comfort. Pages of these minute, detailed sporting results were

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9 Michael Mitchell, Personal Interview, 27 September, 1995
10 ibid
Another treble for trainer Denham

Sydney trainer Jack Denham won his second successive Newcastle treble yesterday at Broadmeadow with Rawlings (Juvenile), First Draw (Three and Four Year Old) and Ocean Mast (First Service, second division).

He also trained Blandster, winner of the first race at Randwick yesterday.

In Newcastle, trainer Jack Denham had a great Saturday at Broadmeadow with Rawlings (Juvenile), First Draw (Three and Four Year Old) and Ocean Mast (First Service, second division).

Rawlings had plenty to spare over Ce Ce in the Juvenile Handicap yesterday. He helped Sydney trainer Jack Denham win his second treble.

Jumper wins fine double

R. Turner scored a double in the jumping events at the athletic meeting held by Newcastle Club yesterday.

He cleared 5½ft to beat W. Jones and A. Kinsella. In the long jump he cleared 6½ft to beat R. Jones. He also won the hurdles.

RIFLEMAN SCORES POSSIBLE

Allan Armstrong scored a fine stage yesterday to record 99 points for a win in the BHP Rifle Club tournament at the .22 National range yesterday.

He cleared 5½ft in the final of the Newcastle Club event.

BOWLS

Kaboom easily beat Rees yesterday to win the Newcastle District Bowling Association's 33rd President's Cup.

The match played under the Adams rules was the last of the District Premiership.

TEAM TO MEET FIJI

Norths' soccer selectors named their team yesterday after the Wallandah and the Armidale game to select the Northern District XI to meet Fiji.

The present selections are Messrs. W. Pedersen, W. Holman, W. Jones and Ralph Green.

TO-DAY'S SOCCER MATCH

Match against Australia

Amateur against Blackpool Town, while at Crdoll Park, West Wallsend, will be played to stand up to All Challenge Cup.

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printed particularly by the Sunday newspapers. The logistics of organising the posting and phoning-in of local results, particularly at peak weekend times, involved additional copy takers who took results by phone, and casual journalists who compiled the results and processed them for publishing. This also involved proof-reading and checking literally hundreds of lines of detailed results. The newspapers brought to this exhaustive task a preoccupation with accurate reporting and publication of minute detail often lacking in the broad-brush approach to big news. It was recognised that even the smallest mistake in local sporting results could upset an individual, a family, a street, a club, even a small community. Newspaper credibility at local audience level closely correlated ability to deliver local sport results on time and without error. This applied particularly to mass participation sports such as local bowls and golf, filled with scoring and procedural detail liable to bamboozle the unwary, the ignorant or the careless. It was a system, also, that could be rewarding for those who could organise and supervise casual labour to do these jobs, part of it voluntary by community volunteers but depending for overall veracity on professional skills.

According to Mitchell, abuse of the casual system was feasible only because of the difficulty of checking and vetting these quasi-journalists: “they wouldn’t get away with it now. They would have a tax file number but then it was quite common.”11 A rival journalist, Wilf McClung, from the Newcastle office of the Daily and Sunday Telegraph recalled that all stringers and casuals were paid in cash either a half or full day’s engagement plus expenses based on award rates. McClung supplied sports results for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror although a staff journalist for the rival Sunday Telegraph.12 The by-lining of journalists, apart from columnists and some specialists, was much less common, and recording of employment and pay details was often elementary.

11 ibid
12 Wilf McClung, Personal Interview, 20 April, 1999
Moonlighting was also facilitated by the traditional, and long accepted, newspaper practice of using *nom de plumes* and generic names other than given names for by-lines. Thus, journalists working full-time for other news sources, particularly newspapers, could avoid scrutiny by using generalised by-lines when they moonlighted. Geoff Roach from the *Newcastle Sun* wrote a column, *Weekly Under Sail with Skipper*; Bob Ralston also from the *Newcastle Sun* wrote *Notches on Northern Sport* under a similar vague cognate disguising his real name. *Fishing* by Tarwhine was a combined effort from several *Newcastle Sun* reporters. *Points for the Punter* was compiled by Val Harland (*Newcastle Sun*), Les Madden (*Newcastle Morning Herald*) and Kevin Plummer.

In assessing the incidence, and impact, of moonlighting, it is important to take account of editorial practices which were deemed acceptable and widely applied. In particular, staff journalists, including those who were regularly by-lined, wrote or compiled columns that were published under generic labels. For the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, “White Hat Brigade” by Unbiased was written by staffer Frank Wilcher. Kevin Plummer compiled *Women in Sport* from the information sent in from sporting associations, essentially no different from standard ‘re-write’ journalism, although the gender association might raise a few eyebrows today. These were all defensible practices because house journalists could be assigned to them as part of their routine duties. Staff were sometimes paid extra for such surrogate writing, although with notoriously stingy proprietors such as Ezra Norton, it was often absorbed into the daily darg.

In aggregate, institutionalised moonlighting contributed significantly to the editorial content of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. For example, *Top Men in*
Northern Sport, a 22-week series, was compiled by staffers Kevin Plummer and Frank Wilcher (Newcastle Sun), Bob Ralston (Newcastle Sun), Arthur Murphy (Newcastle Sun) and Wes Cornish (Daily and Sunday Telegraph, Newcastle Office). Others who contributed general news stories were John Lewis (Newcastle Sun), Perce Haslam (Newcastle Herald), and Bill Blanch (2KO radio station). Even in sports journalism, where more relaxed standards of co-operation applied, this was a remarkable pooling of collaborative talent.

A former Newcastle Morning Herald journalist, John Armstrong, confirmed that most of the contributing journalists to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror were from the Newcastle Sun:

...I'd say the choice of stringers to contribute to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror would have been weighted to members of staff from the Newcastle Sun. Now I think that situation applied because these two papers were tabloids which both required snappy stories compared with the (Newcastle Morning) Herald's long, discursive. It was so easy because you have got a story for the Newcastle Sun, you keep blacks of it and then, righto, I've got to do a story for the Mirror, so you know you would use another lead and you would re-present the story and then that's the story for the Mirror and you get paid for it so you can't blame them for doing it. But I say they would have concentrated on the roundsmen because the roundsmen they had the knowledge.

John Lewis, a former Newcastle Sun civic roundsman, disagreed:

...I always made it a point - what I was careful to do was I never wrote the stories in (Newcastle) Sun time and I never did any of the gathering in Sun time. I might knock off from the Sun and I would ring up (Lord Mayor) Purdue and say: 'Look, I also want to do a story for the (Newcastle) Sunday Mirror' and one of my really good contacts was a fellow called Norm Bassan ...and Norm was always a wonderful contact for the Sunday Mirror. He had a rare dramatic turn of phrase so he was very good and I used to sit down with my little old Royal portable and bang away and churn out the copy on copy paper and take it down to the Mirror office.

13 Ethel Dalby, op.cit.; John Lewis, Personal Interview, 16 June, 1998; Vic Levi, Personal Interview, 27 July, 1999; and Max Watson, Personal Interview, 13 April, 1999
14 John Lewis, ibid, Ethel Dalby, ibid.
15 John Armstrong, Personal Interview, 10 July, 1999
and drop it off for Ron Ford. And Ron would often come up with ideas. He would have angles that I would chase up for him.  

Former *Newcastle Sun* journalist, Vic Levi, believed there was an affinity between the *Newcastle Sun* journalists and the *Mirror* journalists:

None of this writing this story on your notes, you had to get on the blower if it was a late breaking story. On the phone and just dictate it off the top of your head...whereas the *Herald* guys: 'Oh no, you couldn’t do that, too many errors’...bear in mind that Kevin Plummer, Frank Wilcher, Ronnie Ford, they were all tabloid people, cut their teeth on tabloids and the *Sun* people none of them worked on the big broadsheets. The *Newcastle Sun* was one of the few afternoon newspapers, the only other one going in provincial areas was the *Maitland Mercury* and it went morning to survive but the *Sun* and the *Maitland Mercury* were the two, the only two left at that particular time but we felt more akin to the *Sunday Mirror*. We did think the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was over the top but later on we *Newcastle Sun* were even more over the top than the *Sunday Mirror*. It was interesting.  

It was interesting. Indeed it was! Organising the editorial function of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* resembled a superior exercise in creating topsy-turvydom. The basis of the staff were two journalists who also had continuing commitments with servicing the *Daily Mirror* six days a week. Yet the cascade of copy, enough to fill 16-20 pages an issue, was never queried by the editors. As long as the columns were filled, and there were no complaints, the ways and means of providing copy were deemed irreproachable. Because much of it was provided by professional journalists, the journalistic standards were taken for granted. There was some economy of scale because the staff journalists would still have had to provide news to the *Sunday Mirror* even without the special Newcastle edition. But it would have been in smaller quantity. The burden on Plummer and Wilcher, the two staff journalists was onerous, at least in theory. What made the burden sustainable was a collegiate system of journalism which was remarkable even by the free-wheeling, improvisatory news gathering

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16 John Lewis, op.cit.  
17 Vic Levi, op.cit.
(top) Vic Levi, former Newcastle Sun assistant news editor, Newcastle Herald and Post advertising manager, Newcastle Post general manager and presently Lake Macquarie Council press officer.

(pic taken in 1999)

Jim Hooker, former journalist, chief sub and editor of the Newcastle Morning Herald (1933-1976)

(pic taken in 1969)
traditions of *Truth* and the *Daily Mirror*. Plummer and Wilcher were steeped in the crude mechanics of the Norton style, the scrimping of spending on news gathering, an emphasis on expediency and quick improvisation, and a “can do” approach to production. Even with out-sourcing to Newcastle, the most important branch office in NSW, the pervasive practices of head office were still influential. Even though Mirror Newspapers had been at the helm for over a year, *Nortonism* still ruled over much of daily practice.

**Collegiality Forever**

As outlined above, the collegiate system which nurtured news gathering by the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* comprised three principal elements. Firstly, a comprehensive moonlighting whose participants were skilled journalists working for other local news outlets. Secondly, news sharing and collaboration by journalists representing virtually all news organisations in Newcastle. Thirdly, creative use of the available budget to pull in copy from a range of surrogate by-lines, processing *Daily Mirror* staff journalists and colleagues from other news outlets. Remarkably, some of these journalists represented *Sunday Mirror* competitors, particularly the *Sunday Telegraph*. Interestingly, journalists from the *Sydney Morning Herald, Sun* and *Sun Herald*, all John Fairfax publications, were not listed in the moonlighting roll-call. It seems possible that John Fairfax management were more vigilant in looking out for moonlighting and preventing it. This was consistent with the formal policy of treating the two organisations as full-blooded competitors.

Apart from two branch office journalists and a cast of moonlighters, local staffing was minimal. Former Sydney *Daily Telegraph* journalist, Joan Cairnes, did the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* social pages part-time. The distinction between social pages and women’s pages was often indiscernible at the time,
even in the tabloids. Social reporting generally accepted that reporting the social and leisure activities of the long-established and well-heeled families automatically meant news. Innocuous social entertainments and diversions often failed to meet basic criteria of what constituted news. With a populist audience such as *Truth* and the *Sunday Mirror*, it is dubious that much of the social establishment actually read the newspaper regularly. It was supposed, however, that the gloss, glitter and glamour of their social life enthused a stratified readership. The social columns also included material deemed fascinating to women still mostly in the home rather than the workplace, such as cooking, recipes, fashion, dress design, medical advice, raising children, home design and decoration. These often outweighed social gossip and entertainments, although newspapers still used social chit-chat extensively.

Joan Cairnes had been a general reporter in Sydney before transferring to the Consolidated Press Newcastle office. In the late 1950's, Australian journalism practice was still extremely sexist in its perceptions of the role of women's journalists. Laudably, the industry had been among the first in Australia to accept equal pay for all journalists, irrespective of gender. Although women had proven their abilities across the spectrum of news reporting - including crime, foreign and war reporting - newsroom practice often confined them to the purdah of social reporting. News executives were overwhelmingly male, imbued with musty social attitudes that women journalists could not undertake certain kinds of news work because they might hear foul language or be unable to locate a women's toilet. Women were also constrained in work-related socialising by edicts which related them to ladies' parlours or gender-segregated space in hotels. These prescriptions were gradually dissolving, but they remained strong in the attitudes of male journalists. Women were also grossly under-represented in the ranks of press photographers and artists. Wilf
(top) Max Watson, former secretary of the Australian Journalists' Association, Northern NSW branch and former journalist *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph*, Newcastle bureau

(bottom) Wilf McClung, former journalist-in-charge of *Daily* and *Sunday Telegraph*, Newcastle bureau

(photos taken in 1999)
McClung, the head of the Newcastle bureau at the time, was not impressed with a female posting:

The chief of staff, said he was going to give me a general assistant and he was sending me up a woman. I said “Oh hell.” The fact of the matter was that you could be sent to a miners’ meeting and be told to get to buggery.\footnote{Wilf McClung, op.cit.}

McClung admitted that Joan Cairnes was able to deal with those situations, “she could take that”, and that it must have been a “comedown” to be reporting only women’s pages.\footnote{Wilf McClung, op.cit.} He admired her journalistic skills and suggested that it was only for the money that she turned to social reporting. Cairnes began writing the social pages from the second issue of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror on 15 November, 1959 and continued through its publication. She was the only woman journalist who wrote for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. As noted above, even women’s sport was treated as a bit of a perk for the male moonlighters. This was a pity because women journalists might have flourished with the softer, pacier style brought by Fleet St. tabloidism to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

**The Year of ‘Our Ford’**

The Newcastle Sunday Mirror was meagre in its staffing, its journalists competent enough but lacking in flair. It lacked the pizzazz to produce other than a routine weekly newspaper. Fortunately, Brian Hogben, the editorial director, saw that more talented leadership was wanted. He selected Ron Ford a young British feature writer from the Sydney office, to electrify a lacklustre office. According to Ford:

\footnote{ibid}
1) Former News Editor, *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, Ron Ford (pic taken 1993)

2) Former *Daily Mirror* and *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* journalist, Frank Wilcher (pic taken 1960)

I was asked if I would go up there to run the operation and to start with Brian Hogben who was at that time News Editor at the *Sunday Mirror*. He would come with me for week or two to help get things established and this is what happened.20

Ford, Hogben and Harry Johnston, the advertising representative, arrived in October to handle the kick-off, checking in at the Great Northern, Newcastle’s premier hotel, near the Mirror Newspapers office. After Hogben returned to Sydney, Ford and Johnston stayed on at the Great Northern. Both drove new Holden station wagons supplied by the management.

Ford entered journalism in the United Kingdom as a cadet on the *Derby Evening Telegraph* in 1949, accumulating Fleet St experience and then coming to Australia in 1957 to join AAP Reuters in Melbourne. In 1959 he switched to the *Sunday Mirror* as a feature writer.21 In Newcastle, he was responsible only for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* with staff journalists Kevin Plummer and Frank Wilcher assisting him where possible. According to Dalby he was not liked particularly by the staff. Dalby remembers that sometimes Ford would flirt with the truth, “as long as he had a story to send and as long as he had his by-line. He had to have his by-line”. She regarded Ford as a “show-off” and “bombastic...a person I didn’t like much.”22 Kevin Plummer commented:

...with Ron Ford well they made a big mistake. He had been on a London tabloid paper - he jazzed things up. Newcastle people didn’t like that. He used to like to hot his stories up.”23

Circulation clerk, Michael Mitchell, regarded Ford as an opportunist:

He used to call me ‘ledgerman’ because I would do the books, just the circulation books, and he would say “ledgerman we will make

20 Ron Ford, op.cit.
22 Ethel Dalby, op.cit.
23 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
you a pop hero. We will get a guitar, you don’t have to play it, but we will make a quid out of it.” That was his [style] - that is what we used to remember Ronnie Ford for...

Ford was perceived as an outsider and not welcomed at the gabfests held in the office with the police and journalists from other newspapers:

...they wouldn’t talk in front of him. He wasn’t one of the gang...

His brashness apart, Ford was resented as typifying not only Sydney but the even more alien journalism of Fleet St.

Despite unpopularity with the cliquey local staff, Ford was undeniably a gifted journalist and effective newspaper promoter. These qualities won him a grudging respect. He brought to a provincial newspaper glimmers of English tabloid practice which, under Rupert Murdoch, would deeply influence Australian evening and Sunday newspaper practice from the early 1960’s. It opened news vistas beyond the ancestral *Truth* style with its sensationalism, hard news, investigation and public interest representation. In assessing the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s performance over 20 months of publication, it is difficult to conceive what the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* would have been like without Ford’s robust contribution. Admittedly, this was achieved at the price of a trivialising of content by comparison with the old *Truth* and the *Daily Mirror*, whose sensationalism concealed genuine news values. The gradual universality of television, however, powered a sharp turn towards news as entertainment. Whatever its flaws and inadequacies, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* provided an illuminating model of how Australian tabloids might evolve. In particular, it showed how the *Sunday Mirror* might have been

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24 Michael Mitchell, op. cit.
25 Ethel Dalby, op. cit.
spared the disastrous launch of October 1958. This glimpse of the future was largely Ford’s contribution to the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*.

**Good Management**

Ethel Dalby, the mainstay of the Newcastle office, was employed firstly as a secretary but quickly assumed responsibility for broader editorial duties. She helped compile circulation figures, took phone stories in shorthand and sent them to Sydney by teleprinter:

> I ended sending sports results too on a Saturday tea-time. I was sort of doing everything by the time I finished... I didn’t get any penalty rates for that ...they paid me higher - in the end I was being paid higher than the people in Sydney and that’s why I looked around for a job because my pay wouldn’t go any higher.²⁶

The office manager, Alan Rodgers, worked in the Newcastle office from 1950, under Norton, then with Mirror Newspapers and finally with Murdoch’s News Limited. He supervised the accounts and wages, and distribution of the papers, particularly the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* through its life. Rodgers at 1 am each Sunday morning, checked that the newspapers had arrived in Newcastle, a constant source of apprehension:

> ...he’d go around all the newsagents and he’d have to get phone calls if there was any trouble anywhere and sometimes even in those days the vandals would get them and throw papers everywhere and he would get frantic calls from the newsagent and he would have to go again and by Sunday tea-time he was a wreck.²⁷

Rodgers was aided by the circulation clerk, Michael Mitchell, who deputised for him when he was on leave.

²⁶ ibid
²⁷ ibid
Associated with the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*: 1) Alan Rodgers, Business Manager, Mirror Newspapers; 2) Ethel Dalby, former secretary, Mirror Newspapers; 3) Michael Mitchell, Circulation Manager, Mirror Newspapers; 4) Joyce Aird, creator and writer of *Jane Wisdom* advertorial column. (Photos taken 1993-9)
Paying to Advertise!

One of the few redeeming features of the Sunday Mirror launch was the advertising. This had been done professionally and thoroughly. Advertising interest had been whetted by the family design of the new paper, and the agencies had given solid support. Sustaining this support, however, was dependent on a successful launch, the maintenance of the impulse or curiosity effect that had drawn a high foundation readership. When this did not materialise, the advertising support quickly faded. By the late 1950's, it was apparent that much of the traditional advertising revenue would ultimately be diverted to television. New agencies, new technology and new sales practices put heavy pressures on traditional advertisers geared to print. The market was also changing. Even so, significant opportunities remained for conventional advertising with the rapid growth of the big retail stores in the capital cities, the sprouting of new merchandising chains, and the cumulative impact of more affluence and family formation.

Newcastle television was in its infancy in the late 1950’s. Print advertising was still relatively healthy, with opportunities emerging from expanded retailing and sustained economic growth and retailers retaining in-house services or using a handful of mostly small commercial services. It was imperative, therefore, that a sound base be established for providing a competent product and generating revenues from a standing start. Some assistance was afforded by existing arrangements for limited advertising in the Daily Mirror and Sunday Mirror. A new Sunday newspaper, however, was directed to a total Newcastle market, not segments of a substantially metropolitan market. This is why Harry Johnston, an experienced advertising officer, from the Sydney office, had been assigned to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror in the crucial formative phases.
When Johnston returned to the Sydney Mirror, his role was taken over by Wilf Southern. A casual advertising agent, Joyce Aird, initiated the advertorial Jane Wisdom Shops For You which appeared regularly in the newspaper. (See Chapter 7)

Johnston made the initial contacts with advertisers in the Newcastle area. He was particularly close to Glen Burrows who ran the largest advertising agency in Newcastle. Burrows became one of the main sources of advertising revenue for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. Despite Johnston’s success, there was criticism because his expenses were considered extremely high by the Newcastle office. Office manager, Alan Rodgers, complained that Johnston commandeered his then assistant, Alf Brown, to assist with advertising sales.  

Johnston recruited Brown and took him back when he left for the Sunday Mirror office in Sydney, another source of dissatisfaction in the Newcastle office.

Johnston promoted the advantages of advertising in the Newcastle edition by direct measures, placing a 2 column x 4 inches display advertisement for an advertising space salesman at Page 16 in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror on 21 February, 1960, page 16. (See below)

The successful applicant, Wilf Southern, had worked at Mirror Newspapers' Sydney office. Dalby described him as “a bombastic type ... but a nice fellow ... he was good company.”  

An advertiser with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, Peter Langwill regarded him as “a guy amongst guys...” Southern remained with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror until it ceased publication, then joined the Newcastle Morning Herald and became advertising manager.

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28 Alan Rodgers, Personal Interview, 2 February, 1993
29 Ethel Dalby, op.cit.
30 Peter Langwill, Personal Interview, 30 September, 1999
ADVERTISING SPACE
SALES MAN
Required by
MIRROR NEWSPAPERS LIMITED
for its
“NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR”

It is desirable that applicants-
(a) Be in the 25-45 years age group.
(b) Have some experience of creative selling - not
necessarily with a newspaper
(c) Be a resident of Newcastle district
(d) Have a pleasing personality and good appearance

A knowledge of local retail conditions would be advantageous.
Attractive remuneration is offered to the right man, who
will be located at the Company’s Newcastle Office and
every opportunity for advancement with this large
national newspaper organisation.

Apply in writing to:-

THE ADVERTISING MANAGER
Mirror Newspapers Limited
71 Scott Street,
NEWCASTLE, N.S.W.

Advertorial is a practice which presents advertising material in news formats. It is a matter of extreme ethical sensitivity in news production because it blurs the lines between traditional advertising and news. Advertorial is acceptable if it is clearly identified as such. The traditional newspaper practice had been to publish advertorial in special advertising and promotion supplements whose advertising orientation was clearly visible to the readership.

Joyce Aird’s weekly advertorials under the name, Jane Wisdom, appeared regularly from 11 September, 1960. She had been advertising manager for a large retail store, Winns, in Newcastle. Her column disguised what was essentially retailing puff in a news style and format in what emerged as good-quality advertorial. The feature became so popular that after the Newcastle
Sunday Mirror folded, Aird transferred it to the The Newcastle Sun where it continued successfully until 1971. (See Chapter Seven.)

Them Versus Us

An inherent problem in the production of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was that the whole process was fraught with serious frictions between the Newcastle unit and the Sydney management and production staff. Newcastle gathered the news and advertisements, and checked the delivery of the newspaper. Sydney edited, printed, distributed and managed the newspaper. While probably inevitable, the structure was not one designed in heaven for the coherent, integrated production of a regional Sunday newspaper. Newspaper production was hazardous enough when all of the processes were assembled under one roof. The problems that emerged, however, were susceptible to technical hitches which, while not always predictable, could usually be countered by contingency planning. It was usually possible to get the paper into production without excessive strains in coordinating news gathering, editing and compilation, even with very tight deadlines. Where news was gathered and written at one point, and printed at another, the dangers of breakdown between each unit were omnipresent. The greatest risk was producing pages which looked good and felt right in Sydney, but were an absolute nonsense to the Newcastle audience. (See Chapter 5)

The lack of depth and cohesion in the Newcastle reporting staff would not have mattered with sub-editing and layout also done in Newcastle. Apart from recruiting casuals for reporting tasks, Sunday newspapers used casual sub-editors, mostly for the final production spurts on Saturday afternoons and evenings. Putting together a newspaper in wraparound format was an editing job of some scale. While stock pages could be done earlier in the week,
bringing the whole jigsaw together could only be done in the hours before deadline. This rested very much on experienced sub-editors who could visualise the whole paper, finding flaws in concept and execution which could devastate a newspaper's reputation for competence and credibility. It was also essential that these skills in integration were matched by enough local knowledge to prevent blunders prejudicing audience credibility.

This would have justified at least one full-time sub-editor and other casuals to work on as many early pages as possible during the week. Page plates could have been contracted to one of the Newcastle printeries, then freighted to Sydney. Alternatively, the matter from which the plates were made could be sent to Sydney. Electronic transmission of completed page proofs was on the horizon but not practicable at this time. The final pages could have been done in Sydney and the whole edition assembled in Sydney. This would probably have meant a journalist going from Newcastle to Sydney each week for the final production. While not convenient, this was certainly a feasible proposition given the regular rail services. The greatest defect in the production chain was the absence of effective checking in Sydney to ensure that Newcastle was presented accurately in a newspaper tailor-made for it. According to Kevin Plummer, the lack of local knowledge and routine checking lowered accuracy standards:

They (Ron Ford and Sydney subs) made lots of mistakes. They used to say Newcastle Beach instead of Merewether Beach. They didn't know the area - they assumed they were big time!31

The sub-editors in Sydney were also unwilling to open pages completed earlier in the week or even to update breaking stories. Plummer complained that "he would phone the original story and then it would completely change but they

31 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
would stick with the original one because it was a better story". It may have been a better story but inaccurate and misleading when the Newcastle audience read it. Even more damaging was the propensity of chair-bound sub-editors to colour a story or even to re-write it in fanciful terms. This could be done without the Newcastle staff having a clue about the fictionalising or distortion until they opened the paper on Sunday morning. The consequences were embarrassment to local journalists and loss of credibility in a derisive audience. There was a classic instance of this sort of malpractice in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

Sunday Mirror sub-editor Howard Young, working in Sydney, was responsible for the editing of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror pages and his manipulation of news copy on occasions impugned the paper’s credibility. The most glaring example was a ‘beat-up’ story on the front page on January 10, 1960 involving the stealing of the Nelson Bay Community Hospital’s cow during a milk strike. As well as news manipulation, the photograph was faked to show a padlock on the chained cow. The story read as follows:

**MILK BILK!**

Connie, the Nelson Bay Community Hospital’s only milk supply “au naturel”, is in a surly mood. And no wonder. The night the milk strike began someone nipped over the hospital wall and pinched the milk she was preparing so industriously for the patients’ breakfasts.

Nor could she have done a thing about it.

There she was in her paddock, half asleep as she slurped over her cud, when... WHAM. The bails were around her neck in a flash, as it were, a bucket was under her udder and the thieving fingers were at work.

So now it’s a case of lock and key for Connie every night... on the end of a chain right under Matron Seville’s window.

Observe the padlock. No longer the freedom of the hills in the soft night air.

Can you be surprised at Connie looking so sour!

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32 ibid
33 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, 10 January, 1960, p.1
Examples of news manipulation:

To highlight a "beat-up" milk strike story, a padlock was drawn on the picture of the stolen Nelson Bay hospital cow on the front page of issue No. 10, January 10, 1960.

To illustrate the story of the mishit golf ball that stunned a freshwater mullet, an enterprising journalist bought a mullet from a nearby fishshop as the fish had already been eaten. The picture was published on the front page, March 19, 1961. Unfortunately, the difference between fresh and deep sea mullet was evident to keen anglers and provoked numbers of letters to the editor querying the veracity and fakery of Newcastle Sunday Mirror stories.
Ron Ford, no stranger to Fleet St style and presentation, was highly critical of this story:

Yes, that was isolated stupidity by the sub-editor in charge and it wasn’t normal newspaper practice but Howard [Young] did that and there was no reason for him to do that. He must have obviously thought that he was adding to the story and the picture. In fact he was ruining the bloody credibility of the whole outfit and I think that he got into trouble over it. I never thought he was quite up to the job and this was one of the instances that proved that he wasn’t. You don’t do that sort of thing. They don’t do it now, they never did it, and it was a stupid thing to do.34

The faking involved was so blatant that it was blindingly obvious to the audience. Without question, this destroyed much of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s credibility in the short-term. Indeed, it is doubtful whether trust was ever fully restored. It caused doubt in audience assessments of news stories, even where the photographs were authentic. One example occurred in the same issue as the “bilked cow”, a genuine photograph showing a power boat towing skiers driven close to children swimming at Port Stephens. The caption read: “In the picture above, a speed boat, its driver’s head turned aside, speeds dangerously close to a young swimmer, trailing three skiers behind” and in bold type “the Newcastle Sunday Mirror prints this picture for the benefit of Newcastle Maritime Services Board official, Capt. E. Reed.”35

Several letters of complaint were received from the public and a phone call from the Port Stephens Shire Council. All of these complaints implied that this photograph was also was a fake.36 Clearly, the newspaper had been caught badly with its pants down and had no valid comeback when confronted with shameless fakery, and fraudulence, even when the story was genuine.

34 Ron Ford, op.cit.
35 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 10 January, 1960, p.5
36 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
Another example of deliberate deceit eroding the newspaper’s reputation for veracity was the substitution of a deep sea mullet for a fresh water mullet in a photograph. This illustrated a front-page story of a young golfer whose hook shot stunned a mullet (which already had been eaten when the photographer and reporter arrived). Unfortunately, the difference between the two mullets was evident to keen anglers and provoked numerous letters to the editor. The picture, of course, would have been OK if the caption had indicated that it was a similar fish, or even a replacement for the one eaten. It wouldn’t have taken much to re-jig the story and caption in an acceptable way. This was clearly a stupid risk in a region where sea and lake fishing was virtually a way of life. It showed contempt for an audience possessing the contextual knowledge to expose it as bogus. (A brief discussion of photographic ethics is included in Appendix B.)

These deliberate manipulations of news materials should be distinguished from the inevitable foul-ups that occur in the complex processes of newspaper productions. Even the most vigilant checking procedures will not eliminate errors which are often amusing, but embarrassing to news staff. Audiences are generally tolerant of these mishaps, particularly if they embarrass or deflate public figures. A make-up error causing consternation in Newcastle and Sydney occurred in December, 1959. A two column photo of Newcastle’s highly visible Lord Mayor, Ald. F.J. Purdue was transposed with a two column photo of a nude baby illustrating a hot weather story. A thousand copies of the incorrect page were printed and distributed before the error was noted and the page replaced. The news editor of the Sydney Sunday Mirror, Brian Hogben, moved quickly to offset the company’s embarrassment and maintain good relations with the Newcastle City Council. He met with the Lord Mayor and apologised for the mistake. The publicity-acute Mayor was unfazed,

37 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 19 March, 1961, p.1
Stories from the Sunstrip!

Fly Point

Like this — or this?

Our story last week on The Flurry at Fly Point got speedy results.

Take care, sir... Take care!

Swift check is ordered

Water Ski Risk At Fly Point

A pilot will be made in the Hunter River at Newcastle (top left) and at the same time a pilot will be made in the Hunter River at Newcastle (top right). The Newcastle Herald's less emotive story without illustration which appeared the following day, January 4, 1960.


(bottom left) 'One fake, all fakes!

Although authentic, this photo was deemed a fake by readers annoyed with false padlock drawn on the 'Milk Bilk' front page photo of the same issue.
saying that those who had seen the paper thought it was a picture of him as a baby. No attempt was made to apologise to the parents of the baby, an interesting assessment of audience sensitivities. The incident was not without repercussions. The sub-editor assisting Howard Young with the page make-up left the following week.

Howard Young was a Fleet St journalist brought to the Sunday Mirror by its Editor-in-Chief, Lindsay Clinch, who was his brother-in-law. According to Newcastle Sunday Mirror journalists, Young made many errors in layout, captions and sub-editing. It was argued that his knowledge of Australian society and culture was weak, and he had little awareness of the ingrained nuances and subtleties of regional Australia. In Young's defence, the classic role of the sub-editor, (as defined by Hutt and James), should be cited: "the sub-editor or copy-editor is neither a reporter nor a photographer, no matter what his or her background may be, but is the person responsible for projecting the story; he or she must make the most of the raw material available."38 Arguably, Young was let down by a system which saw him producing a regional newspaper in isolation from the reporters who gathered and wrote the copy. The practice of check subbing, which provided a last intensive scrutiny of all completed pages, was irrelevant because the Newcastle edition was checked in Sydney.

Ford criticised Young's competence to produce the paper although he had been a sub on the London Sunday Pictorial: "He obviously couldn't have been one of the top people doing layout," Ford, however, conceded the difficulties Young faced:

A layout error on page 2, issue No. 6, December, 13, 1959 resulted in the transposition of two same size blocks, one of the new Lord Mayor, Ald. Frank Purdue and the other, a hot weather picture of nude baby, Paul Newey of Hamilton.

1,000 were printed and distributed before the mistake was corrected.

Eager to cement good relations with the Newcastle City Council, the then news editor of the Sydney Sunday Mirror, Brian Hogben visited the Lord Mayor on the following Monday to apologise for the mistake. Ald. Purdue was not upset by the error and said most of his friends had thought it was a picture of him as a baby.

The sub-editor responsible for the layout left the Mirror Newspapers the following week.
It rubbed off on him and he knew the direction that he should be going in and actually producing 16 pages or more (of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*) and he had other jobs to do, it was pretty hard. The material would sometimes be late so I shouldn’t be too critical of him.”

The policy was for soft news to be down in Sydney by the Thursday so that most of the inside pages could be laid out early. Sports results were phoned in and sent by teleprinter before 6.30pm on the Saturday. Photographs of Saturday sport and weddings were received in Sydney between 3.30pm and 6.30pm via a picturegram service from Newcastle Post Office. Friday night social photographs and weddings were sent by rail on the Newcastle Flyer at 6.40am on the Saturday morning, arriving Sydney before 9.00am. The envelope was addressed to the News Editor, Sunday ‘Mirror’ Sydney, 2-0924 C/o Foreman, Guard’s Office, Central Station, Sydney and marked URGENT. Copy boys were sent to collect the envelope. The guard on the morning flyer was tipped 10/- to ensure the safe delivery of the photos.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has tried to do three things. Firstly, some attempt has been made to define models for producing the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, given its spatial and resources separation from Mirror Newspapers, the parent office in Sydney. Most important were the conceptual, productive and distributive factors involved in wrapping a medium-sized newspaper around a significantly bigger core newspaper. Secondly, the recruitment and organisation of editorial, advertising, business and circulation staff in Newcastle has been assessed, taking particular account of work practices such as moonlighting and other collaborative activities. The analysis in this chapter has concentrated particularly on news reporting, with limited attention to photographic,

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39 Ron Ford, op.cit.
advertising and circulation. These are given specific attention in subsequent chapters. Finally, the ramifications of the split of production processes between Sydney and Newcastle have been investigated, looking particularly at problems of co-ordination, integration, and unethical manipulation of news material. These issues are taken up again in Chapter 5 which considers at some length the editorial content of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. 
CHAPTER FIVE

CONTENT AND DISCONTENT

Introduction

This chapter and Chapter 6 are devoted to the basics of popular tabloidism: news production and presentation: textual content; design (or layout); and pictorialism content. The prime concern here is textual content and its presentation on tabloid pages. Chapter Six takes a similar approach with pictorial content and its presentation, conceived as the notion of pictorialism. Text, pictorialism, and design in news production cannot be compartmentalised readily. Textual content is influenced by available space which is determined by advertising sales and placement. (Mostly, with tabloid formats, Page 1 does not carry advertising. This was the case with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.) Pictorialism is influenced by textual content, but it can also create textual content, particularly in popular tabloids where the merits of individual pictures compete for inclusion in their own right, irrespective of story/illustrative purposes. Design (or layout) pulls text, pictures and typography into pages that are attractive, readable, and coherent.

This chapter begins by taking up themes of what constitutes tabloidism in the context of Australian newspaper production in the late 1950's. With specific relevance to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, three models are predicated: established Truth & Sportsman tabloid practice identified here as Nortonism; Fleet St tabloidism as exemplified particularly in the London Daily Mirror; and traditional hard-news tabloidism. It is stressed that the framework of tabloidism advanced here is not designed for analysis of tabloidism globally or even in the Australian news structure. It is very much focussed on the struggles of a
traditional company to cope with changing practice and audience in the Sydney and adjacent Newcastle Sunday newspaper markets. While this segment constituted the single most powerful unit in the Australian structure, its experience was not applicable generally to other units across a wide spectrum of historical evolution, locales and audience.

This provides the framework for analysing the 87 front pages of the entire publication run of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror including the seven final issues published under a different masthead. A briefer survey is made of textual content and presentation in the newspaper, excluding Page 1. The chapter concludes with an assessment of the newspaper's overall successes and failures in providing a "Sunday" for a distinctive regional in conjunction with a major metropolitan "Sunday" designed for a mass audience.

A Popular Press

Kane described written 'style' broadly as the 'total of all the choices a writer makes concerning words and their arrangements. In theory, the words, syntax and grammar a writer can use are immense, limited only by the resources of the language and the literacy of the writer. Professional writing, including journalism, is dependent totally on the literacy of the audience. Printed publication in Europe dates back to the manufacture of the printing press by Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-15th Century. British publications began in the 1470's, but distribution was constrained by technical, legal and transport impediments. Dissemination of news mostly was done orally, although increasingly supplemented by printing popular ballads, and crudely-illustrated accounts of crimes, disasters, unnatural births, and other topical horrors. Thus, sensationalism was inherent to printed news from the very beginnings, an

historical truth often ignored in critiques of tabloidism. By the 1620’s, the rudiments had emerged of an organised industry dedicated to news gathering and presentation. This developed with increasing momentum through the 17th and 18th Centuries, although a fully-fledged free press did not materialise until the 1770’s. The technology and practice of the British press were transmitted to the developing colonies of Northern America from the early 18th Century. A printing press was included in the essential productive tools sent to Sydney with the First Fleet in 1788. Australia’s first newspaper, the Sydney Gazette, was published in January 1803.

For almost the first 200 years of English journalism, (from the late 17th Century to the 1890’s) audience response was taken as a given. Access to the press was limited by literacy, income, and social class. The literary style of newspapers was mostly indistinguishable from the written, and printed, expression of education, literature and the learned professions. A pertinent example is provided by the London Times in late 19th Century Britain. The edition of 23 January 1882, Page 7, published in six densely-packed columns a 10,000-word report of a parliamentary speech by the Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt. The speech was described as impassioned, rhetorical and long. The Times printed it almost verbatim in a page of microscopic text unadorned by headings, pictures or even a patch of white. The report was typical of content in the literate broadsheet press save for a single line of type interpolated almost exactly half-way through. It read: “The speaker then said he felt inclined for a bit of fucking. I think that is very likely. (Laughter)” The piece became a collectors item. Vigorous attempts failed to discover the identity of the perpetrator of this gross outrage.2 Deflating the pomposity of the establishment press was an important factor in the emergence of the British popular press a

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decade or so after this incident. Even a century later, no popular tabloid daily would print the obscenity used.

The 1890's were the pivotal years between a press for the educated elites and a popular press. Even in the heyday of the elite press, there were radical elements aimed at an artisan readership. The so-called British "pauper press" of the 1830's was aimed at radical, literate and predominantly working-class audiences. A vast periodical press had emerged, much of it emphasising entertainment as exemplified in the great popularity of London Punch and its world-wide imitators. In Australia, much of the early publication involved printing and distributing government information. The early audience largely comprised the elites of government, the law, commerce and land settlement. Through the 1820's, the colonial newspapers shed the trappings of government gazettes, and emerged as independent, vigorous and enterprising institutions.

From the 1830's, the broadsheet, quality-brand papers began to flourish alongside the tabloid-sized journals which had done much to assert, and entrench, free press traditions in Australia. Papers emphasising popular content, such as Bell's Sydney Journal, (based on a London) model, documented a diversifying society. From mid-century, periodicals emphasising entertainment and black-and-white illustrative material found an eager audience. Sporting and other specialist journalists were launched, including foreign language publications. By the 1880's, even some mildly pornographic magazines were circulating in Sydney.

As noted in chapter 1, the 1890's were a catalyst for the Australian press, largely because of the flow-through from Britain of a popular press ethos heavily burnished by the impact of mass public education. American trends such as the 'yellow press' and muckraking were imported into Australian
newspapers by direct influences, and also by their emulation in an increasingly popular British press. Thus, an elementary pictorialism was injected into newspapers by access to photo engraving techniques from the 1890's, although tardily. (See Chapter 6) John Norton's Truth crystallised a mix of emerging trends, such as sensationalism and direct press intervention to correct corruption and social abuse. (See Chapters 1 and 3) There was a gradual congealing of forces, practices and formats which gave a generic basis for tabloidism. Strictly speaking, though, tabloidism did not congeal as a press genre until the 1920's.

What is Tabloidism?

As noted in Chapter 1, the noun tabloid derives from popular medicine. The conventional medicinal pills were often so large that they were designated frequently as "horse pills." In 1884, a medicine manufacturer, Sir Henry Welcome, registered the name tabloid for a compressed type of pill that he had invented. The word was an amalgam of tablet and the Greek suffix, -oid, meaning a likeness. The new tabloid was very like a tablet, but it was more concentrated:

The tabloid was an instant success. Not only did the trade name enter the popular language but in due course the word came to be applied to anything that was miniature or smaller than expected, not unlike the present vogue-prefix 'mini'.

The most bizarre use of tabloid in this linguistic sense was the "Sopworth Tabloid", a small and sprightly military aircraft used early in World War 1. Oddly, tabloid did not survive in the language of medicine or pharmacy. The original tablet re-asserted itself and is as widely used today as pill. The term is little used, or not at all, in the sense of diminutive. That it remains so potently in

3 ibid, p.7
the English language is due to the great newspaper entrepreneur, Alfred Harmsworth, in later years Lord Northcliffe. He transformed British newspapers from the early 1890's, catering for the mass audience spawned by publication education acts with smaller, newsy and entertaining newspapers. Much of this publication was tabloid in the formats adopted, and the retention of strong news values blended with a sure feel for popular entertainment. Among the newspapers he established was the Daily Mirror, unsuccessful in its initial incarnation as a women's oriented newspaper but a spectacularly successful tabloid in later years. What Northcliffe did was very similar to later tabloidism, but with one important distinction. The expression still inclined to the literary language and constructions of the 19th Century press; it was a language neither used by the mass readership nor easily accessible to it. The racier style of writing more attuned to popular comprehension had yet to imbue tabloidism.

A Shorter Oxford English Dictionary quoted by Waterhouse defines tabloid in the newspaper sense as "a newspaper of small format which gives its news in concentrated form - 1926." The date conforms with the conventional wisdom that Northcliffe used the term in a speech made about 1925, much in the sense that 50 years later he might have spoken of a 'mini newspaper." According to Spiegl, Northcliffe was not foreshadowing a paradigm shift in newspaper language. His tabloids were just as verbose and ponderous as the Victorian broadsheets in their expression.

The fact that modern tabloids were later to present news in a highly compressed form, easily swallowed and quickly assimilated, did not enter Lord Northcliffe's head.

This is somewhat unfair to Northcliffe who did much, at least in his earlier years, to develop ways of writing and sub-editing to make newspapers more popular.

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5 Spiegl, op. cit., p.7
and accessible. As he aged he became complacent about the basics, not seeing
the need to revise accustomed writing styles and practices. It is also true that
much of the newspaper language of the first 30 years or so of the 20th Century
was written not in the language of the people but in an artificial language that
the people could understand. The distinguished newspaper editor, Lord Rees
Mogg, concluded that there had been four dominant mass newspapers in 20th
Century Britain. Each had aged with its proprietor: Northcliffe, Beaverbrook,
Cecil King, and Rupert Murdoch. Each had lost its lead as the nation’s social
mix had changed.Keith Waterhouse, a journalist and author who wrote a
widely-admired style book for the London *Daily Mirror*, argued that two Fleet
St newspapers had dragged newspaper style “slamming and blasting” into the
20th Century. These were the *Daily Mirror*, whose proprietor was
Northcliffe’s nephew, Cecil King, and Beaverbrook’s *Daily Express*:

...In the mid (1930’s) the Mirror spat the plum from its mouth and
began to speak in its own down-to-earth voice. ...the Daily Mirror,
to borrow some favourite expressions from its new robust
vocabulary, ceased to be fuddy-duddy and became brash and
cheeky...

Waterhouse acknowledged the deficiencies of this brash and breezy
revolution. Some of its efforts to be bright and lively had all of the desperation
of a “fixed smile”.

The self-conscious, over staccato language striving to be up to
date and down to earth at the same time, oscillated wildly between
the slangy and the streamlined, the homely and the Hollywood.
But at its best it was good, plain refreshing English.

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6 Waterhouse, op. cit. pp.44-45
7 ibid, pp.26-27
8 ibid, pp.27-28
This good, plain, refreshing English, though, was not the language of the people. It was an artificial construct, but an artificial construct that the people could read and comprehend.

Beaverbrook’s *Daily Express*, interestingly a broadsheet in format and not tabloid-sized, revolutionised the editing and design side of the equation. It brought similar qualities of brightness and breeziness to the expression but, more importantly, it developed and refined the presentation. At the most basic level, newspaper pages can convey a disorderly impression of type thrown into pages and columns with a shovel. These newspapers give a new dimension to the conventional newspaper usage of “laying out” a page. At the highest professional level, however, skilled sub-editors can produce pages that are exquisite in their balance and proportions, an accessible mix of text, *pictorialism* and design, inducing the reader to enter the page and leave it fully replete.

Waterhouse credits this transformation of presentation to the *Daily Express*’s “legendary” editor, Arthur Christiansen, very much Beaverbrook’s voice, but a master of the voice in which Beaverbrook’s paper spoke. Christiansen, said Waterhouse, perfected “package journalism”. This was as crucial to the emergence of Fleet St *tabloidism* as was the language revolution whose fuse had been ignited by the *Daily Mirror*. In practice, package journalism shifted the onus of newspapers from the reporter to the sub-editor. Certainly, the gathering of hard news was still important as the rationale for a newspaper’s existence. But no longer was it paramount. Hard news retained its place, its resources were maintained, and coverage of breaking stories remained central to news organisation. It now had to share its status with the ‘package’, even defer to it, particularly in slack news periods:
the story brought in by the reporter being merely the raw product to be processed, prettified, wrapped in cellophane and tied up in ribbon by the sub-editor assigned to it. Some Express writer-subs became personalities, famous in Fleet St, if not outside it for the manipulation of raw news material to fit a particular spot in the paper. The Daily Express was not about news but about its presentation - which was brilliant. . .Between the maverick anti-establishment, empire preference Toryism of Beaverbrook and the barrack-room Bolshevism of the Daily Mirror, a revolution was going on. . .

From this revolution, *tabloidism* was born as a commanding news genre, not necessarily a small-format genre because the language and style conventions could be applied adeptly to both broadsheet and small formats. Although the ‘package’ presentation elements of *tabloidism* could be accommodated in larger formats, however, it became apparent, with experience, that they worked better in the smaller “tabloid format”. Widespread acceptance of these layout principles was manifest in a virtual stampede of Fleet St mastheads to small-format tabloids, ensuring that by the mid-1950’s *tabloid* in the newspaper sense was synonymous with small: “The basic principle of Christiansen’s formula journalism, shaping news and features to a pre-determined ‘exciting’ image, prepared Fleet St for the next generic change, the mass conversion to tabloid format.”

Thus, when we speak of Fleet St *tabloidism* when discussing Sydney newspapers of the late 1950’s, a combination of small format, idiosyncratic prose style and packaged presentation is essentially what we mean. This resolves into two basic elements of newspaper content: how it is written; and how it is packaged. This sort of schematic approach raises some dangers. In particular, with the most highly wrought forms of Fleet St *tabloidism*, a sub editor writes (or re-writes) the content and does the design. This re-shaped the traditional contributions of reporter and sub-editor in a way that was extremely

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9 ibid, p.28
10 ibid, p.30
Moss wins—MIKE is the CHAMPION

CENTURY DRAMA

Moss wins—MIKE is the CHAMPION

From PETER STEAKER, Casablanca, Today.

BRITISH driving and racing hero Moss won the "Race of the Century" in Casablanca today with a breathtaking victory over his British rival Mike Hawthorn.

A "BRAIN" PICKED THE BRIDE

Carole Lesley

A BRAIN PICKED THE BRIDE

CAROLE LESLEY

A BRAIN PICKED THE BRIDE

NEWCASTLE Mirror

ALL THE SPORTS — PAGE 17

Black Sunday

Housewives and traders fear long steel strike

"If" thread a steel strike in Newcastle, housewives and traders live under the threat of a long steel strike.

THE LOVERS WHO FOUND A SILENT HAPPINESS

You can win £20,000 — see inside

Jim Macdougall starts today... see inside
labour-intensive, at least until the computer aided design (CAD) revolutionised newspaper production. In the late 1950s, however, few Australian newspapers had the sub-editing resources to adopt completely Fleet St tabloidism, much as they might have liked. This applied particularly to Truth & Sportsman newspapers traditionally known for extreme economy on the subs table. This has to be borne in mind when assessing attempts to emulate Fleet St tabloidism in the metropolitan Sydney market of this period.

**Tabloid Style Rules?**

Attempts to define tabloid style with any precision are mostly self-defeating. It can be assumed too easily that it is, by definition, a demotic style reflecting oral speech and limited education. In many ways, the language of tabloidism is as artificial and as tightly structured as the iambic pentameter lines of poetry. While it may not require high levels of formal education, popular comprehension does require extensive knowledge of contemporary popular culture, and also the popular-cultural memory. For example, a reference in tabloidism, whether a heading or text, to “Mucky Jim” must arouse associations in the reader’s mind with Kingsley Amis’s novel, *Lucky Jim*, if it is to make its point. Another layer of association is raised because Amis took the title of his famous story from a popular music hall song.\(^{11}\) This allusiveness, and ready understanding of it is the essence of tabloidism. The complexities of tabloid style have been captured most fluently by Waterhouse:

> (Tabloid style) is a patois made up of unconsidered trifles. It could be compared irreverently, with those ransom notes which are made up of lettering cut from various publications. Tabloid style takes its references from a wide variety of sources - TV shows, film titles, advertising slogans, sporting events, song lyrics, political jargon, catch phrases, clichés, (including, cannibalistically, many of its own invention) and that vast repository at large of popular quotations,

\(^{11}\) This example is taken from Waterhouse, *ibid*, p.39
rhymes and snatchs, which it juggles into a deft montage of puns, allusions and wordplay.  

Clearly, such a melange is not necessarily palatable in large, or regular, doses for a discriminating, discerning or highly educated readership. It is tailor-made for a mass popular audience. Circulation figures suggest that readers of the quality, mainly broadsheet press, also read the tabloids, at least occasionally. They are read because they entertain as much as they inform. That they are good fun can easily disguise their potency as propagandists and defenders of the public interest. The towering circulation figures alone assure this. The audience may find the tabloid style often to be excruciatingly awful. It is, nonetheless, highly addictive:

The archetypal tabloid story is a piece of high precision engineering, with the predictability accurate to a thousandth of an inch, the hackneyed phraseology polished like old brass, and puns worn smooth with age gliding effortlessly into place like the moving parts of a well-oiled Victorian donkey engine.

Tabloid style has been insidious in its gradual encroachment into all newspapers, broadsheet or tabloid, quality or popular. This does not mean that it replaced hard-news style as the predominant style of many newspapers. The quality broadsheets did not throw over years of conservative, but accurate and literate, house style. Tabloids did have an influence, though, on the infiltration of imagery and allusion in headings and text. Waterhouse notes that the impact of tabloid style was most profound on provincial newspapers, both morning and evening. The British provincials had long been recruitment pools for Fleet St dailies replenishing their staff. The entry of younger provincial journalists steeped in tabloidism into Fleet St reinforced, and extended, the pervasive influence of the style.

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12 ibid, p.38
13 ibid, p.39
14 ibid, p.33
Australian Tabloid

If the British tabloid genre did not emerge in strength until the mid-1930's, when did Australian tabloidism emerge? A logical starting point is John Norton's *Truth* which was sensational and populist, but too quirkish and idiosyncratic to fall readily, into any standard newspaper genre. It owed much to the stylistic whims and predilections of John Norton who assumed its proprietary in the early 1890's. Much remains to be done in defining what influenced Norton's newspaper-making. With Australian newspaper scholarship in relative infancy, we know very little, in particular, about the undoubted impact of American journalism and its spread. In the first 20 years of his proprietary, Norton appears to have been influenced by the American "yellow press" and the "muckraking tradition" associated with both US newspapers and magazines. Norton was also responsive to Fleet St practice in the 1890's, and he was well versed in the Australian popular press of the era.

In the early 20th Century, the Australian press had been largely broadsheet in format. There was a gradual drift, however, towards tabloid format, although several metropolitan mastheads remained as broadsheets. One of the older Sydney morning dailies, the *Daily Telegraph*, adopted a tabloid format in the 1930's. When Consolidated Press established the *Sunday Telegraph* in the late 1930's, it appeared in tabloid form. Another Sydney broadsheet, the *Sun*, also moved to tabloid format, and Ezra Norton's *Daily Mirror* was tabloid from its first publication in 1941. (See Chapter 1) If Sydney and Newcastle were perceived as one great market in the mid-1950's, the three evening papers were tabloid format, the three Sunday papers were tabloid format, two of the morning papers were broadsheet, and one morning paper was tabloid format.
A infiltration of tabloid style on the British model was perfectly feasible, therefore, from the early 1950's. In particular, the Sunday and evening papers were ripe for Fleet St tabloidism, utilising the circulation building promotions, entertainment and exuberant writing and presentation exemplified in the tabloid revolution. The morning papers were a different proposition. The Sydney Morning Herald and Newcastle Morning Herald were stamped as journals of record, meticulous and often comprehensive in their coverage but musty in writing style and conservative in presentation. The tabloid-format Daily Telegraph was a vigorous, well-edited quality newspaper leaning more to US models than the equivalent British dailies. It had a strictly-governed writing style known, with some pride, as Telegraph style. In essence, this was hard news style rigorously applied. (See below). This staccato, supremely disciplined writing style worked effectively in the news columns, but was less satisfactory for features and entertainment text. In its rigidity and predictability, Telegraph style was as artificial as tabloid style, which it sometimes uncannily resembled when taken to extremes.

Although there was no stylistic lingua franca to guide the Sydney metropolitan press, there was an acceptance of hard news style as a desirable model, although not applied with any rigour or consistency. Basically, hard news style was similar to Telegraph style, but more flexible. It sought to get the news point of a story into the first sentence (or para), using a format known succinctly as the 5-w’s, 1-h (who, where, when, what, why, how). If the sentence structure could not absorb all of these elements into one summary intro (or lead), then no more than two paras should be taken.

The second major principle of this formal style was known as the inverted pyramid, writing the story in a descending hierarchy of fact, with less important material pushed down. In effect, the story had written itself out when the point
of the inverted pyramid was reached with the least important point last. It favoured short, punchy sentences (usually 20-25 words), writing with nouns and not adjectives, systematic use of the active voice, reliance on simple words, sourcing of quotes and information, separation of news and comment, objectivity in reporting, scrupulous checking of facts.

Hard-news style was American in its origins, its principles spread widely by their uniform application in the international news agencies or cable services. It was as much a creed as it was a style. The prescriptions were wholly admirable, but they did bring a certain monotony to news writing, particularly if applied inflexibly, without leeway for subjectivity, experiment or individuality. Most newspapers paid lip service to the hard news canon, including it in their style guides even though observance was often lax. Much of the textual content of the Norton papers, *Truth* and the *Daily Mirror*, was consistent with news style although never applied in the remorseless manner of the *Daily Telegraph*. It also had an idiosyncratic ring drawn from the practice and preferences of its two proprietors, John and Ezra Norton. This distinctive variant of conventional news style is identified here as *Nortonism*.

*Nortonism*

John Norton’s vigorous, alliterative writing style had an enduring influence on the textual content of *Truth*, an influence transmitted in subdued fashion into the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Norton’s writing was shaped by forces as diverse as parliamentary oratory, evangelical religion, street-corner spruiking, popular novels and music-hall ditties. His love of alliteration survived in the *Truth* tradition, most notably in headline writing. Take for example a heading from Sydney *Truth* in the early 1950’s: “Cops Cop Cuffs from Caustic Cuties”. This was a court report describing a confrontation between the police and a
group of prostitutes. The alliteration and the international "slanguage" of the late 1940's (cops, cop, cuties) are tempered by the older "cuffs" and the literate "caustic". In itself, the heading is a distillation of popular tabloids with its mix of contemporary vernacular, traditional populism and relatively learned expression. It would be easy to accept this alliterative heading as squarely in the genre of Fleet St tabloidism, but the more likely source is John Norton's application of the American "yellow press." Thus John Norton's writing, although often florid and crude, possessed enormous vitality. He would have been superbly equipped as a technician assembling the "package" units of Fleet St tabloidism.

Ezra Norton was not a writer. As noted in chapter 3, Eric Baume dismissed him contemptuously as "not a journalist". Under his leadership, though, Truth retained much of John Norton's approach to newspaper text, although rarely capturing his bravura style. The style of the Daily Mirror, however, was more in the hard-news tradition, tight and newsy although straying sometimes into the excesses of Truth. The demands of producing up to five daily editions in a fiercely competitive metropolitan environment effectively eliminated remaining traces of the leisurely literary style of the old broadsheets. Thus, the written expression of Ezra Norton's daily newspaper diverged from his Sunday, although most Norton journalists successfully straddled the divide and wrote competently for each paper.

Invaluable aids in assessing the news-writing style of a particular newspaper are the style guides prepared at various times for editorial reporters and sub-editors. Waterhouse's superb style guide produced for the London Daily Mirror was used above to illuminate the principles of tabloidism. The Sydney Daily Telegraph style guide, with its definitive delineation of Telegraph style, is another classic in the genre. General style guides for Truth and the Daily
Mirror have not survived if, indeed, they were ever produced. We are reliant, therefore, largely on the newspaper texts for drawing conclusions about the style of both the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and the Sunday Mirror. This suggests that the style of the Daily Mirror, rather than the received style of Truth, its predecessor, was the main influence on the Sunday Mirror.

The string of daily editions, the full-blooded competition of the Sydney Sun, and the very limited time available for incorporating breaking news into upcoming editions encouraged in the Daily Mirror a style that, at its best, was direct and immediate. At worst, the expression could be muddled and cliché-riddled, despite the general competence of an under-resourced and hard-driven sub-editing table. Often, there was little time for effective re-writing, and stories were padded when facts were few and news deadlines imminent. The basic requirement was to provide a cover which might be improved and augmented by up-dates, follow-ups, and background material from the files.

In contrast with spot and breaking news material, often hastily improvised, the Daily Mirror ran human interest, semi-feature style stories which could be crafted under less pressure from incessant deadlines. These were mostly based on pictures, and presented with greater design flair. In later years, such news material was often labelled as ‘do-ups’ but the term was not generally used in the 1950’s. Generically, these stories were mostly described as “boxes”. Thus, they were separated artificially from harder news stories by either whole, or partial, borders formed by edging the stories, pictures and headings with leaded rules. Usually, these boxed stories were set to a narrower column width. Mostly, these stories were written in a softer style although in the full-blown allusive style of Fleet St tabloidism. Although these ‘boxes’ had superficial resemblance to the Fleet St “packages”, they were simpler, plain and less contrived. Very often, these “boxes” were victims of quick layout changes to
accommodate breaking stories. This was a milieu in which mass conversion to Fleet St *tabloidism* was likely to occur. The influence of Fleet St was subtler but pervasive, drawn from the influence of Australian journalists who had worked in London.

**Fleet Street and Back**

Before World War II, a newspaper career or even professional experience in Fleet St was largely fanciful for Australian journalists. Even the young Keith Murdoch failed to find Fleet St employment when he ventured there in 1909. The few Australians who did establish themselves in peak British journalism, as epitomised by Fleet St, largely abandoned prospects of returning to Australian journalism. Breaking into Fleet St often meant consignment to the drudgery of hack journalism while awaiting opportunity. Despite impediments, young Australian journalists were able to get some Fleet St experience as casuals or relieving during summer vacations. Some rose to eminence through perseverance, luck and sheer ability. Alan Moorehead, James Aldridge, Phillip Knightley, Murray Sayle, Godfrey Blunden, Sam White... the list could be much extended.

Other Australian journalists got easier access to Fleet St through prized postings to Australian news bureaux and press agencies. An example was Irvine Douglas, a senior political journalist and former press secretary to Australian Prime Minister, Joseph Lyons. Douglas was head of the *Sydney Morning Herald*’s London office during World War II. After the war, Douglas wrote comment and features for Ezra Norton’s *Truth* and *Daily Mirror*. As noted in Chapter 5, Eric Baume was London bureau chief from 1941 of the newly-established *Daily Mirror*. Baume conducted his news gathering from a suite in the Savoy Hotel, mingling a gaudy social life with inspired news
gathering. Unquestionably, this shaped his choice of the *Sunday Pictorial* as the most suitable model for Sydney’s *Sunday Mirror*. (See Chapter 4)

From 1945, shortage of steamer transport and sterling restrictions made it difficult for young Australian journalists to work in London. By the early 1950’s, there was more transport and shipping, so young Australian journalists sought prized Fleet St jobs in greater numbers. Many were disappointed, finding work only in provincial newspapers, smaller publications, or as casuals. It took time, but Australian journalists began to assert their professionalism, particularly as reporters. The “packaging” skills, (sub-editing, re-writing and design), of the British tabloid writers and sub-editors were harder to match, although some Australians made the transition and picked up invaluable experience. By the late 1950’s, a ‘bash’ at Fleet St was almost a routine career pattern.

Most of these migratory journalists came home, usually within two or three years, their British experience boosting their careers and instilling a possibly inflated notion of the Fleet St ethos. By the late 1950’s, British journalists, some highly experienced, began to trickle to Australia. Among them were Ron Ford and Howard Young, crucial figures in the style and development of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. (See below)

By the time the *Sunday Mirror* went on the drawing boards, the time was ripe for a Sunday largely following the *tabloidism* of the London *Sunday Pictorial* (later renamed *Sunday Mirror*). As described in chapter 4, Norton and Baume were unable to find a team of journalists, both reporters and sub-editors, who could do the job. It is not known whether attempts were made to recruit Fleet St technicians directly, to find able practitioners in *tabloidism* already working in Australia, or to give intensive training in the genre to local
journalists with Fleet St experience. Probably, there was a general expectation that existing staff would rise to the standards of tabloidism expected. Given the commitment of existing staff over many years to the variant tabloid tradition of Nortonism, such an expectation was unrealistic.

When O'Connell Publications took over Truth and Sportsman, operating as Mirror Newspapers, it was unable to revive the Sunday Mirror by a paradigm shift from Nortonism to Fleet St tabloidism. When the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was started almost a year later, a conjunction of personnel and production factors provided an opportunity for experimenting further with Fleet St tabloidism. Although much of value was accomplished, it is argued here that Nortonism was re-asserted on the Newcastle edition for most of its run. This, of course, is a speculative interpretation but, given the poverty of hard information, it seems the most plausible. Before taking up the content of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, it is appropriate to look at the case for Nortonism as an established tabloid genre. This also provides a window for looking at professional perceptions of the ethos and practice of tabloidism in the Australian news industry of the late 1950’s.

Just another Tabloid?

Brian Hogben came from a Sydney newspaper family, a career journalist and a good one. He spent much of his working life with the Daily Mirror, Truth and the Sunday Mirror. He worked under Ezra Norton with Truth and Sportsman. When Mirror Newspapers took over under John Fairfax, he retained a senior editorial position, including responsibility for the staffing and logistics of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. He rounded out a notable career as Editorial Director with Rupert Murdoch’s News Ltd. He was adept in turning out
tabloid newspapers in the Norton mould, and a great defender of what he perceived to be the tabloid tradition:

'Tabloid' means no more than a newspaper page half the size of the older broadsheet, yet it has come to be used as a term of denigration of all that is shoddy and substandard in journalism. This distortion of meaning owes much to the woolly thinking and intellectual snobbery of that strange new breed, the media commentators.15

As Hogben points out, newspapers world-wide were mainly broadsheets "until Alfred Harmsworth, later Lord Northcliffe, revolutionised newspaper design with his London Daily Mirror early this century."16 Hogben justly points out that the tabloid transformation began with Northcliffe. He also makes the highly relevant point that, under John Norton, Truth was a broadsheet in format: "... the critics of tabloids conveniently forgot that broadsheets like John Norton’s Truth did things no tabloid would dare to do even today."17

This reaffirms the point made frequently here that, conceptually, tabloidism is not dependent on format. It is a distinctive genre of news production reliant on traditional formal elements such as text, pictures and design but presenting them with markedly different emphases and in more artificial, highly-wrought combinations. Certainly, it is accurate historically to trace the origins of the popular press back to the 1890’s, as has been done here. It is inaccurate in the extreme, however, to equate this with the history of tabloidism. The notion that there is no difference except size between tabloid and broadsheet presentation was erroneous as early as the mid-1930’s. The tabloid revolution which spawned this genre of Fleet St tabloidism began in the 1930’s,

16 ibid
17 ibid, p.23
culminating in the 1950's when virtually all of the popular national dailies had adopted *tabloidism* manifested in tabloid format.

Hogben also ignores here the distinctive *Nortonism* tradition of tabloid production which he had served for much of his career. It is beyond credibility to claim that there is no intrinsic difference between, say, the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sydney Morning Herald* except size. It is argued here that *Nortonism* is a clearly distinguished form of *tabloidism* shaped by an idiosyncratic proprietary but also influenced by hard news traditions and conventions applicable to both broadsheet and tabloid formats. The application of hard news practice is clearly favoured by Hogben, and this is basically what he outlines in his conception of *tabloidism*. The argument here is that the *tabloidism* applicable to the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* is largely attributable to the twin strands of *Nortonism* and Fleet St.

After making these qualifications, much of Hogben's defence of tabloids is applicable to the *Daily Mirror* in particular, but also in some degree to the *Sunday Mirror* "...tabloids have bold layouts in the main. They use big, black headlines and display pictures prominently." Basically, said Hogben, the "bold headlines and artifices of display are not more than an exhortation: READ THIS."18 Hogben also defended the journalistic skills inherent in *tabloidism*, arguing it required a skill and discipline beyond the range of some broadsheet journalists: "It requires boiling things down to their essentials."19 He perceived the broadsheet literary style as "generally, although not always, more formal, more decorous if you will, than that of the tabloids with their penchant for the vernacular. Stories are generally, although not always, displayed in a more restrained fashion than tabloid style."20

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18 ibid, p.24
19 ibid, p.24
20 ibid, p.25
Hogben’s defence of *tabloidism* was published in 1990, at a time when he could look back over the broad sweep of the popular press in the 20th Century, and generalise. It is an intriguing question what his perceptions might have been in 1959 when he was closely involved with both the *Sunday Mirror* and the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. He was also an executive of News Ltd through the 1960’s and 1970’s when Rupert Murdoch sponsored a further revolution in *tabloidism*, exemplified most potently in the London *Sun*, but drawing on experience with both the *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror*. This, of course, is largely irrelevant to the *tabloidism* of the late 1950’s which is the principal theme here.

**The Key Players**

In chapter 4, an account was given of the staff establishment of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, how it was recruited and utilised. Broadly, the meagre staff resources were divided into two groups: the reporting staff in Newcastle, and the sub-editors in Sydney. The Newcastle staff relied heavily on two already hard-pressed staff journalists, Kevin Plummer and Frank Wilcher, supplemented by a cadre of casuais, several employed by other newspapers and agencies. Emphasis was placed on the role of Ron Ford, a young British journalist familiar with the ethos and practice of Fleet St *tabloidism*. Ford was posted from the *Sunday Mirror* to the Newcastle paper, working for just under a year, writing many of the main stories and driving the promotions. Ford was on the threshold of a lively and productive career on Sydney tabloids, serving for several years as Editor of the Sydney *Sun*. When he returned to Sydney in mid-1961, he was not replaced by another Sydney journalist. For the remaining 30 or so issues, the bulk of the reporting fell on Newcastle branch office reporters and casuais.
Brief mention was also made of Howard Young and his role as principal sub-editor of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Ford was critical of Young's ethical misjudgments and professionalism, rating him as not in the top drawer of Fleet St practitioners. He acknowledged, however, the extreme pressures facing Young in producing a Newcastle newspaper in Sydney. Regrettably, little is known of Young's background and experience. According to Ford, Young was the brother-in-law of Lindsay Clinch, the Editor-in-Chief of Mirror Newspapers: "Not that would have influenced his appointment." Young had been a down-table sub-editor on the London *Daily Mirror* and "one of the people obviously thought he had what could be developed." Clinch had put him in charge of the Sydney end of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*: "He was to lay it out and take responsibility for it there and liaise with us in Newcastle in producing it."21 (The difficulties Young encountered in "liaising" and "producing" the paper were also outlined in Chapter 4).

It is difficult to estimate what the weekly production schedule was and how many sub-editors Young had to help him. It is unlikely to have been more than two. It is also impossible to state accurately just how long Young was responsible for the Newcastle edition. According to Ford, Young died during the life of the paper:

...the pressure of doing this paper was too much for him and he had a heart condition and he had a heart attack. He was still relatively young.22

Given the huge pressures on him, it is not surprising that Young made mistakes and errors of judgment. It is a measure of his professionalism that the paper was as good as it was in the crucial early issues. Undoubtedly, it struck an early

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21 All quotes from Ron Ford used here are taken from Personal Interview, 30 December, 1993.
22 ibid
rapport with a demanding regional audience. Without knowing precisely when Young actually finished producing the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, it is difficult to assess his overall contribution to the paper’s qualities. A careful examination of the front pages of the 87 editions produced suggests that Fleet St tabloidism, as applied to both text and pictorialism, was most evident in the early months. It is reasonable to conclude that this influence was largely due to Young working in collaboration with Ford. Fleet St tabloidism re-emerged in a form heavily influenced by pictorialism in the final seven issues published as the Newcastle edition of the Newcastle Sunday Pictorial. According to Ford, Young had died some time before this. The best conclusion that can be made is that Young supervised the production of at least the first 20 issues, about a quarter of the whole run. It is possible that he worked on subsequent issues, but in a sharply different style.

After Young’s death, the Chief Sub Editor of the Sunday Mirror, Jack Plummer, took over responsibility for the Newcastle papers. Plummer had been a career Truth and Sportsman journalist, working as a reporter and sub-editor on the Daily Mirror, then taking principal responsibility for getting each edition out on time as make-up sub-editor. Brisk, hard-working and flamboyantly energetic, Plummer was a commanding editorial presence with a gimlet gaze accentuated by thick glasses. This prompted one of his office nick-names, “Dr Cyclops”. He revelled in his work and its responsibilities, seemingly destined for a senior executive position which he never quite achieved. He was Acting Editor of the Sunday Mirror and, in later years, briefly editor of the Sydney Sun between permanent editors:

(Plummer) always had a position very close to the editor. He was an excellent layout man, excellent headline writer and he had a very good news sense, that’s why he used to like these stories from Newcastle because they had a vigour about them and (he)
It is tempting to analyse the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in terms of the contrasting approaches of these two experienced newspaper producers, one favouring a softer tabloid style, the other excelling in hard news if not the full *Nortonism*. Such an approach, however, would be schematic and speculative. There was no lack of sensational hard-news stories in the Newcastle paper during the first 20 issues when Fleet St *tabloidism* was strong. As Chief Sub Editor of the *Sunday Mirror*, Plummer would have had overall responsibility for production. It is impossible to know if, when, and how he intervened. With the difficulties of the *Sunday Mirror*, Plummer might have had enough on his plate. He would certain have vetted the Newcastle pages, and he had the power to overrule and make changes. Nor is it known whether Plummer continued a major role with the *Sunday Mirror* while doing the Newcastle pages. In analysing content and layout, we can only go by the evidence of the pages themselves, not trying to read too much beyond the lines to tease out individual approaches to style. 24

**The First Issue**

The account of the disastrous launch of the *Sunday Mirror* in Chapter 4 illustrates the absolute importance of getting the first issue right. Some great mastheads have recovered from the debris of a misbegotten first issue; the London *Daily Mirror* is perhaps the supreme example. Many more have limped on for a few weeks, sometimes months, before throwing in the towel. Over time, under the new proprietary of Rupert Murdoch, the *Sunday Mirror* bobbed into

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23 ibid
24 The material used here on Jack Plummer is based on a personal interview with Clem Lloyd. 3 December, 1998.
an uneasy stability. It was never a serious threat to its rival Sydney Sundays, the *Sun-Herald* and the *Sunday Telegraph*. Many in the substantial *audience* that bought the first issue voted with their feet, not bestowing a second chance. It is argued in Chapter 7 that the creation of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was one of the market ploys used to stop the circulation haemorrhages. To a degree, the strategy was effective, although the Newcastle edition in itself was not sufficient to turn around the whole market. That the newspaper was able to create a niche in a difficult market is testimony that its first issue was acceptable to its *audience*, and solid standards were maintained in the always-difficult foundation period.

A factor in the relative success of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* launch was its provision of an alternative, even an antidote, to the institutional *Newcastle Morning Herald* and, in lesser degree, to the lacklustre evening, *The Newcastle Sun*. Ford concluded that the breezier style and freshness of the local news approach contrasted with the traditionalism of the established press:

> The *Newcastle Morning Herald* was a very, very, serious minded newspaper, which would be classified by us as bloody, awfully dull and so we couldn’t try to compete with that anyway, so the only way into Newcastle and being a Sunday paper was to be a sort of vibrant, energetic newspaper - big headlines, racy stories, and a very human approach ...\(^{25}\)

A former Editor-in-Chief of the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, John Lewis, described the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* as being “very much more cheeky than *The Newcastle Sun*. , , for all the fact that it was a tabloid newspaper, (*The Newcastle Sun*) wasn’t a tabloid in its approach.”\(^{26}\)

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\(^{25}\) Ron Ford, op cit.

\(^{26}\) John Lewis, Personal Interview, 16 June, 1998
The success of a new masthead, and its proprietary can be influenced greatly by big news breaks. The classic instance in the Australian experience is the young Keith Murdoch’s assumption of the *Melbourne Herald*’s editorship in the early 1920’s. Murdoch’s advent was fortunately timed, coinciding with a particularly juicy breaking crime story, the “Gun Alley” murders in Melbourne’s Eastern Market. Eric Baume’s world scoop in breaking news of Hitler’s invasion of Russia in the early days of the Sydney *Daily Mirror* boosted the newspaper immeasurably. The Sydney *Sunday Mirror* was singularly luckless in striking a meagre news period when it launched in late 1958. Not so its Newcastle counterpart. The first issue chimed in nicely with one of the big news breaks of the late 1950’s, the manhunt for jail escapee, Kevin Simmonds, who was finally run to earth in bushland near Newcastle. Thus, the first edition of the Newcastle *wraparound* splashed a pointer on Page 1 to the extended coverage in the *core Sunday Mirror* inside.

The Simmonds story was dramatic, a large reverse 95 point heading across the top of the page: “Simmonds is Heading North - Story and Pictures inside”. Despite the emphasis given to the manhunt, four other stories appeared on the front page. The main lead headed “Pacer Maimed by a Slasher” (72 pt) was spread over five columns, telling the story of the pacer, Nulla Nulla, who was slashed in his stall at Newcastle Showground. The story ran over two columns down the left-hand side of the page. The other major story titled “Liberty lost in hospital” lead as follows: “Doctors say Maitland Hospital’s new medical scheme is robbing patients of personal liberty”. This story ran over two columns on the right-hand side of the paper. This story, tinged with sensationalism, was clearly directed at the audience in Maitland, the second city of the lower Hunter Valley, and crucial to building an audience for the newspaper in the Greater Newcastle region. Similarly, a smaller single column

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27 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, November 8, 1959, p.1

28 ibid
filler was directed at Cessnock, a substantial mining city also central to the
target audience. Headed “Council battle”, this gave a brief but lively summary
of a campaign contest in the Greater Cessnock Council. Another small single-
column filler, “The cash stays put”, was a sharply-angled Newcastle story.

Front-page pictorialism also neatly encapsulated an essential tabloid element, a
girl picture, displayed with panache, three columns wide and seven inch deep.
It showed Australian badminton champion, Janet Harrison, a local hero, leaping
to smash a volley, showing a generous expanse of ‘Gorgeous Gussies’ panties
(a reference to American Gussy Moran, whose tennis became memorable for her
short dresses and revealing lace panties at Wimbledon). The caption read:

SWOOSH! Pretty 24-years-old Janet Harrison, of Mayfield West,
slams a winning return down the badminton court at Newcastle
Showground Pavilion. Badminton is booming in Newcastle and
Janet is a national champion.29

This was pretty much a standard picture caption, giving basic information, but
the opening SWOOSH! gave it an onematoepic tabloid twist. This enticing
visual emphasis was due to a notion from Kevin Plummer, the head of the
branch office, that a girl playing badminton would suit the first Page 1:

Back in the mid fifties I remembered a picture on the front page of
the Saturday Daily Mirror Newcastle Edition that was printed
around 10.00am in Sydney then trucked to Newcastle by road
and arrived in the Newcastle area about 12.30 to 1.00pm. The
newspaper was mainly a sporty paper with race, football and
other features. There was a big picture down the front page of a
badminton player smashing the shuttle with a cut out reverse
heading titled ‘Janet Goes for a Big Hit’.30

29 ibid
30 Kevin Plummer, Personal Interview, 20 November, 1993
SIMMONDS IS HEADING NORTH

JANET HARRISON, NEWCASTLE BADMINTON PLAYER


(bottom) *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, November 8, 1959
This picture of a younger Janet Harrison, appeared in the *Daily Mirror* on 1 September, 1956 and also showed a tantalising display of leg and lingerie. Its caption was similar to the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* caption just over three years' later.

Australian junior badminton champion, Janet Harrison of Newcastle, puts everything she has into a smash during a practice match. Badminton is booming in Newcastle and New South Wales is expected to play New Zealand at Newcastle.31

This earlier *Daily Mirror* edition sold out in the Hunter area and Plummer and his colleagues at the Mirror credited this extra circulation to the front page picture.32 Such resonances and associations are instrumental in the stimulus of successful *tabloidism*. Without question, the re-jigged picture, commissioned from the Hunter Photographic Association, (See Chapter 6) sealed an impressive Page 1.

**Before the Masthead**

If a successful first issue is dependent on the quality of the front page, there is an enduring element of that front page that is also indispensable to good readership perception. This is generally known in Australian print news tradition as the *masthead*. (In American practice, the term used is the *nameplate* or *flag*. The British usage is title-piece.) In essentials this is an ensemble of typographical and pictorial elements mostly assembled as a coherent entity at the top of Page 1. Occasionally, *mastheads* are accommodated vertically down the first column of Page 1, usually in tabloid formats. It includes the title line of the newspaper itself (*Newcastle Sunday Mirror*) plus traditional trimmings: number, date, (an important news element in its own right), price, edition,

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31 *Daily Mirror*, September 1, 1956, p.1
32 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
address, telephone numbers. It may also include a logo or pictorial emblem as an identifier, (or signifier), although this has become less obligatory. Small items of news can be incorporated, such as weather forecasts. With broadsheets in particular, the traditional mastheads have been closely associated with pointers to news, entertainment and promotional content inside the newspaper. Because tabloids have significantly less front-page space, pointers are shifted around the page, although sometimes used at the top below the masthead for striking effect. An example was the first issue with its pointer to the Simmonds manhunt. (See above)

In the process of rapid flux that produces a daily newspaper, there is a fundamental need for elements that are constant and enduring. In short, the reader needs daily assurance, or reassurance, that although much changes, the foundations remain the same. This what an effective masthead does. Hutt likens its qualities to a flag:

...to draw attention like a well designed nameplate, to rouse interest and to rally supporters like a distinctive flag. To draw a commercial analogy, it may fairly be said that a newspaper [masthead] calls for as much care as that normally given nowadays to the styling of a product name on a package label... A distinctive [masthead] like a good trademark, helps to build a positive association in the minds of readers and potential readers...

Somewhat wistfully, Hutt also observed that although a masthead was one of the most important items in typography, it was also one of the most sadly neglected. Hutt would not have been impressed by the Newcastle Sunday Mirror's masthead which was not one of its glories. In fact, the masthead was commonly perceived as the worst aspect of the whole paper. From the first edition in November 1959 it was criticised by editorial, circulation and, most

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importantly, by newsagents. Bureau chief, Kevin Plummer felt it reduced the status of the paper from its inception.\textsuperscript{34} According to the \textit{Sunday Mirror} management in Sydney, it was a production problem that could not be solved while the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror} was wrapped around the Sydney edition. It is difficult, though, to conceive any technical problem that could not have been resolved if the matter had been considered sufficiently important by management.

The masthead comprised a red NEWCASTLE over the SUNDAY MIRROR (see insert). It was criticised as “looking temporary” and “chatty” compared to the rest of the design.\textsuperscript{35} All issues included the local weather forecast boxed on the left of the title, and either phone numbers or a small \textit{promo} on the right. It had virtues of plainness and a lack of clutter, largely negated by a crushing anonymity. It looked cheapskate, totally lacking any semblance of the identifier and signifier roles of the memorable, or even effective, \textit{masthead}. In terms of the contemporary notion of “branding” it was a total zilch, failing to convey any sense of the newspaper’s ethos, policy or \textit{readership} appeal. It is impossible to quantify whether this lack-lustre “flag” cost the newspaper significant circulation. Certainly, it would not have helped.

The temporary NEWCASTLE remained after the Murdoch takeover of Mirror Newspapers in May 1960. (See chapter 8) The masthead type was changed slightly on Sunday, May 29, 1960, but the red Newcastle was still positioned above. On Sunday, July 17, 1960, however, the new company made a significant change in the masthead, copying the style of the London \textit{Daily Mirror} issues.\textsuperscript{36} “Newcastle” was re-positioned on the left hand side, still in red but with finer lettering:\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{34} Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{35} Ron Ford, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{36} Hugh Cudlipp, \textit{Publish and be Darned!}, Andrew Dakers, London, 1953, p.69
\textsuperscript{37} \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}, May 21, 1961, p.1
Beneath the main title was a tag line in light italic capitals: YOUR INDEPENDENT QUALITY NEWSPAPER.

This masthead remained intact until issue 81 (May 28, 1961) when a new masthead reflecting a major name change appeared. The Sydney edition was renamed Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial to reflect an increased emphasis on photos. (See chapter 8). The Newcastle wraparound replicated the masthead of the core paper which was three tiered. At the top was a reversed “Sunday” with the black tapering to the left. The second tier had the accustomed “Mirror” in bold type. At the bottom was another reverse with “News Pictorial.” Thus, the “Newcastle” identification in the title was eliminated, although an additional four-tiers included the date in large bold type, (the date had been very much subsidiary in the previous design), and Newcastle/District/Special in three layers, with the bottom line in smaller type. The total impact was to play down to the point of nonentity the significance of “Newcastle” in the original masthead. Regional identification was removed from the focus-point of the title, and completely relegated to the subsidiary component. Symbolically, these changes foreshadowed the demise of the entire Newcastle wraparound concept. A masthead can be an extremely revealing indicator of the birth, health and death of a newspaper. (See Chapter 8)
Changes in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* mastheads: (from top to bottom) November 8, 1959; May 19, 1960; July 17, 1960; August 28, 1960; September 18, 1960. The bottom masthead dated May 28, 1961 indicates the end of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* masthead which was replaced by *Mirror News-Pictorial*, Newcastle special edition and a reduction in both the status and size of the wraparound now only 8 pages.
The importance of the front page in establishing readership and audience would seem so elemental as to require no justification. Whether a newspaper is broadsheet or tabloid, the importance of the front page is obvious but, as Hutt points out, it also has dangers:

The common description of the front page as a paper's 'shop window' is an apt metaphor, underlining the need for inviting [typographical] window-dressing. But there is a danger here; after commendable efforts have been concentrated 'on the shop window', too little may be done to make the display of the wares inside equally attractive. . . It seems that the metaphor should be somewhat modified; a newspaper is like a store with many windows, each one of which should have dressed to the same high standard. 38

In short, newspapers with good front pages tend to fall away in the rest of the paper. Part of the problem is advertising. The front page of a tabloid is generally free of advertising or, at worst, only minimal advertising. (The Newcastle Sunday Mirror contained no advertising on the front page.) Advertising is also restricted on the prime display pages 2 and 3. Thereafter, the density of ads thickens as the reader advances further into the paper. Most of these pages provide scope for only limited, essentially modular blocks of text and display. It is axiomatic that the early pages should be the best designed and most attractive to the readership. Just how this is to be achieved creates a remarkable diversity of opinion among sub-editors and designers.

Obviously much depends on a more exacting selection of content for a tabloid front page which has to do five things if it is to succeed: include the best news; include the best pictorial content; be attractively designed; point to the content inside; point to specific newspaper promotions (or promos). This can impose

38 Allen Hutt, op.cit., p. 142
inordinate strains on a much reduced news space, usually of only seven narrow columns and limited depth, taking account of the masthead. The often sensationalist approach of tabloidism also constricts limited space because of the demand for bigger headings, pictures and art work. No wonder that tabloid front pages often seem to burst at the seams! Much can be accomplished by very tight writing and sub-editing. Where stories have to run to length, this is best done by limiting the front page text and spilling the balance inside. This is a solution of mixed blessings because it creates a ripple effect inside as laying out the spills is often a clumsy business. No longer do the tabloids have the luxury of spilling automatically to the back page, space now allocated by convention to sport. Apart from Page 1, the best read news page is usually Page 3 which the reader hits automatically with the page turn. Page 3 has to be designed so as to lure the reader both to it and then Page 2, the pattern of the average reader's gaze.

Formulas for meeting these demands have evolved steadily over time, although old patterns often die hard. Hutt's influential treatise on newspaper design published in 1960 favoured one heavily presented story, with picture or pictures. Once this was assured, the next important question was the use of prominent pointers inside. According to Hutt, the ultimate front page for a tabloid was a single theme and a single reverse block (white on black). His premier example was an admittedly sublime Page 1 from the London Sunday Pictorial, about a confession made to the newspaper by the killer Donald Hume. Much of the page was dominated by a huge four-deck reverse heading: I killed Setty... and got away with murder. Two other elements were a deep insert picture of the killer, with explanatory pointer, and the opening lines of the confession, boxed across the bottom of the page.

39 ibid, p.141
I, DONALD HUME, do hereby confess to the Sunday Pictorial that on the night of October 4, 1949, I murdered Stanley Setty in my flat in Finchley-road, London. I stabbed him to death with a dagger while we were fighting.

Sydney papers were not averse to copying their London counterparts.

Striking similarities in the layout of the London Sunday Pictorial (June 1, 1958) and the Sydney Truth (June 29, 1958) featuring the same story four weeks apart.

Alan Hutt in Newspaper Design, 1960, p.141 described the above Sunday Pictorial page as the tabloid ultimate: “a single theme, a single reverse block, to make the front page”
Other pundits of news style and presentation looked more sympathetically at multiple stories, even on a tabloid front page. W. Sprague Holden, a US journalism scholar who studied Australian newspapers in the mid-1950's, favoured a multi-faceted approach:

...the tabloid must capture readers with one or two - not more than three - units of interest on page one. Page one gets the "most" story on the tabloids. It may be the most interesting, most tragic, most pathetic, most unusual, most humorous, most horrible.40

Sprague Holden compared this approach with another editor's concept of a good page one mix: an absorbing national or foreign story; a good human-interest story; and a good sports story. In short, the ideal blueprint comprised three varied stories. Obviously, this model is designed for a national or major metropolitan newspaper. A regional or local newspaper would require at least one good local news story. It is also a formula for a daily newspaper rather than a Sunday because the demands of national and state news are more imperative. Tabloid Sundays in particular have more options. Sprague Holden concluded that the formula most commonly used in Australia inclined strongly to using more stories than devoting the whole page exclusively to one sensational story.41 Distinct differences between dailies and Sundays have to be recognised in analysing the content of newspaper front pages.

Page 1 Dissected

A breakdown of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror's Page 1 content in crude mechanistic terms shows some interesting trends. This following analysis is based on a content study of each of the 87 issues of the newspaper, including the seven issues presented as the Newcastle edition of the Sunday Mirror

40 W. Sprague Holden, Australia goes to Press, Wayne State University Press, Detroit, 1961, p.35
41 ibid
News-Pictorial. This study is drawn on more extensively in Chapter 6 with particular reference to pictorial content of front pages. The focus here is on the mechanics of the stories displayed on Page 1 rather than their specific content.42

In total, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror ran 276 stories on the front page over 87 issues, an average of just over three stories a page. Eight issues carried only one major Page 1 story. In 28 issues, two stories were carried; in 28 issues three stories; in 22 issues four stories; and in nine issues five stories. Clearly, the majority of the front pages favoured three or four stories. Even so, the proportion of issues containing only one or two stories is quite high. Typography textbooks would generally rule out five stories on a tabloid front page, but the front page layouts incorporated five stories without notable disaster.

Generally, there is a firm tendency through the run of the paper towards using more stories on Page One. Scrutiny of the first 21 issues shows that none used five stories. About half of the pages used two stories, and four used only one. Only five issues used three stories, the mix most favoured by many analysts. The preponderance of issues with few front page stories partly reflects promotion material, relating particularly to the Sunstrip girl contest. It also gives some support to the notion that tabloidism favours fewer front page stories, with an emphasis on highly-crafted “boxes” or “do-ups” in current terms. (This theme is taken up at more length in Chapter 6). Conversely, the final 21 page ones are weighted heavily to more stories. Only one issue used a single story, and only one issue two stories. Five issues used three stories. Of the remaining 14 issues, nine used four stories and six used five stories. The

42 The content study used here and in Chapter 6 was devised and conducted by Professor Clem Lloyd of the Graduate School of Journalism, University of Wollongong. It has not been published.
differences between the page composition of the early group of issues and the final group are quite pronounced.

Another attribute associated with tabloidism is fewer words in stories. In terms of the page as a whole, this may be expressed in proverbial terms as “fewer stories, fewer words.” The principal reason for this greater economy is that front pages of tabloidism are strong on pictorialism and display, leaving less space for text, which is usually re-written anyway to reduce narrative or thematic content. Looking again at the first and last 21 issues, we find that in the first batch, the lead stories absorbed some 380 news paras of text. Excluding one page which was substantially promotional text, an average of about 19 paras is struck for each lead story. (This excludes spills to later pages.) The style of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror favoured short paras, usually comprising a single sentence. Using a rule of thumb of 20 words for a standard news para in this style, the lead stories on Page 1 averaged about 380-400 words. Aggregating the subsidiary story units (inclusive of boxes and fillers but not promotional material, pointers and blocklines), the total was 30 story units totalling about 240 words, or eight paras a unit, about 160 words a story.

Conducting a similar exercise for the final 21 stories, 21 lead stories accounted for 318 standard news paras, an average of about 15 paras a story or approximately 300 words. The 60 subsidiary story units accounted for 482 standard paras, or six paras a unit and about 120 words. Clearly, the early batch of stories was stronger in wordage, emphatically so with the leads which were about 25 percent longer than the final batch. Subsidiary story units in the first batch were also about 25 percent longer than in the final batch. In terms of text, the typical issue in the first block absorbed about 620 words (one lead, two subsidiary stories). The equivalent issue in the second batch absorbed about 660 words (one lead, three subsidiary stories). Taking account of
variations in layout and pictorial, there is a striking uniformity between the two story batches. This suggests that, on average, the typical front page of the newspaper, had about 640 words, an imposing body of text for a tabloid front page. Despite the clear shift to more and shorter stories across the 87-issue run of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, the overall body of text contained substantially the same number of words.

Allowing for the generality, even crudeness, of such a fundamental exercise some interesting conclusions can be drawn about the writing and presentation of the newspaper. Clearly, it has to be differentiated from Fleet St *tabloidism* because it is much more text driven. For example, a typical issue of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* would include about 15 times the wordage of the London *Sunday Pictorial* front page cited above. Admittedly this classic example of Fleet St *tabloidism* provides an extreme example. Fleet St *tabloidism* at its peak aspired to the classic balance of this Page One, attaining it but rarely. Even so, the relative verbosity of the Newcastle front pages and their newsiness contrasts strikingly with the stringent economy of the pictorial “do-ups” of Fleet St *tabloidism*. The general trend here supports the case made more strongly in Chapter 6 (based on front page pictorialism) that the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* leaned to Fleet St *tabloidism* early in its life, but the conventional canons of *Nortonism* with its emphasis on hard news style asserted themselves through much of the newspaper’s run.

*Nortonism* also emerged strongly in the issues which carried only one major story on the front page. (Excluded from the analysis here is a full-page pictorial “do-up” promoting the “Sunstrip Girl context” which included art works and typography but no news text.) One was an Anzac Day feature published on April 24, 1960, with a rare by-line for Ron Ford.43 At a massive 50 paras, about

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43 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, 24 April 1960
1,000 words, it represented a substantial infusion of text for a tabloid front page. The story was competently written and the layout starkly appropriate, although owing little to tabloidism or even a conventional “Sunday”. It very much resembled a standard issue of the Daily Mirror of the late 1950’s. Even more evocative of mainstream Nortonism was another front-page devoted to the plight of Platt’s Estate, a deprived area of Newcastle with a partly aboriginal population. Although not by-lined, the story was probably written by Ford. The text of 40 paras (about 800 words) was substantial, given the extensive pictorialism also injected into page layout. In terms of origins, a dead giveaway was a large reverse head across the front page: THE SHAME OF OUR CITY. This clearly echoed a famous Truth front page series, THE SHAME OF SYDNEY, published about a decade earlier. Again the link to Nortonism was unmistakable.

Three other single-story front pages were complemented by outsize pointers and pictures, reducing the volume of text and muting its overall impact. One was a clear “silly season” sensationalism, headed SHARKS CLOSE IN, with the tenuous text devoted to packs of killer sharks cruising off Newcastle. With a second, the gigantic pointer, Referendum latest: NO LEADS Details Inside, dominated the top of the page, the remainder a by-lined story by Kevin Plummer about bad water quality at Raymond Terrace. The third carried a three column pointer almost the depth of the page about the Thorne kidnapping, leaving space for a newsworthy, well-displayed story about an autonomous university for Newcastle.

The only single-story Page 1 story with a whiff of Fleet St tabloidism was, predictably, the report of the winner of the Sunstrip Girl contest. This carried

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44 ibid, 15 May, 1960
45 ibid, 1 January, 1961
46 ibid, April 30, 1961
47 ibid, July 17, 1960
In the last 10 days, Newcastle has suffered the most shameful publicity it has had for years.

Australia has been told by newspapers and radio that people are living like animals almost in the heart of the city.

It is the tragic story of the town called Matt's.

Meals from a nearby refuse dump

Anger and Newcastle's Never-Never Highway

Two babies, who lived in this shanty, died when an outbreak of gastro-enteritis swept the area.

N'CASTLE'S NEVER-NEVER HIGHWAY

(SEE INSIDE SECTION, PAGE 11)
minimal text, a dominant beachgirl picture, and strong typography. The modest pointer was the spill of the Page 1 story to Page 3. In many ways, this page links up well with the *pictorialism* evident in the handful of issues published as the Newcastle edition of the *Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial*. It exemplified a much softer tabloid picture, with a dominant single picture and integration of minimal text and maximum *pictorialism* and display.

A Point of View

A formal *Editorial* or *Leader* is widely perceived as indispensable to a newspaper and its *readership*. The content and presentation of this *sine qua non* is crucial to the ethos and image of both a quality daily broadsheet and a rip-roaring daily tabloid. It has also been conventional for a Sunday to carry an editorial although perceived as having rather less weight. *Tabloidism*, at least on a daily basis, has not been considered as antithetical to editorialising. Indeed, it might be thought that with its vast popular *audiences*, the editorial is ideally suited to the genre, as indeed it is. The great Fleet Street tabloid thunderers, such as the London *Daily Mirror*, have often provided superb editorials, crafted with the same care and quirkish expression as their “do-ups”. It is also true that for less accomplished tabloids, the editorial can become something of a duty, even an after-thought. The perception of tabloids as crusading or campaigning in the public interest can also conflict with standard editorialising. It is a pertinent argument that a tabloid can do its editorialising in its news page by crusading and campaigning.

The conventions of *Nortonism*, particularly in *Truth*, leaned strongly to boisterous crusades in the news column rather than effete editorials. The *Sunday Mirror* had mostly followed this practice. The *Daily Mirror* ran daily editorials, although it was not a memorable feature of that idiosyncratic, often
effective campaigner. From January to October, 1958 only one editorial appeared on the front page of the *Truth* — on July 27, 1958, criticising the Menzies' Federal Government. In the period 1 November 1959 to 24 April, 1960 only two editorials appeared in the Sydney *Sunday Mirror*. With no firm precedent or guidance, editorials appeared in only a few editions of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, usually sandwiched between competing stories on page 3. The first editorial in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* appeared in the second edition, November 15, 1959 with a reverse block indicating 'Editorial' with a heading “Motorists, meat in the sandwich”. The content could be considered unsensational in tone:

The public will be the butt of the petrol price war which this week threatens to shut down more than 200 of the 220 service stations in the district.

If the closedown takes effect thousands of Newcastle motorists will be immobilised.

The penultimate paragraph in bold type was emotive: “But in the middle is the suffering public, wanting nothing more than the right to buy petrol at the right price”. This exemplified traditional editorials in tabloids as emphatic in typography, clustered with bold, italic, caps, underlining, and exclamation marks. By contrast, the two stories flanking the editorial were both samples of editorialising in the news columns: “TOWN WITH A KILLER CROSSING PEOPLE WANT ACTION” and “Mayor says river plan is a waste”.

The paucity of journalists' getting by-lines for stories or photos has been noted earlier. It was a period of traditional journalistic anonymity, largely a reflection of standard practice designed to sharply differentiate news from opinion in the columns. As John Fairfax and Co. opined:

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48 ibid, November 15, 1959, p.3
49 ibid
News is a statement of fact. Once anything speculative or in the nature of comment creeps in, diverging from the relation to strict fact, it ceases to be news. 50

Thus, journalists who wrote columns of opinion were dignified as columnists using hallowed space and by-lined prominently. In a rare example of a photographic by-line, Newcastle photographer, Ron Morrison got a by-line for two human interest pictures of a fox terrier with glasses reading the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, titled “These Made us Laugh”. The credit read (Mirror Pup-Pics by Ronnie Morrison). Such whimsical personalisation of journalistic work was otherwise unknown in the newspaper.

Because it was wrapped around the core Sunday Mirror, it was unnecessary for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror to duplicate the mother paper in providing the range of feature and stock entertainment material it contained. Comic strips, joke pages, serialised novels, film and television reviews, book reviews, recipes, crosswords - all appeared in the Sunday Mirror. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror did feature cartoons mainly by the cartoonist, Virgil Reilley. These pinpointed local issues, tinged with social comment, such as Sydney’s dominance, a lost Newcastle bus, BHP workmen cooking at the open hearth, a pipe band’s quest for new uniforms, Hamilton residents driven crazy by cracker noise, and a row over lack of airport facilities. The cartoons appeared sporadically when it was felt additional comment was necessary to reinforce the story. They were not devised as part of the newspaper’s editorial policy, such as it was. Considering Virgil did his Newcastle cartooning in Sydney, the cartoons were a useful diversion and gave a lift to the problems of presenting often uniform pages. None appeared on the front page.

50 Oft-cited definition of news from A Century of Australian Journalism: The Sydney Morning Herald and its Record of Australian Life, John Fairfax & Sons Ltd, Sydney, 1931 p.2
51 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, June 5, 1960, p.16
1 and 2 Two cartoons by Virgil, highlighting firstly Sydney’s dominance of Newcastle (November 29, 1959, p2) and secondly, the rubbish clean-up by Newcastle and Lake Macquarie (March 6, 1960, p9)
3 and 4 Examples of highlighting letters to the Editor as Halo of the Week and Rat of the Week.
5 and 6 Cartoon-type illustrations used to occasionally accompany a story, eg syphoning of petrol and a lost Newcastle bus.
In the Public Interest

A glory of Nortonism was the lusty, sustained support it gave to the protection of the public interest, particularly those who lacked a champion. It was consistently on the side of those who mostly had no other means of redress but a sensationalist press. Its support for the downtrodden, the neglected, the homeless, and the dispossessed over many years was sure, certain and effective. (See chapter 3). In its quests for a family audience with a much softer paper, the Sunday Mirror largely rejected the role of public champion and advocate. In so doing, it cut the umbilical cord with a loyal sector of its audience that ignored its excesses and sensationalism because of its enthusiastic espousal of the public watchdog role. In many ways, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror reflected the traditional Nortonism, its public interest journalism redolent more of Truth and the Daily Mirror than its parent Sunday.

Thus, it relished the news columns as a platform for public-interest campaigning. It criticised local government, state government, the Road Transport Department, the PMG, hospital, health and water boards, electricity and other quasi-government departments, industries, education establishments and Newcastle’s lousy relationship with Sydney. In a brief life of 20 months, it raised a lot of hell. Front page stories carried headlines such as “Heliport Hum-Haw Stop All this Quibble”\(^{52}\); “Insurance Scheme Unfair”\(^{53}\); “The Department of NO Main Roads Costs us a Fortune”\(^{54}\); “Dental treatment scandal - Kiddies Wait 6 Years”\(^{55}\); “Bus Danger to Schoolchildren”\(^{56}\); and “Why Don’t They Give Our Kids A Chance”\(^{57}\), an attack on schoolteachers.

\(^{52}\)ibid, February 7, 1960, p.l
\(^{53}\)ibid, April 17, 1960, p.l
\(^{54}\)ibid, May 1, 1960, p.l
\(^{55}\)ibid, December 18, 1960, p.l
\(^{56}\)ibid, February 19, 1961, p.l
\(^{57}\)ibid, December 20, 1959, p.l
The paper always found space for the battling family, the jobless, the out-of work, and bewildered immigrants who found life in a new country different and disconcerting. According to Willey, a good newspaper would give equal consideration to community activities such as meetings, sport fixtures and social functions and cultural events, though these may seldom make the front page:

Often too, the newspaper is a line of appeal for people who are in distress, need help or want wrongs righted: a last line when all else has failed.\(^{58}\)

The 96 point reverse heading **The Shame of our City** has already been mentioned above. The story was about an Aboriginal family living in a shanty town called Platt’s Estate. A blocked sub-heading read “In the last 10 days, Newcastle has suffered the most shameful publicity it has had for years”. A further sub-heading in bolt print highlighted “Meals from a nearby refuse dump”. A photo was captioned: “Two babies, who lived in this shanty, died when an outbreak of gastro-enteritis swept the area”.\(^{59}\) In an era when front page reporting of indigenous Australians was highly unfashionable, it was a conspicuous and courageous piece of trenchant social criticism.

On October 30, 1960 a front page story titled “5 years’ bad luck” delineated the experiences of the Vogtmann family who had been dogged by hard luck and sickness since they arrived in Australia five years previously.\(^{60}\) The next week a follow-up story was headed **They’re all smiling now!** The lead paragraph read: “Readers have responded whole-heartedly in helping the Vogtmann family of eight - including six young children - who are living in primitive conditions in a bushland tent near Anna Bay.”\(^{61}\)


\(^{60}\) ibid, October 30, 1960, p.1

\(^{61}\) ibid, November 6, 1960, p.1
Examples of headings highlighting stories criticising Sydney’s control of and interference in Newcastle.
story on disadvantaged migrants featured on December 11, 1960. Headlines across the page blazoned New Australians “not wanted” and No Job for Brigitta (with accompanying photo), describing German Brigitta Gumulec’s discriminatory treatment by prospective employers. This brand of high-impact reporting displayed the instantaneous response that sensationalist reporting of deprivation and rank injustice can often spark in ameliorative action.

A sensational approach to the public interest did not come readily to more staid journalists who contributed to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. Public-interest stories in more subdued vein were written by the former editor-in-chief of the Newcastle Herald, John Lewis, who was civic roundsman for The Newcastle Sun in 1959-61. He was approached by Kevin Plummer to write copy for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror:

I think (Plummer’s) words were something like ‘jazzed-up’ versions of the Civic stories which I started to do. I must say that my idea of a ‘jazzed-up’ story was probably pretty naive in those days. My attempts at jazzing-up were quite modest and then I came across Ron Ford who was an absolute master at jazzing-up stories and making them far more interesting than they otherwise would have been.

Lewis assessed the best of the stories he wrote as pushing the case for an autonomous university at Newcastle. This was integral to the city’s efforts to break into new service industries to offset dwindling mining and manufacturing jobs. Lewis believed that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s campaign was effective in the push for its own university:

. . .if you were writing for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, you could be a lot ruder, more abrupt and you could attack. I think that had some sort of impact on the government of the day where

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62 ibid, December 11, 1960, p.1
63 John Lewis, op. cit.
PASSING THE BUCK ON UNIVERSITY ISSUE

Newcastle loses again

Newcastle is being given the run-around in its struggle for an autonomous university.

Statements on the issue by the Premier (Mr. Heffron) and senior officials of the University of NSW have rocked local campaigners.

Said Mr. Heffron: "Autonomy must stem from the Council of the University of NSW—not from the State Government."

Said Professor Baxter, Vice Chancellor of the University of NSW: "What we have here is autonomy for Newcastle—and this is a new thing."

Conflicting stories started the rounds many months ago.

Newcastle motorists are being robbed by faulty parking meters—See P.2

In any case, Aid Purdue will write to Mr. Heffron and place both the Premier's statement and that of Professor Baxter side by side, and then ask Mr. Heffron to tell him what he means.

"If the Premier is as vague as Professor Baxter, he might consider an amendment to the University of NSW Act which would make it clear that in the matter of granting autonomy, he cannot do it."

Mr. Worth (University of NSW), said it was not the university's problem but one for the State and Federal governments.

"Empire"

However, others behind the university issue are not so hopeful. Aid Purdue, speaking up in support, said: "The Premier and Professor Baxter may be right. He said the Premier's statement and that of Professor Baxter may be right, but when it comes to getting autonomy, it must be written in.

Back where we started

Mr. Heffron and Professor Baxter may be right. He said the Premier's statement and that of Professor Baxter may be right, but when it comes to getting autonomy, it must be written in.

"Empire"

The Premier (Mr. Heffron) was the first to pass the buck by declaring: "Not a State Government responsibility. See the University of NSW Council."

ARTS: See P.17
they saw 96 point headlines whereas you were lucky if you got 48 point headlines in *The Newcastle Sun or Newcastle Herald*.

The existing University College was an outpost of the University of Technology, Sydney - later the University of New South Wales.

Professor Baxter [who] was the vice-chancellor was quite an arrogant man and he was quite sneering in some of his comments about Newcastle. It got people's backs up and the campaign was really off and running and, of course, Frank Purdue was then the Lord Mayor and he had a brilliant sense of publicity and pushing Newcastle's interests. The university was really big news. It was quite amazing for a blue collar town how there was a united front to get autonomy for the university. I think that movement was probably pretty remarkable. It says something about Newcastle when it really gets an issue between its teeth."64

This was one example of how the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* tapped into Newcastle's antipathy to Sydney dominance. Readers empathised with the journalists' attack on Sydney institutions which tried to reduce the status of Newcastle. In the June 5, 1960 issue, the paper printed a story of Newcastle artist, Peter Sparkes' exhibition in Sydney with the heading “He turned the tables on Sydney”65, further highlighting Newcastle's aversion to the synonym 'second city'.

**Peopling the News Columns**

Arguably, the greatest contribution of tabloids to the ethos and practice of the newspaper has been its primary emphasis on the demotic, the popular, that which relates to the common people. It took newspapers from the estate of the elite and lodged them firmly in the domain of the vernacular, the real world and its occupants. *Tabloidism* depends heavily on personalising issues, on translating them into styles and formats that are instantly accessible to a mass...

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64 ibid
65 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, June 5, 1960, p.7
audience. Much of the effort of tabloidism is devoted to finding the combinations of words, type and pictures that do this with what is, at best, an intuitive simplicity. The essence of this is finding correlatives for abstracts, concepts and theories that are rooted in the world of what people do, where they do it, when they do it, how they do it, and why they do it. The content of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was rich in examples of this approach. Some have already been considered, and more will emerge in the consideration of pictorialism in Chapter 6. Harris and Spark point out the useful assumption that the primary interest of readers in buying the local paper will probably be in “people and the doings of people.”66 Readers are interested in how other people are affected and many readily identify with people in trouble or involved in controversy. The following case histories are classic examples of this precept.

Sprucing up Ron

Ron Buckley’s story first appeared in the Sunday Mirror issue of December 20, 1959 under the 95 point sans serif headline SPRUCE UP! It was by-lined by Ron Ford, Special Newcastle Sunday Mirror reporter.67 In short, the story was so good that it was given dual treatment in both papers. It detailed the saga of Ron Buckley, 51, who had his unemployment relief suspended until he smartened himself up. This matter was raised in Federal Parliament by Newcastle member, Charlie Griffiths. The Minister for Social Services, Mr Hugh Robertson was quoted as replying: “It is not wholly sufficient for Mr Buckley to merely apply for a job. It is reasonable to expect that he will ensure that his behaviour and personal appearance is not such as will create an unfavourable impression on a prospective employer.” Charlie Griffiths commented: “I’ve seen worst dressed men in the House (of Representatives). . .Ron might look a

67 Sunday Mirror, December 20, 1959, p.44
(top left) Back page story on page 44 of the Sydney Sunday Mirror December 20, 1959 (with by line Ron Ford) featuring unemployed Newcastle man, Ron Buckley, who lost his unemployment relief until he smartens himself up.

(top right) Follow-up story on Ron Buckley with heading “More Strife for poor Ron - Now He’s TOO smart” which appeared on page 6 of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, February 21, 1960.

(bottom) Later story in Newcastle Sunday Mirror, on page 7, February 28, 1960 headed “Old Ron Buckley’s BIG chance” detailing the unemployable Ron Buckley’s pick and shovel job.
bit grubby sometimes, but what man wouldn’t fill his belly before he bought a bar of soap. Ron’s a trier. He wants to work.”

In news reporting, the fruits do not always come at the first picking as Mathieson points out:

Reporters are not asking themselves, automatically: “Now, is there a follow-up to my story?” In any given circumstances, the latent follow-up usually yields a better story, anyway.

A follow-up story appeared in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* under the heading MORE STRIFE FOR POOR RON. It showed *before* and *after* pictures contrasting an unkempt and spruced Ron Buckley with the caption NOW HE’S TOO SMART. Ron had applied for 20 jobs and was knocked back each time. The reason, he said, was that he looked too smart for his trade as labourer. “They won’t have a labourer looking toffed up. They don’t want clean shirts. A man’s got to look like he’s not scared to work.” The article concluded with the comment that Federal MP, Charlie Griffiths, was still on his side.

A further follow-up appeared a week later with a seven column article and photo and reverse headline, *Old Ron Buckley’s BIG chance*. The picture caption read: “Here’s Ron on the banjo - and liking it. The job should last several weeks. Says Ron: ‘It’ll do me; I’ll stay until I get the sack.’” Ron Buckley had been hired as a pick-and-shovel man by a Newcastle builder. It was a classic tabloid story, emphatically *Nortonism* in its championing of the battler. Not all of the newspaper’s staff approved of the way in which some of the demotic stories were obtained, particularly some of Ron Ford’s tactics in stories about “down and outers”. One was circulation clerk, Michael Mitchell:

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68 ibid
70 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, February 21, 1960, p.6
I used to think Ron was about forty years after his time ‘cause he reminded me of one of those 1920s journalists who ...used to be on with all the old winos in Newcastle and he would have them sitting on a story, have something breaking and he would palm them off a couple of quid here and he would have them on ice.71

Yessir, that’s my baby!

On June 5, 1960 the Sydney Sunday Mirror devoted its front page to the story and seven column photo of five-years-old Sharon Little, headlined ‘CHILD TO BE GIVEN AWAY’.72 The front page story ran in all editions of the core paper. A four column photo with extended caption appeared on the front page of the wraparound Newcastle Sunday Mirror on the same day with ‘GIVEAWAY BABY!’ blazoned across the photo.73 The story originated from a letter to the Newcastle Sunday Mirror by the child’s father. Kevin Plummer recalled the circumstances:

There was one story that Fordie (Ron Ford) did - it was a giveaway baby. This bloke wrote and said that he couldn’t afford to keep his child, his wife had left him and he was going to give it away. That was fairly sensational but it was a good story. We kept the kid and father at a motel the whole weekend so that other papers couldn’t get on to it. That’s London sort of stuff. It was fairly new. I’m sure it had never been done in Newcastle before.74

Indeed! No wonder the Sydney parent paper picked it up. The story would have made the front page of any tabloid newspaper ever printed.

The author, Ron Ford (then News Editor), elaborated:

The story you mentioned of the man who was giving away his daughter. He wrote to us - he was obviously in terrible financial position and, of course, you take a letter like that, that the guy only wants to try and raise a few quid for himself. We went out to see him but he was genuine. He would have gone through with it and he was genuinely in an awkward predicament. His wife left

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71 Michael Mitchell, Personal Interview, 27 September 1995
72 Sunday Mirror, June 5, 1960, p.1
73 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, June 5, 1960, p.1
74 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
FRANCE TAKES A BEATING

Humbled France lose top flight match at the Cricket Ground yesterday, winning by 25 to 7.

FRANCE
TAKES A
BEATING

NEWBIE IN PULL10

BELOW ARE IMAGES FROM THE SUNDAY MIRROR, JUNE 5, 1960.

The 'child to be given away' story made front page on both issues - the Sunday Mirror and the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, June 5, 1960.
him, obviously he wanted his wife back and this was his last throw to try to get her back, , , But I think that it overtook him in that he did this and then it ran away with him and he had to go ahead with it and the result, of course, was predictable. When we ran the story with an excellent picture on page one of the general (Sydney Sunday) Mirror, there was huge public reaction about how could this man do this, why should he be in such awful circumstances and we were able to follow up when his wife went back to him.75

Follow-up stories appeared in the Daily Mirror on June 6, the Sunday Mirror, June 12, Daily Mirror, June 20 and finally the front page story and 7 column photo on the Newcastle Sunday Mirror on June 26 showing Sharon Little with her sister and parents under the headline ‘Family together again’. The stories listed the statewide offers made for little Sharon Little; Bob Little’s rejection of £1000 for his daughter; and, triumphally, the return of Sharon’s mother and the family reunion. Said Ron Ford: “They were reunited and well it seems like a set piece, you know, that this was a typical tabloid beat-up. It was in fact genuine.”76

The story was given the greatest accolade of professional journalism. It was picked up by its rivals. The Newcastle Sun ran the following two column story without pictures on page 2:

30 Inquiries
For Adoption
of Girl (5)

New Lambton man, Mr. Bob Little (35), who says he wants to let his daughter Sharon aged five, be adopted because she has no mother, has received more than 30 inquiries about the adoption.77

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75 Ron Ford, op.cit.
76 ibid
77 The Newcastle Sun, June 6, 1960, p.2
Follow-ups on the ‘Give away baby’ front page story:
1) ‘Many offers for daughter’, Daily Mirror, Monday June 6, 1960, p.4
2) £1000 for his daughter’, Sunday Mirror, June 12, 1960, p.3
3) ‘No adoption for Sharon’, Daily Mirror, Monday, June 20, 1960, p.3
4) ‘Family together again’, a 7 column x 4 inches photo across the front page (June 26, 1960, Newcastle Sunday Mirror) of the Little family reunion.
The story differed markedly in style, layout and presentation from the front page stories on the *Sunday Mirror* and *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. This could have been interpreted as differentiating as far as possible a story that had been lifted directly from the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. More likely, it reflected a different genre emphasis to a story that could not be ignored in hard-news terms. Ford could not remember how the *Newcastle Morning Herald* covered the story:

> [Anyway] we were rather contemptuous of the Newcastle papers because they had reached a state of total turgidity and anything that was slightly sensational or controversial, they didn’t want to know. They ran the news that was fit to print not the news that people might be interested in.78

Remarkably, surviving editions indicate that the *Newcastle Morning Herald* did not touch the ‘giveaway baby’. This seems to have been a deliberate decision rather than a mishap. According to Armstrong, Harry Dickinson, the Herald’s news editor could not have failed to have sighted the story:

> . . . Now I don’t think he had a lot of respect for it (the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*) but he certainly had enough respect to take the stories in the *Mirror* seriously and then ask people like myself to follow them up on Monday.79

Apparently, the *Newcastle Morning Herald* did not consider the story was worthy of a follow-up. This is interesting, because it illustrates the pronounced disjunction between tabloidism (whether Fleet St, Nortonism or hard news) and the blinkered conservatism of the elite journal of record. Probably, the story was just too sensational for the Herald’s dour news editor:

> . . . he told us [what] he wouldn’t have liked about the (*Newcastle Sunday Mirror*) because he worked for a ‘quality’ paper. He wouldn’t have liked those bright vivid headlines; he wouldn’t have liked those arrows, those reverse things; he wouldn’t have liked the unattributed statements because...

78 Ron Ford, op.cit.
79 John Armstrong, Personal Interview, 10 July, 1999
looking at the papers the stories often are in the present tense, you know, the Newcastle Council is, the Hunter District Water Board is this, that or whatever but then you read the story and no-one is quoted so you might say where is the source of this. He wouldn't have liked that. Stories ... like estate agents say and then you read the story and there is not one real estate agent quoted.80

Admittedly, Dickinson had some good points. Tabloidism can be sloppy in style, vague on checking basic facts, given to generalities and avoidance of specific quotes and identification, overly sensational. It still seems extraordinary that this story was overlooked by the Newcastle Morning Herald. The family reunion effectively killed the story. It might have been an interesting follow-up to see whether the family stayed re-united.

Dr Tommy Hicks

The story on controversial evangelist, Dr Tommy Hicks, followed the publication of a six column page advertisement in March 1960 about his meetings in Newcastle. This produced an early instance of what today would be called advertorial. Kevin Plummer said that often the offer of a covering story facilitated the sale of advertising space “even though it might have been a story we wouldn’t have normally touched.”81 (This linkage between advertising and editorial content is taken up in Chapter 7) Facing the advertisement in the issue of March 20, was an interview with Dr Tommy Hicks describing his 17 trips around the world “on faith”, and the conversion of over three and a half million people after attending his meetings. A follow-up story with the headline CURED by faith they say! appeared on Sunday, April 8, 1960 after Dr Hicks’ team had returned to America. The story listed several people who claimed they had been cured of chronic illnesses by the evangelist. Two photographs featured Ernie Tanner who said his Parkinson’s disease was cured, and Martin Allsopp whose father claimed his asthma had gone and drugs had

80 ibid.
81 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
tonight at 8 pm
for seven hours and a half
in the big marquee-auction
birdwood park
newcastle

by faith; they say!

several people claimed this week they had been cured of chronic illnesses by evangelist dr. tommy hicks.

they said they had been "healed by faith" after attending his meetings in newcastle.

the illnesses repaired have been tuberculosis, diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, nervousness and "more diseases in one ear for 10 years." the people have been "healed by faith" after attending the meetings in newcastle.

mr. allsopp, who said his son had been ill for the past five years and nothing much could be done for him, gave the name of a doctor.

the doctor could not be contacted this week as he is away on tour. he was angry.

mr. allee, who served in the fort world war, when i stand up in front of all these people here i don't think that i have to give my doctor's name. this is humiliating me," he said.

later, he returned and gave his doctor's name.

the doctor confirmed he had been treating mr. allee for a form of parkinson's disease.

the last time i saw mr. allee on march 3 he was no different then to what he is now, said dr. allee. he has been treated for his parkinson's disease.

he was no different.

the doctor confirmed he had been treating mr. allee for a form of parkinson's disease.

mr. tanner says his parkinson's disease is cured, and he's discontinued his walking stick.

mr. allsopp, his father says marlin's asthma has gone, and drugs have been discontinued.

six column advertisements had appeared previously on march 13, and 20.

(top) six column advertisement of dr. tommy hick's evangelical meeting, newcastle sunday mirror march 20, 1960, page 12. on the adjacent page a news story with a current photo appeared.

(bottom) "cured by faith; they say!" story and pictures that ran over five columns in the newcastle sunday mirror, april 3, 1960 detailing claims by two newcastle people of miraculous cures after attending the evangelist's meeting.
been discontinued. Many claimed to have been “healed by faith” of illnesses ranging from backache, asthma, Parkinson’s disease, cerebral thrombosis, bronchitis, heart weakness and deafness after attending the evangelist’s meetings. They had filled in cards for dispatch to Dr Hicks’ 25-staff office in Los Angeles.

The article questioned the veracity of the claims made by those purporting to be healed. In bold type, it proclaimed: “Mr. Tanner was angry when a Sunday Mirror reporter asked him the name of his doctor so that his condition could be checked.” A later paragraph quoted his doctor stating after seeing Mr Tanner on March 25 that “he was no different then to what he was 10 years ago.” Having secured and received payment for the advertising, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror in this article was able to maximise the sensational and controversial element of Dr Hicks’ visit. While of dubious ethics, it certainly had the best of both worlds. It would, of course, have been rather more odious if, after taking Dr Hicks’ shilling, the newspaper had not published claims that he was a fraud.

**Women’s World**

The specialist news section for women in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror scrupulously adhered to conventions, some of them obsolete. The first issue had only one women’s page with three wedding photographs under the banner “Wedding Bells”. Four paras of text down one column were headed in bold: “What the women are doing”. The page included a 3 column x 9.1/2 inches advertisement for “the lowest priced divan in Australia - a sensational new ‘divan’ priced £8/19/6.”

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82 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, November 8, 1959, p.9
National dishes will be served and tables decorated to represent different countries at an International Night to be held at the YWCA on Wednesday. The tables will be arranged by senior YWCA clubs in the district. Mrs. Jean Middles of Bar Beach, who recently returned from the United States, will be guest speaker and a program of music has been arranged. The International Night is one of the special functions arranged for World Fellowship Week.

* * *

Captain and Mrs. Douglas Graeme-Clarke, of Adamstown, have returned home after a short holiday at Toowoon Bay, where they were the guests of Captain and Mrs. Peter McQuade.

* * *

Mrs. W.C. Mierendorff will entertain friends at a luncheon party on Friday at her home in Orchardtown Rd., New Lambton.

* * *

Mr. and Mrs. Alan Wilson, of Pulver St., Hamilton, with their daughter, Susan, are holidaying in Melbourne. 83

Kevin Plummer recalled that the social news was “somewhat basic”. It certainly was, to the point of banality. It reflected a mode of social writing that had disappeared from most metropolitan dailies and Sundays years before. Its stilted expression and reflection of extinct social mores contrasted piquantly with the language and social values of tabloidism. According to Kevin Plummer, it was written “in the first place by the male journalists who rang around friends for any social news of interest”. 84

Perhaps feeling that the page was lacking in feminine interest, Joan Cairnes was recruited to write the women’s page and oversee the content. Issue No. 2 on November 10, 1959 was expanded to two pages including three wedding photos again under the banner “Wedding Bells”. There were four feature stories: ‘The City’s fencing women!’ with a female fencer pictured; ‘A gown from a sari’; ‘Newcastle considers a big pageant’; and ‘An old, old, organ’. The

83 ibid
84 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
pages were rounded out with a three-column photograph of an engaged sports couple; and ten social paragraphs under the reversed heading ‘The wonderful world of women’. Harry Johnston, the advertising rep., felt the page had potential and, actively sought advertisements for these pages. An offer of a free honeymoon at Surfers Paradise by TAA appeared in a 3-column x 8 inches advertisement on the second issue. Mal Woolford, the diamond specialist, offered “every couple purchasing a Diamond Engagement ring...regardless of price, between now and Xmas will have the opportunity to win this sensational offer”.  

The two women’s pages usually ran on pages 8 and 9 but occasionally on pages 12 and 13. The format of a feature with a photo, 8 to 12 social paragraphs under the banner “Wonderful World of Women” and wedding photos continued until October 1960. Two to four weddings were used under banners such as “Married”, “Wed at Weekend”, “Weekend Brides”, “Wed this Week”, “Wedding Bells were Ringing”, “All of them are Newlyweds”, “Day they will remember”, “Valentine Week Brides”, “Camera gets glimpses of smiling brides”, “Married Yesterday”, “This was their wedding day”, “Pre Easter wedding bells”, “Attractive Brides”. Most of the wedding photos included only the bride and groom with the occasional group of four, or the bride only. The high cost of sending picturegrams to Sydney and the 6.30pm deadline on Saturdays meant that some wedding pictures were taken during the week, particularly on Friday nights. In the 1960s many Friday night couples were reluctant to be photographed. Some couples, although pleased, were amazed when a press photographer appeared to cover their wedding. ‘Shotgun’ weddings were not unusual and often pictures published showed only a close-up of the bride and groom. To make it easier, a single column

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85 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, November 15, 1959, ps8/9
86 ibid, p8
87 ibid, December 6, 1959, ps12/13
88 Elizabeth Morrison, Personal Interview, 30 December, 1993
Examples of wedding and social news in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*.

(top left and right) September 4, 1960
(bottom left and right) March 5, 1961
paragraph with a dotted border appeared in the paper on 17 January 1960 headed “Getting Married” and asking readers to detail forthcoming weddings:

**Getting married**
Are you planning a wedding?
Or is someone you know about to get married?
If so, either you or the other fellow - let the Newcastle Sunday Mirror know about it and we’ll be glad to see what we can do about getting a picture of the big Event.
Just pick up a phone and dial Newcastle MA2053.

Requests for details of social events appeared under the heading “Let us know!”. It sought information on balls, mannequin parades and other social “do’s.” Copies of photographs used in the women’s section were sold at the Newcastle office, one of the few sources of revenue from news-related merchandising at the disposal of news offices in these uncommercialised years.

**A Sporting Life**

As emphasised in Chapter 2, Newcastle had a well-earned status as one of Australia’s greatest sporting cities. Sport was quintessential to any conception of a Newcastle audience. Its contribution to the city’s ethos was incalculable. The role of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was to focus on local and regional
Top Newcastle women hockey players Isobel Marshwell and Colleen Quinn were outstanding in the hockey international against New Zealand.

Points for the punter

Northern Notches

Committee for the presentation of the hearty aw.

Top men in Northern Sport

Over greens

Fishing

by "TARWINE"

In a week highlighted by big captures of Jewfish, notably a 90-pounder at Belmont, fishing generally

Newcastle Sunday Mirror Sport

Club’s man of action

Northern Notches

Northern Association as well as Coffs

NOTCHES ON NORTHERN SPORT

Service to Rugby in the North

North Clarence Rugby League's most valuable player among the backs. "Tarwhine" has scored nine points in the season; the season.

NOTCHES ON NORTHERN SPORT

Although not under 18, club's man of action, has played for Newcastle under 18. He was a valuable points scorer for the club.

BOY SPRINTER

NEW STAR

JUNIOR SPORT

CHRIS HARVEY

A selection of the weekly sports columns which appeared in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror with illustrations, reversed headings, boxes and special type. Nom-de-plumes and generic names were used by casual staff from The Newcastle Sun, Newcastle Herald and Telegraph, Newcastle bureau.
sport in the context of a greater metropolitan, state and even national sporting
coverage. In short, it complemented, and extended locally, the sports reporting
of the Sunday Mirror, a newspaper in the Truth and Sportsman lineage of
newspapers with an overwhelming sporting emphasis. In an era when sport was
much less diversified, the principal spectator focus was on racing, cricket, and
football. Mass participation sports requiring often detailed reporting of
multiple results were mostly lawn bowls and golf. Access to the sea and lakes
stimulated audience for the spectrum of aquatic sports, and the region had
pockets of excellence in specialist sports such as badminton.

With only a limited slice of the standard 20 or so pages of the newspaper,
judicious reporting and editing was clearly required. It was difficult to satisfy
the range of sporting enthusiasts every week. The problem of servicing a mass
audience with very limited space and resources was tackled with some
ingenuity, mainly by increasing the range of columns which looked at sporting
activity in a generalised way rather than trying to meet consistently the
demands of multiple events. The newspaper began with two columns:
‘Notches on Northern Sport’ with line drawings of action sports figures and
reference to eight sports in 14 paragraphs; and Fishing by “Tarwhine” with a
line drawing of a rod fisherman. Traditionally, fishing was both a profession, a
pastime and a sport in the region, and Tarwhine captured well the highly-
technical language of the obsessive anglers and the range of esoteric
information they needed to know.

More columns were gradually added. Points for the Punter provided
contemplative fodder for professionals and amateurs in one of Australia’s
strongest horse breeding and horse-racing areas, complemented by harness
racing and coursing greyhounds. The armies of lawn bowlers of both genders

89 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, November 8, 1959, p.14
Twenty-two times during the illustrious career of Rugby League footballer Wally Prigg, people tried to "buy him away" from Newcastle.

They even tried in England. They tried it in Scotland too, and

Our racy new feature on—

Top men in
Northern
Sport

"THE MAN NO MONEY CAN BUY"

No. 1
Wally Prigg

"Discard gift racehorse made good"

The biggest thrill he had

THE TALENT QUEST

INTRODUCING:

First two issues of the feature Top Men in Northern Sport".

Twenty-two sportsmen were featured in the column which began on January 24, 1960.
were provided with ‘The White Hat Brigade’ (Bowls by Unbiassed).90 The most innovative of the new columns was unquestionably *Top Men in Northern Sport*, introduced in standard newspaper parlance as ‘Our racy new feature ...’. The first featured outstanding rugby league footballer, Wally Prigg, and ran seven columns with a double column photograph. The series featured prominent sportsmen from soccer, rugby league, rugby union, lawn bowls, boxing, cricket, cycling and baseball. (see table). ‘Women in Sport’ and ‘Junior Sport’ appeared midway through the newspaper’s run in response to readership demand for these broadly-based areas.91 *Under Sail with Skipper*, targeted at the large sailing and yachting audiences off the coast and on Lake Macquarie, was the final column which ran over the last 40 issues. Overall, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* averaged four pages an issue (including the back-page feature story and photographs) on all facets of sport including scores and results.

Under Ezra Norton, a fanatical supporter of horse-racing, Truth and Sportsman newspapers had been besotted with turf coverage. Journalists were known to have been personally dismissed by him for making mistakes in racing coverage. This fixation on horse racing seems also to have permeated the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Armstrong remembers the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* mainly as a racing sheet which was an indispensable aid to *Newcastle Morning Herald* when it compiled the massive weekend sports results on Sunday evening:

... a small team of reporters which included myself produced the sporting pages for the Monday’s *Herald*. So the first awareness I had of [the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*] was on a Sunday night - it was used by the sporting staff to find the racing results and as such it was very useful to them - it saved them a lot of work ... I remember the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* as a necessary check for me before I wrote my rugby union story on the Sunday night. I had the advantage because I could embellish whatever Frank

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90 ibid, January 17, 1960, ps14/16
91 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
Wilcher [of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*] had written the day before.\textsuperscript{92}

### NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR
#### TOP MEN IN NORTHERN SPORT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wally Prigg</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>24/1/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg Date</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>31/1/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Hannan</td>
<td>Boxing</td>
<td>02/2/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ald. Harry Edwards</td>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>14/1/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cyril Burke</td>
<td>Rugby Union</td>
<td>21/2/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Boki” William Bell</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>28/2/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlie McNiell</td>
<td>Lawn bowls</td>
<td>06/3/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Podge” Maunders</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>31/3/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stan Carpenter</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>20/3/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alec “Sandy” Cameron</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>27/3/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oscar Mullaly</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>31/4/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Whitelaw</td>
<td>Boxing</td>
<td>10/4/60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jimmy McNabb</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>17/4/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rees Duncan</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>24/4/60</td>
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<tr>
<td>Perce and Jack Lennard</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>01/5/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Beath</td>
<td>Cycling</td>
<td>08/5/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Gibb</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>15/5/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jimmy Curran</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>22/5/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tom Maguire</td>
<td>Boxing</td>
<td>05/6/60*</td>
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<td>Johnny Bond</td>
<td>Rugby Union</td>
<td>12/6/60</td>
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<td>Gavin Russell</td>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td>19/6/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Paul</td>
<td>Rugby League</td>
<td>03/7/60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ossie Osland</td>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>17/7/60*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*No sportsmen featured on 29/5/60 and 10/7/60

\textsuperscript{92} John Armstrong, *op. cit.*, 1999
At least one sports photograph appeared on each of the four pages. The most frequent subjects were swimming, golf, athletics, bowls and cricket which could be photographed early on Saturday and sent on the midday express train to Sydney. During the football season, photographs of Saturday rugby league games were picturegrammed as were some Newcastle Jockey Club race finishes and surf carnivals contests.

**Conclusion**

This chapter in a kaleidoscopic, discursive way has sought to categorise three broad types of tabloid news, described here as Fleet St *tabloidism*, *Nortonism* and hard-news *tabloidism*. On the basis of these categories, Australian popular *tabloidism* has been analysed broadly, although no rigorous typology has been attempted. In particular, the front pages of all 87 issues of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* have been subjected to analysis of their textual content (Headings, pointers and promotional material). Based on this analysis, it is suggested that the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* showed some signs of Fleet St *tabloidism* in its early issues, but moved consistently to a modified *Nortonism* as the run progressed. Much of its content was also consistent with the canons of hard-news writing in tabloid format. In chapter 6, this analysis is extended to look at pictorial content in the context of various kinds of *tabloidism*. 
Back sports pages of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror:
1) March 27, 1960, p.28  2) December, 27, 1959, p.16
5) December, 20, 1959, p.20
CHAPTER SIX

PICTURES ON A PAGE

After type and white space, illustration is the third basic ingredient in the make-up of a newspaper page. Most important is the handling of pictures...but just as the typographic pattern of a made-up page must have a journalistic purpose, and not be merely pleasant to look at, so must the picture; though it should be decorative its function is not decoration; it either illustrates the news, with which it is tied up, or it is a piece of pictorial news in its own right. Every picture, indeed, should tell a story.

Allen Hutt

Obscura Beginnings

In 1826 Joseph Nicephore Niepce succeeded in making the world’s first photograph by using a modified camera obscura. By exposing for eight hours a sensitised piece of pewter, he eventually produced a rough, recognisable image of his courtyard. Just over 50 years later, on 4 March, 1880, the Daily Graphic in America published the first half-tone reproduction of a photograph, the subject a New York City squatter’s camp. Before the introduction of the half-tone process, there had been no practical way to transfer the photograph directly onto the printed page. Previously, photographs were reproduced from woodcut blocks in the traditional way.

The first specimen of the modern news picture (as distinct from photograph) is usually accepted as a drawing showing the attempted assassination of Queen Victoria in the London Illustrated News in May 1842. The ‘spot’ news picture showed an alert constable knocking the weapon from the assassin’s hand as the carriage containing Queen Victoria and her consort, Prince Albert, drove

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past. No camera of the time would have captured the image because of the slow exposure time necessary for the image to be made.

The camera came into widespread use in the 1840's but photographs did not revolutionise picture journalism. As *Life Library of Photography* points out:

> The engraving and printing processes of the time could not reproduce a photograph on ordinary paper, alongside ordinary type, on an ordinary press. Only the full tones of the photograph, the solid blacks and blank whites could be rendered. The intermediate shades of gray - called halftones - could not. Consequently photographs had to be converted into drawings and then into woodcuts before they could appear as news pictures... The photograph merely furnished material for the artist, taking the place of the on-the-scene sketch the artist had formerly made.²

The drawings in newspapers were eventually superseded by half-tone photographs, although not without considerable opposition from artists and engravers fearing loss of income. Many publishers remained comfortable in the old ways.

Although appearing as drawings or hand engravings, the elements of news photography can be traced back to the late-1840's and 1850's. Enterprising photographers captured newsworthy images of train smashes, warehouse fires, and preparations for war and its aftermath. (Slow exposure times made it virtually impossible to capture actual combat.) Particularly notable was the extensive coverage of the Siege of Sebastopol during the Crimean War in 1855 by Roger Fenton and James Robertson. Fenton's 360 photographs are not very warlike by present day standards but his main purpose was to sell public prints. He also sought to provide convincing proof of the well-being of the troops after the disasters of the previous winter which had caused the downfall

² *Life Library of Photography, Photojournalism, Time Incorporated, USA, 1972, p.14*
of the government.³ Fenton could be attributed as the first photographer to
develop on-the-spot-news pictures. His photographic wagon, used to develop
collodian glass plates, foreshadowed mid-20th Century picture transmitting
vans, affectionately known as 'pie wagons', which developed and printed
news pictures at the scene and then transmitted them to the newspaper.

The Eye of History

The most comprehensive early photographic documentation of history is
Matthew Brady's photographs of the American Civil War. Brady believed that
the 'camera is the eye of history'⁴ and he recorded the effects of war, not simply
its dramatic actions. Similarly Alexander Gardner's photographs of the Civil
War showed "the dead of both sides looked very much the same!". Timothy
O'Sullivan brought home the reality of war in his 'Harvest of Death'
photographs showing the aftermath of the Battle of Gettysburg in July 1863.
Newhall describes the most poignant of these Civil War photographs as the
"inhumanly objective records of ruins - architecture and men. The bleak and
ravaged fields, shattered houses, stiff and gruesome corpses, the pathetically
homely pictures of camp life, overreach in their intensity mere records."⁵ This
drove home the message that the new medium could bring reality into the home.
Very few of these Civil War images found their way into contemporary
newspapers still reproducing photographs as hand-engraved copies.
Photographers also were restricted because the 'wet' plate, once made, had a
life of only two or three minutes which meant the darkroom had to accompany
the camera wherever it went. The eventual development of the 'dry' plate
allowed the image to be kept for several years in the dark, and photographers
no longer had to haul huge amounts of equipment.

⁴ Helmut and Alison Gernsheim, A Concise History of Photography, Thames and Hudson, London,
1971, p.142
The half-tone process heralded the era of news photography. By 1897 the mass-circulation New York Tribune was regularly using half-tone photographs. Photos were used increasingly in newspapers and magazines although some publishers were slow to pick up the practice. Joseph Pulitzer, publisher of the New York World, was at first reluctant to introduce half-tone photographs, fearing that their widespread use would lower the dignity of the paper. These musty attitudes to pictures and text also constrained the introduction of pictorials in Australian newspapers perceived as “quality journals”.

**Australian Portrayed**

Daily newspapers were slower to introduce photographs than were the weeklies.

Anne-Maree Willis

The first Australian news picture is believed to have been taken by William Stanley Jevons who photographed the wreck of the Dunbar with 122 passengers and crew aboard on 20 August, 1857 on the coast just outside Sydney Harbour. Gordon commented: “It was a pity that the lack of development in reproduction techniques prevented newspaper publication of [the Jevons] ‘Dunbar’ picture”. This was the age of the wood-cut, and staff artists such as Tom Carrington and Julian Ashton attended news events, making painstaking drawings for journals like the *Sydney Mail* and *Australasian Sketcher*. Events such as the great Hawthorn railway collision, and the sinking of the steamer *Austral* (1882), the capture of Captain Moonlight (1879) and the rush on the banks in 1892 were photographed.

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6 Anne-Maree Willis, *Picturing Australia: a history of photography*, Angus & Robertson, North Ryde, 1988, p.110

7 Harry Gordon (ed), *Famous Australian News Pictures*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1975, p.6
Perhaps the most controversial of the early “news” photographs was the ‘posed’ picture of bushranger, Joe Byrne, one of the Kelly gang. Byrne had been shot and burnt during the capture of the Kelly Gang at Glenrowan in 1880 and his body taken to Benalla Police Station. The *Sydney Morning Herald* recounted the event:

> During the forenoon the body of Byrne was brought out of the lockup where it lay, and slung up in an erect position on the outside of the door, the object being to have it photographed by Mr. Burman, of Melbourne...The spectacle, however, was very repulsive. The hands are clenched and covered with blood, whilst blood also covered his clothes. The police soon had the body removed from the public gaze.8

Burman’s photograph was reproduced as engravings in several papers, including the *Bulletin*. The caption read “Byrne, the outlaw, after death (From a picture taken at Benalla by Mr. Burman, Victorian Government Photographer).9

The *Sydney Mail* published in 1888 the first half-tone photograph of a train derailed at Young, twenty years before its sister publication, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, introduced photographs to its pages. The *Sydney Morning Herald* published its first photograph, showing the American Fleet in Sydney Harbour, on 20 August 1908.10 The *Australian Magazine*, a short-lived publication that used half-tone illustrations from its first issue in February 1902, predicted that, because of the increasing demand for illustrated periodicals, “the next generation of journalists will have to be proficient in photography as well as shorthand”.11 Although a little optimistic, by 1908 there were enough photographers who worked for newspapers to hold a press photographers’

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9 *Bulletin*, 10 July 1880 quoted ibid
10 Willis, op. cit. p. 110.
11 ibid, p.104
dinner during the Sydney Royal Easter Show. The *Sydney Morning Herald* was employing photographers from 1908 but Willis points out:

Until the 1920s photographs in newspapers seemed to do little more than provide visual relief from the large areas of grey type. The Sydney Morning Herald did not employ its own photographers until 1925, the Age not until 1927...Although the Daily Telegraph was employing William Kimbel in 1912, it continued to use photographs from a range of sources, particularly during World War I.

When photographs came to be used more prolifically in the 1920's, they were not scattered throughout the newspaper as they are today:

In publications like the Melbourne *Sun News-Pictorial* and the Sydney *Daily Telegraph Pictorial*, freestanding pictures were concentrated on the front, middle and back pages, most of them having no relationship to the major news stories of the day.

Two photographers, Jack Turner and William Kimbel, employed in 1912 by the *Sydney Sun* and the *Telegraph* respectively, were the main contributors to the development of the mystique of the press photographer. Kimbel (sometimes spelled Kimble) stressed the necessity for being predatory, taking risks and having quick judgement. Jack Turner was praised for “delivering the goods” despite all obstacles.

The first generation of Australian news photographers was very much geared to a narrow conception of what constituted news. They learned to scoop the opposition with the first shot to “hit the front pages.” Although newspapers later widened conceptions of news photography to include social and sports images, fierce rivalry for the best pictures continued through the 20th century. Newspaper amalgamation in the last 50 years eventually reduced the brunt of

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12 ibid, p.105  
13 ibid  
14 ibid  
15 ibid  
unbridled competition. Wire photographs (picturegrams) sent over the telephone lines, and later picturegram vans, revolutionised the speed at which photos could be received by newspapers from photographers in the field. From the start of transmission, the photos could be in the pictorial editors’ hands in 15 minutes. The aim was to beat the competition by publishing a photo in an earlier edition. Often photographs had to be retouched as pictures taken on-the-run by photographers at the scene of riots, fires, and accidents lacked the clarity necessary for publication. Wire photos often were badly blurred in reproduction.17

Gramming and Speed Graphics

Picturegram vans were an essential part of most Australian newspaper photography departments from the immediate post-World War II years. They mostly transmitted pictures from outlying areas but were also used with advantage in Sydney. It was often quicker to relay a picture rather than try to negotiate motor traffic back to the newspaper in the Sydney CBD.18

The picturegram van was a mobile photographic laboratory and a telegraphic transmitting station. It was self-contained with both power and chemicals, but the picture transmitting unit demanded skilful operation. The complete equipment to transmit a photo comprised a single unit which was light enough to be carried with ease. The machine consisted of a power source, the electronics, and the scanning equipment in a single, compact unit. Connection with the newspaper was by telephone line. The picture was placed on a drum on the transmitter and a lamp illuminated a small area. An image of the illuminated area was focused on a small aperture pierced in a plate, with light

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17 Lindsay Revill and Colin Frederick (eds), The Journalist’s Craft, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1965, p.122
18 ibid, p.135
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Charge</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Initials</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7 x 5</td>
<td></td>
<td>2:30 PM</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To: Sunday Mirror, Sydney (DIRECT)*

*Supplementary message or remarks (if any):* for Newcastle Sunday Mirror

*Senders signature and address:* [Signature]

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1) Envelope used to dispatch photographs and captions by rail to the *Sunday Mirror*.
2) an example of a completed Newcastle Post Office picturegram form.
3) Picturegram unit used by *Mirror* photographers in the Newcastle branch office in 1989. The unit is similar to the ones used in the picturegram vans in 1960, only more portable.
4) *Mirror* photographer, Ron Bell, checks his portable darkroom consisting of 35mm enlarger, developing tank, chemicals and photographic paper (the alternative to using picturegram vans for distance assignments).
passing through this aperture falling on a photo-multiplier cell. The drum was then rotated and as it traversed at a constant speed, the photo was progressively scanned and transmitted simultaneously to sensitised material at the newspaper office. The sensitised material - film or bromide printing paper - revolved at the same speed and was scanned by a lamp on a receiving drum.\textsuperscript{19} Captions for the photos were either phoned through or attached as a strip across the bottom of the photo. The Speed Graphic camera, with the use of an auxiliary transformer and lamphouse, could be utilised as an enlarger. In the smaller picturegram vans, usually a Holden panel van completely light sealed, the Speed Graphic camera became an alternate means of processing the print for transmission. The Speed Graphic/enlarger moved horizontally along a track in the van instead of the normal vertical enlarger.

Early press photographers had been hampered by the heavy Graflex camera requiring the photographer to look down the hood on top. The Speed Graphic replaced the Graflex in the late 1920's. This lighter camera, with a wire frame viewfinder and faster shutter speeds, allowed more versatility and became immediately popular with press photographers. The large format camera was synonymous with press photography in the 1950's although 35mm and 2.1/4 x 2.1/4 cameras were gaining popularity. Robert Boyd, an American photographer, was once asked what the 5 x 4 inch Speed Graphic press camera could do that the 35mm couldn't. Boyd put the big camera on the ground and sat on it.\textsuperscript{20}

The Speed Graphic dominated press photography until replaced by the 2.1/4 square twins lens reflex Mamiyas and 35mm Nikons in the early 1960's. The \textit{Newcastle Morning Herald} and \textit{The Newcastle Sun} introduced these cameras much later than their Sydney counterparts. This was because the head of the

\textsuperscript{19} ibid
family company, Syd Wansey, refused to allow Japanese cameras to be used by his papers. His bitter memories as a Japanese prisoner-of-war prevented him accepting any Japanese innovations. Financial considerations and the phasing out worldwide of the Speed Graphic finally forced him to capitulate.

Electronic Flashes

Flashbulbs were a limiting factor in fast action photography until the introduction of electronic flashes in the early 1950's. A worldwide shortage of flashbulbs (PF60s) in 1949/50 contributed to the introduction of the electronic flash. The duration of the electronic flash was between 1/1000th and 1/10,000th of a second and gave greater versatility, particularly in sports photography where it 'froze' the action. The electronic flash ended the era epitomised in American films of the ubiquitous cameraman, brash, intrepid, cigar-in-mouth, with press card in hatband, raising a Speed Graphic and exploding flashbulbs in the faces of unwilling subjects. The image of the 1950's press photographer changed significantly, as Irving pointed out:

We learned to carry heavy weights on even the simplest of assignments. We would lug a heavy 5 x 4 metal-bodied Speed Graphic camera and STC electronic flash unit - the battery pack and condenser slung over a shoulder, ruining the collar of your suit - then a long cord leading to the camera shutter. Add to this a couple of Grafmatic film magazines, and we were ready for any photographic emergency.

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Newcastle Pictures, Newcastle News

Local pictures give a complete and final value to local news.

The Press Directory of Australia and New Zealand

In the 1950's Newcastle press photographers on the Newcastle Morning Herald and The Newcastle Sun avoided the relentless competition of their Sydney counterparts. Although their press assignments covered the large Newcastle and lower Hunter Valley region, and edition times still pressed, the two newspapers were not in direct competition. The individual photographers maintained a professional rivalry, although both the Newcastle Morning Herald and The Newcastle Sun were jointly owned and housed in the same building, although on different floors. The editions were hours apart - the Herald presses ran at 1.30am and the first edition of the Newcastle Sun appeared at 1.30pm. The competition rested on ability to have the best picture reproduced and published first. For example, if a major news break occurred at 4p.m., too late for the Sun, and was splashed in the Herald on the following morning, its news value for the next day’s Sun was greatly reduced. If the Sun pictures were of better quality and more imaginative in news angle and composition, they could still be used big, even a day later. Often the losing photographer had to be content with publication of what were only sidelight pictures.

Newcastle photographers also differed from Sydney because they processed and printed their own negatives when they returned from an assignment. They did not pass their exposed film on to competent darkroom staff, as was the usual practice in Sydney. The exposed magazines sometimes were sent by car to the Sydney newspaper office. It was possible in Sydney for a photographer to be out of the darkroom for three days or more and only know what pictures

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(top) Four Newcastle press photographers in the early fifties carrying quarter plate cameras pictured with unknown movie cameraman.
(Left to right) Arch Miller with Speed Graphic (Newcastle Morning Herald); Milton Merrilees with Graflex (The Newcastle Sun); Tom Hall with Ihagee (Newcastle Morning Herald) and Cec Piggott with Speed Graphic (The Newcastle Sun).

(below) Seven press photographers at the AJS Spring Carnival at Randwick in 1963 holding either quarter plate or 5 x 4 Speed Graphic cameras.
(Left to right) Paul Percival, Peter Hardacre, Wally Harrison, Baden Mullaney, Alan (Spider) Funnel, Arthur Bullard and Roy Mclnnes.
(Pic from Clem Lloyd, Profession: Journalist, 1985, p.153)
were published by checking the editions. No company cars were provided for Newcastle photographers. They used their own cars on a mileage basis, or taxis and buses.

Editorial management of both Newcastle dailies in the 1950’s wanted pictures that were sharp, groups that were compact (to conserve advertising space) and an image with the quality for making a good block for reproduction. It was paramount that correct names were provided for the block lines under the photo. Most photos were captioned from left to right. To eliminate any mistakes when the photographer was unsure of the order, the photo was captioned thus: “In the picture are . . .”

The four graded photographers on the Newcastle papers in the late 1950’s all used Speed Graphic cameras although the two cadets often used the older Graflex cameras. Super XX or Super Panchro Press film (Kodak) was used in cut film magazines which held 12 films. To overcome black reproductions, photographs for publication were printed in low contrast. Press pictures were taken with a flash on the camera even in daylight to fill in the shadows. According to Mohler and Worstell:

Most of the flash pictures that are seen have a characteristic flatness that comes from making the picture with a flashbulb in a reflector that is part of a synchroniser fastened to the camera. . . Because so many pictures, particularly press pictures are made in this way, many people associate the flatness of the lighting with the flashbulb itself. . .24

The use of an extension cord up to 20 feet and a second flash was common for national magazines, and quality newspapers.25

25 ibid
Trends in world press photography were influenced in the mid-1950's by the 'Family of Man' exhibition which opened in the New York Museum of Modern Art in 1955, billed as the greatest photographic exhibition of all time. It included 503 pictures from 68 countries.\textsuperscript{26} Williams, concluded that the book and travelling exhibition "probably did much toward making straight documentary photography respectable".\textsuperscript{27} This reinforced the argument for both the utility and the creative value of press photography against the vaunted superiority of art photography. Although Newcastle photographers experimented, 'arty' (available light) pictures were rarely used in newspapers - praised by editors but seldom published. In 1950 a Newcastle Morning Herald photographer, Tom Hall, influenced by the contemporary bible - *Graphic Graflex Photography* - used the extension flash to create more natural and sensitively illuminated pictures. An assistant (usually a journalist, if available) was needed to hold the extension flash. An audit by the company accountant found that Hall's costs for flashbulbs were double those of photographers using only one flashbulb. The practice of using an extension flash in the cause of 'artier' shots was shortlived, a sacrifice on the altar of economy. Later this economic policy prohibited staff photographers supplying photos to metropolitan papers other than Fairfax (see below).

The darkrooms of the Newcastle Morning Herald and The Newcastle Sun were adjacent but were run separately, and staff photographers for each paper did not share resources. The darkrooms comprised a film developing room and a printing room, sharing a Kodak rotary glazing machine for drying and glazing glossy prints. Each section had an office where negative-filing cabinets were located. The two enlargers in the Herald printroom were Gilkon Australian enlargers, in contrast to the Sun enlargers made by the chief photographer, Milton Merrilees. These improvised enlargers had been adapted to print 'wet'
negatives, an essential factor in saving precious time (between 15 to 20 minutes) when the photographer was running close to *The Newcastle Sun*’s edition deadlines.

The film developers used by both papers were Kodak DK60A, D72 and, when necessary to meet the edition deadline, the fast-acting print developer Dektol. During the early 1950’s most of the chemicals including the fixer were supplied in bulk and the photographers - usually the cadets - weighed and mixed the amount required during the day. By 1954, both Newcastle papers were using Kodak pre-mixed chemicals either from tins or bottles. For publication, the photographers printed the photos either 8 x 6 inches, 10 x 8 inches or 12x 10 inches. The photographers believed, perhaps erroneously, that the larger the photo supplied to the news editor, the more likely it would be used over several columns. Mostly, newspaper economies dictated the size of the prints, and 8 x 6 inches or smaller became the norm.

**Awards and Work Practices**

Throughout the 1950’s, press artists and photographers were classified and referred to under industrial awards as ‘B’ division and paid less than the journalists who were reporters and sub-editors, the ‘A’ division. In Newcastle the photographers were classified in three grades: A, B, and C while journalists were graded A+, A, B, C and D. The salary paid to the A grade photographer was between the A and B grades of the journalists. Similarly, the photographers’ B and C grades were slightly above the journalists’ C and D grades. Thus, in practice the discrimination was not as serious as it seemed on paper.

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28 Max Watson, Personal Interview, 13 April, 1999
The *Newcastle Morning Herald* had been slow to incorporate press photography into its pages. Other newspapers introduced news, feature and fashion photography long before the *Herald* which did not publish photographs regularly until the early 1930’s:

News pictures were mostly lumped together on an inner page. The captions to the pictures often, but not always, referred the reader to the accompanying story on another page. It wasn’t until World War II that photographs were spread throughout the paper [Herald] although many were not much bigger than a postage stamp.29

Most Newcastle press photographers in the 1950’s complained that ‘postage stamp’ [two columns] photographs were still the norm. In short, neither broadsheet nor tablet newspapers were effectively maximising their pictorial capability although, of course, the smaller pictures seemed more incongruous on the expanses of the broadsheet page.

During the early 1950’s, it was common practice for *Newcastle Morning Herald* and *The Newcastle Sun* press photographers to supply pictures to the Sydney metropolitan papers after servicing their own papers. This was confined mainly to major news events such as crashes of Air Force jets, floods, train and dramatic car crashes. The photographs supplied had not appeared in either Newcastle paper which, of course, had proprietorial right to first choice. The Sydney branch offices in Newcastle had staff journalists in Newcastle but did not routinely post staff photographers there. (See Chapter 4) After a major news event, they would request the *Newcastle Herald* or *Sun* photographer to put a print on the Sydney express train or photogram one direct. This was done openly, and usually without challenge by the Newcastle management which did not consider it an infringement of either professional competition or company rights.

By pre-arrangement, a Newcastle Herald or Sun photographer on a rostered day off would be commissioned by the Daily or Sunday Telegraph or Sunday Mirror to cover a photo assignment. The metropolitan papers paid the award half-day or full-day engagement fees plus mileage and expenses for the extra prints supplied by fulfilling arranged assignments. This was open, and accepted practice, which was not deemed moonlighting. Generally, management took a more serious view of photographers moonlighting than their rather lax attitude to reporters, because press photography was often costly. According to a Newcastle Herald editor, Jim Hooker, moonlighting reporters did not incur expenses attributable to their employers except maybe a few telephone calls and copy paper. Photographers used cameras, films, paper, chemicals and darkrooms, costing the company money. Even so, little was done to curb photographers from moonlighting; probably it was impossible to police effectively. Clandestine supply of photos to Sydney papers and other ‘foreign orders’ during work-time for private clients were commonplace. A photo-montage of the Herald and Sun photographers prepared for a social occasion showed photographers on a rickshaw with retouched oriental features holding papers marked ‘foreign orders’. The far-from-subtle point was obvious. Some staff photographers set up darkrooms in their homes and used their own cameras, equipment, paper and chemicals for unauthorised assignments. Even so, the extent of ‘foreign orders’ must have severely strained management tolerance.

Newcastle 1959 - A Summary

This chronicle of the long march of press photography from Europe in the 1840’s to Newcastle in the late 1950’s has had two objectives. Firstly, it has sought to show how the technology of photography and pictorialism, its

30 Jim Hooker, Personal Interview, 20 June, 1998
31 Saturday Evening Soak, September 8, 1951, p.8
A montage of Newcastle Morning Herald and Newcastle Sun cartoonists, press artists and photographers depicted as the 'Foreign Trade Delegation' in the satirical Saturday Evening Soak produced for the Australian Journalists’ Association, Northern District’s annual award night in September, 1951. The practice of ‘foreign orders’ and ‘moonlighting’ by the staff was accepted and tolerated by management during the early fifties.
conceptual expression, have gradually merged with print technology and text to create an integrated basis for news gathering and presentation. For much of the 100 years or so that newspapers have been accessible to photographic reproduction, as distinct from illustration by other techniques, the printed word has been predominant. This was largely due to the strength of the broadsheets until at least the 1940’s. An over-riding emphasis on text, of course, was not dependent solely on broadsheet format. The smaller formats known as tabloids from the 1920’s could also focus on text comparably to text-driven newspapers usually described as “elitist” or “quality”. Even some of the tabloids formally designated as pictorials on their mastheads leaned towards these market. The emergence of authentic pictorialism, and its full expression in the genre of tabloidism, however, were reliant increasingly on the tabloid format.

The second reason for this exposition of press photography is to assess and analyse the options open for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror in meeting the clear expectation that it would emphasise pictorialism. Even before the re-casting of Truth as the Sunday Mirror, the drift towards an enhanced pictorialism had been evident in the Daily Mirror, a tabloid format with a strong photographic staff from its inception in 1941. The Sunday Mirror had been established squarely in the tradition of pictorialism as exemplified in the London Sunday Pictorial. Although the Sunday Mirror’s effectiveness in the genre was questionable, the commitment persisted in the year before the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was established. As a wraparound of the core Sunday Mirror, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror could not blaze a separate path at odds with the inherent pictorialism of the Sunday Mirror, even if its editorial and production staff had any inclination to do so. Clearly, the key staff members - Ron Ford, Howard Young, Kevin Plummer and Jack Plummer - were committed to pictorialism, although with differing emphases.
The options for supplying the flow of local pictures needed to produce a regional pictorial in the mode of tabloidism were not attractive. Clearly moonlighting of photographers was out, although a blind eye had been turned to subterranean reporting practices. Recruiting casuals was hardly more attractive because it also meant drawing on staff photographers from the two Newcastle papers. These photographers were constrained by formal rosters in their workplaces, and a range of 'foreign orders' and other spare-time commitments. Posting a group of Sydney photographers to Newcastle was not a serious option because of the heavy cost in salaries, basic photographic supplies and infrastructure such as dark-rooms. Providing these resources even at bedrock level would also have delayed the launching of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. With a daily and a Sunday to service, pressures for routine picture supply in Sydney were already intense. Enough was said above about the internal segregation of Newcastle Herald and Sun staffs, and the rivalry between them, to demonstrate the impossibility of bringing a commercial rival into the building. This dilemma was resolved from an unorthodox source, the existence of a functional press photographic agency in Newcastle that was able to meet the demands of the new paper.

**Pictorialism and Contracting Out**

In October 1957 two years before the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was launched, Ron Morrison, a Newcastle Sun photographer, registered the business name Hunter Photographic Agency with the NSW Registrar General. He began operating a commercial photographic agency part-time in partnership with his wife, Elizabeth. They set up a darkroom and office in their home at Islington, a Newcastle inner suburb only seven minutes from the Newcastle Post Office and railway station. The Morrisons equipped the agency with
Thirteen people were injured early today when the Sydney-bound North-West Mail, travelling at 45 miles an hour, crashed into the guard’s van of a stationary goods-train at Lochinvar.

David Cooney, fireman of the express, heroically saved his driver from a fire which began in the wrecked diesel engine. Cooney, although injured, put out the fire with two extinguishers while driver Roy Dean lay in a pool of oil in the blocked cabin.

The availability of press photographic services in Newcastle to supply pictures such as the Lochinvar train smash (August 19, 1959) pictured above, was a motivating factor in the decision to produce the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in November, 1959.
electronic flashes, flashbulbs, and 5 x 4 inch quarter- plate Speed Graphic cameras. Elizabeth Morrison recalled:

As the large format camera gave excellent clear sharp 10” x 8” enlargements, we considered that we would be able to more than compete with the 35mm cameras and postcard size wedding candid generally offered to the public and at the same time supply news pictures for Sydney papers and do some commercial work.32

Speed was not an imperative for the Newcastle Herald and Sun photographers supplying picture services to Sydney and interstate newspapers. This made the Hunter Photographic Agency an attractive alternative source for the Sydney market. For a half-day or full-day engagement plus expenses, Sydney got the news pictures two or three hours before the Newcastle Herald picture service. Until May 1959, the agency operated only part-time, supplying news pictures to metropolitan papers (mainly the Daily and Sunday Telegraph and the Daily and Sunday Mirror) and some interstate papers. The agency also did some commercial photography and covered week-end weddings, a staple of commercial photography. A Hunter Photographic Agency flyer advertised press-type wedding photos using large format cameras and supplying 10 x 8 inches photographs in a white wedding album.

Early in 1959 the management of the Newcastle Herald threatened to dismiss photographic staff who supplied photos to opposition Sydney papers (the Daily and Sunday Telegraph and the Daily and Sunday Mirror) from assignments covered as staff members of the Newcastle Herald. (At this time the Sydney Herald, Sun and Sun-Herald had a reciprocal agreement with the Newcastle Herald and Sun to supply photographs for their respective publications. Two years later in September 1961 John Fairfax acquired 45% of Newcastle Newspapers). According to Hooker, this edict was ‘part of a

32 Elizabeth Morrison, Personal Interview, 27 December, 1993
F. Form 5.

New South Wales.

BUSINESS NAMES ACT, 1934.

(Section 16.)

Certificate of Registration.

I hereby certify that registration pursuant to the Business Names Act, 1934, has been effected in respect of a business carried on at Islington, under the Business Name of

HUNTER PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY.

Given under my hand, at Sydney, this first day of October, one thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven.

Registrar-General

NB. This certificate is required to be exhibited in a conspicuous position at the principal place of business.

[Image showing Hunter Photographic Agency's flyer advertising press style wedding photos using large format cameras.]

Write or Phone for further information to —

HUNTER PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY

M. J. AND E. D. Morrison, Prop's.

TELEPHONE MA 2091
HA 2694


2) A Hunter Photographic Agency flyer advertising press style wedding photos using large format cameras.

3) The letterhead of Hunter Photographic Agency and the stamp with logo of the Speed Graphic camera which appeared on the reverse side of the photos.

4) The darkroom of Hunter Photographic Agency at Islington.
general tightening up on expenses, travel and block-making sizes'.\textsuperscript{33} (Photographs were made into blocks by a subsidiary, S.A. Best Blockmakers and Engravers Pty Ltd, for printing in the paper and the cost of the blocks was charged to the \textit{Herald} and \textit{Sun} editorial - the larger the picture used, the greater the cost.) This change in attitude by the previously complaisant \textit{Herald} management, together with Hunter Photographic Agency's sound commercial basis, led Ron Morrison to quit \textit{The Newcastle Sun} in May 1959 and work full-time with his agency.

The emergence of the Hunter Photographic Agency was a key factor in the decision by the \textit{Daily Telegraph} to introduce in Monday's northern edition on July 6, 1959 a Newcastle photographic wedding page.\textsuperscript{34} This was timed to tap the invariably large crop of weekend weddings, particularly on Saturdays. It increased circulation of the \textit{Daily Telegraph} in Newcastle on Mondays, to the detriment of evening \textit{Daily Mirror} sales. In turn, this reinforced the argument for a \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror} which could publish wedding pictures a day before the \textit{Daily Telegraph}.\textsuperscript{35} According to Ford, the availability of a photographic agency in Newcastle also facilitated the planning of the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}.\textsuperscript{36} As noted above, Hunter Photographic Agency saved Mirror Newspapers considerable expense in setting up and equipping darkrooms, paying photographic staff, and meeting accommodation and travel expenses. By contracting the agency to provide pictures for the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}, the newspaper secured competent press photographers, had no direct overheads, and paid only for completed assignments. No retainers were paid at first for the services of two photographers and casuals, available without the work-practice restrictions of newspaper staff photographers.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{33} Jim Hooker, op.cit. \\
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Daily Telegraph}, July 6, 1959, p.12 \\
\textsuperscript{35} Kevin Plummer, Personal Interview, 20 November, 1993 \\
\textsuperscript{36} Ron Ford, Personal Interview, 30 December, 1993
\end{flushleft}
A Newcastle story and picture originally covered for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror that appeared in the Sydney Daily Mirror.

Kidnap hoax, Thursday, August 18, 1960. Pictured was Alfred Vercoe leaving Newcastle Court. A Speed Graphic camera with a polaroid back was used to take this photograph which was picturegrammed to the Mirror office in Sydney and arrived 20 minutes after the photo was taken. This was the first time polaroid technology was used in news photography in Newcastle.
The Hunter Photographic Agency darkroom was equipped with a 5 x 4 inch Gilkon enlarger adapted to print ‘wet’ negatives, a Kodak rotary print drying machine, and one large lead sink where negatives and prints were processed. The films were developed by hand in trays so as to maximise speed, using Kodak DK60A film developer, and normally were printed ‘wet’. The agency had a 5 x 4 inch polaroid back that attached to a Speed Graphic camera could give a positive print within a minute. Using this technology, an agency photographer could picturegram a photo to the *Daily Mirror* an edition earlier than the picture the rival Sydney *Sun* could receive from the *Newcastle Herald* and *Sun* service. (A grammed 5 x 4 inch Polaroid picture of Alfred Vercoe leaving Newcastle court on a kidnap hoax charge during the Graeme Thorne kidnapping in 1960 was in the *Mirror* office in Sydney 20 minutes after it was taken outside the Newcastle Court House. The photo was published in the *Daily Mirror*, three columns across the front page, before the Sydney *Sun* photographer sent from Sydney to cover the story arrived at the darkroom at the Newcastle *Sun*. ) Such coups trimmed conventional lead-times significantly and set new standards for quick and competent publication of prime news pictures.

The normal size of photos required for picturegramming was 7 x 5 inches. Photos taken earlier in the week and sent by train were printed 10 x 8 inches on black and white glossy paper. During the 87 issues of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* (including the Newcastle edition of the *Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial*), the Hunter Photographic Agency covered between 15 to 24 assignments per week, consisting of news, human interest, weddings, social, personalities and sport (see Appendix G). Over the 87 issues, Hunter Photographic Agency photographers covered 1,367 assignments. Weddings accounted for 272 jobs, about 15 percent. Twenty-one sports were covered,
most intensively golf, swimming and athletics, because they could be photographed early on Saturday morning and immediately grammed to Sydney. Personalities and human interest stories were mainly sent Wednesdays and Thursdays by rail. Friday night weddings and social were processed and captioned during the early hours of Saturday and sent on the Saturday morning train at 6.30am, the guard tipped 10/- to ensure quick and safe delivery to the Foreman’s office. Late Saturday weddings and sports (including races, golf, swimming, beach carnivals, football, cricket and athletics) were grammed through the Newcastle Post Office. Usually six picturegrams were sent weekly at a cost of £8.10.0 each (the average weekly wage for men was £17.14.11 in 1960), a substantial contribution to production costs. (The cost of two picturegrams was more than a Newcastle Morning Herald ‘D’ grade reporter’s weekly salary in 1955-63 of £16.15.3.) News picturegrams of more than local interest, such as cliff rescues, murders, prison escapees, could reach Sydney as late as 9.30pm and still make the last metropolitan edition.

The Saturday afternoon deadline for transmitting picturegrams for inclusion in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was 4.30pm. This imposed extreme pressures on the dispatch of pictures later in the afternoon. There was consternation at the Newcastle Post Office when a photograph of surf race winners taken in the showers inadvertently was printed full negative in the afternoon rush. The Post Office deemed it illegal to transmit, so the caption was placed over the offending parts. According to Elizabeth Morrison:

Ron [Morrison] had missed the presentation to the winners at Newcastle South surf carnival so he took them under the showers. They were starkers. He took head and shoulders but you often get more in the frame. I raced in and picked up the magazine as he had to cover another job. Back in the darkroom I developed the negs and printed the photo - just checking the faces - typed the

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37 Daily Telegraph, August 2, 2000, p. 11
38 Quoted in the award negotiated between the Australian Journalists’ Association and The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate Pty Ltd, No. 874 of 1955.

4) Don Brewster taking beachgirl photo for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in 1960.

All photographers used Speed Graphic cameras.
caption and raced back into the post office for gramming. The picturegram officer just looked at the print and shook his head. “I can’t send that, it’s worth more than my job.” I hadn’t realised I had printed the whole negative. I quickly moved the caption to cover the bottom part of the photo and they sent it. I bet they had quite a chuckle over it.39

The *Newcastle Morning Herald* and *The Newcastle Sun* had no policy preventing their press photographers freelancing in their own time using their own equipment. This allowed their staff photographers Milton Merrilees, Don Brewster and Roy Cotterill, to cover assignments for Hunter Photographic Agency, using its equipment and darkrooms.

**Women in a Darkroom**

Hunter Photographic Agency was unique in Newcastle because it employed a female press photographer. Women had worked as press photographers since 1900 in America and England, but rather later in Australia. According to Kobre, Frances B. Johnston represented the Bain News Services in Washington D.C. in 1900. Jessie Tarbox Beals, a school teacher, was hired as a press photographer in 1902 by the *Buffalo Inquirer* and *Courier*.40 In the United Kingdom, Christina Broom worked as a press photographer from 1902, covering subjects as diverse as suffragette marches, Cambridge boat races, explorer Ernest Shackleton aboard the *Nimrod*, the first women police and Nurse Edith Cavell’s funeral.41 Pat Stuart (nee Holmes) was probably the first full-time female press photographer on an Australian newspaper. She joined the photographic staff of *The Sydney Sun* in 1943:42

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39 Elizabeth Morrison, op.cit., 1993  
40 Kenneth Kobre, op.cit., p.323  
42 *Sydney Morning Herald*, obituary. “Photographer who showed the way for Women”, October 29, 1992, p.14
There were film shortages during and after the war and photographers were allowed to take only one shot unless it was a really big news story. You couldn’t be trigger happy. . .Being a woman press photographer on a daily? I was a little hesitant at first when I went out on jobs, but I soon realised that I had to take the initiative. . .It was mainly the very young and the older men that I worked with during the war years. Half the staff was in uniform. It was strange with all the young men away. Then the men came back and life settled down. I missed newspaper work at first when I left in 1948. It had been exciting. Life was flat without the variety.43

Adelie Hurley, the daughter of famous photographer and adventurer, Frank Hurley, began working in 1938 as an 18-year-old, freelancing for *Pix* magazine in Sydney. She joined the staff of Australian Consolidated Press in 1939 and worked for the magazine *A.M*, the *Daily Telegraph* and *Women’s Weekly*. According to Hall and Mather:

> Although Adelie’s career proved to be an interesting one, it was not without its difficulties, in particular the hostility she frequently faced from male photographers. The men saw her as an intruder in their world, and on one occasion even went as far as sabotaging her equipment while she was on a job. She took to using only her own gear and locking it away when not in use.44

Hurley contended that she held her job because she nearly always got the picture she was assigned: “I never tried to excuse myself from a difficult assignment on the ground that I was a woman.”45 Adelie moved to America in 1941 but returned three years later to work as a full-time casual for the *Sydney Sun*. The management’s excuses for not employing her as a permanent staff member was that there were no female toilets on the photographic floor of the building.46

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44 Barbara Hall and Jenni Mather, ibid, p. 149
45 ibid
46 ibid
Elizabeth Morrison of Hunter Photographic Agency with speed graphic camera and National electronic flash photographed outside Maitland Court during coroner’s inquiry into the double headless body murders at Maitland in May 1960. Elizabeth was Newcastle’s first female press photographer and partner in the press agency which supplied photos for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.
Elizabeth Morrison found that 16 years later when she did press assignments for Hunter Photographic Agency, she had no problems:

...in fact I received a considerable amount of assistance. Probably this was because I had known most of the Newcastle press photographers for five years or more - they were friends, not rivals. The Sydney photographers also were extremely helpful. I was offered the use of the 'pi wagon' (picturegram unit) to develop and send my photos after covering a rescue of children at Morisset. Also when I was covering the inquest into a double beheading at Maitland court house, the metropolitan journalists had no reluctance in requesting me to take and gram pictures for them after the Sydney photographers had to return to their papers.47

Linking Pictures and Text

The evolution of juxtaposing pictures and text have been noted briefly above. Even when photo engravings opened expansive vistas for photographic news, many newspapers remained wedded to stacks of headings and columns of text, with only sparing resort to news photography. When pictorialism came to daily newspapers, it was mostly based on segregation of text and pictures. Thus, even a designated pictorial, usually clumped all the pictures together on a page or a separate section, leaving expanses of text substantially unillustrated. The spreading of pictures through text in a joint approach to news presentation was accomplished more quickly with tabloids and popular formats. Quality broadsheets took longer. These tensions took many years to resolve. Indeed, it is arguable whether they have even yet been completely resolved, despite the abundance of technology.

Some examples of conceptions of picture usage in the late 1950's relative to text may be picked up from the contemporary Newcastle newspapers. Hooker, commented on the Newcastle Herald's use of photographs:

47 Elizabeth Morrison, op.cit., 1993
Two Newcastle women are holding down marvellous jobs as acting heads of University departments.

Example of symmetrical style layout (what today would be called modular style) that appeared throughout the inside pages of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror over its eighty editions - page 9, November 22, 1959.

A dummy layout showing the preferred style that constantly appeared on the Newcastle Sunday Mirror inside pages.
The Herald’s policy was to use pictures to relieve the text on the pages - lots of pictures that we used were sidelights. What I mean is if it was a Health Week march of thousands of children marching down Hunter Street, we would use a picture - probably on the front page - of three or four kids drinking from a bubbler after the march or if it was raining, under their blazers - it was our style then. .48

Thus, pictures were conceived largely in terms of relieving eye strain. This sort of approach, of course, was largely negated by television. Even so, it lingered in the broadsheets through the 1960’s.

By contrast, the tabloids had, perforce, to use pictures big. Consequently, their mixes of typography, text and pictures were more advanced, despite occasional conservatism. A news editor of the Newcastle Sun, Harry (Mick) Little succinctly defined photojournalism in the 1950’s, as recalled by Ron Morrison:

I remember clearly one of the first comments made by the news editor concerning newspaper photography - that a press photographer’s aim should be to show the newspaper readers in one, two or three pictures what was happening at the event or spectacle he was covering. “You are the eyes of the people who cannot be present”, he said.49

Using pictures as sidelights, as in the Newcastle Herald approach prescribed by Hooker, effectively side-lined the reader, who was left to rely on word pictures. By contrast, the philosophy outlined by Little got closer to the essence of tabloid news pictorialism.

Groups and Groupies

The Newcastle Morning Herald was well known for its group photos that took up space but illuminated, or interpreted, little else. These non-informative

48 Jim Hooker, op.cit.
49 Ron Morrison, Newcastle Seen, Regional Illustrators, Newcastle, 1989, p.2
Potholes attacked

The Lord Mayor's limousine (above) suffered a six-cylinder sideswipe this week from the progtcfit associatians.

Their spokesmen said any one riding in the upholstered luxury of the chauffeur-driven limousine never felt the shock of a pothole.

Mr. Norm Foulun, [  hricl Ín lho l

Examples of reverse headings, large type, arrows and pointers used to maximise impact of photo illustrated stories.
pictures prevailed for many years in British and Australian provincial and regional pictures, as Evans observed:

Nothing in photojournalism has been quite so degraded as photography of groups. They should mean something, at the least tell us something about the people or the occasion, and at their best something about their relationships to the event and each other. Hardly any of those published in newspapers or magazines do.... The argument for publication is ‘Yes, that may be a dull photograph, but you can recognise people on it. They and their friends will get a kick out of seeing their faces in print and will buy an extra copy or two of the paper.’ This is doubtful reasoning and bad photojournalism.50

Group photographs also constituted a perpetual nightmare for photographers responsible for accurate captioning.

During the late 1950’s and early 1960’s, the Newcastle Morning Herald did not have designated Pictorial Editors. Various experienced journalists (and some inexperienced) were assigned to ‘pictures’ from week to week. Each night they left a list of photographic jobs to be covered next day. Occasionally, a specific photographer was requested for certain assignments.

One reason given for the ubiquitous, lack-lustre group pictures was that the journalist responsible for the photographic assignments often listed jobs that had no special pictorial point or merit. If a photographer returned to the office and claimed, “There was no picture in that job!”, it could have been construed as laxness. So in self-protection, a group picture was organised, submitted and invariably used. (As a self-protective device, photographers on assignments that clearly lacked news value, or failed to materialise, often took innocuous pictures of houses and street scenes to cover themselves).

The Newcastle Sunday Mirror's policy was to have action in a picture even if it was posed. The story of 'go-ahead Raymond Terrace headmaster, Mr. A.H. Hodge' is illustrated by a picture (top left) of Mr Hodge filming students in the school library. This contrasted with the local papers, The Newcastle Sun, and the Newcastle Morning Herald in which static groups appeared regularly: (top right) Newcastle Morning Herald, March 28, 1960; (right middle and bottom) The Newcastle Sun, March 7, 1960.
The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* did not publish group pictures. The policy was to have action in all photographs even if they were posed. Photography was a pivotal element in the paper. Ron Ford considered photographs as essential for boosting circulation, and this was reflected in the high proportion of pictorial column inches on each page, and in the paper overall.\(^{51}\) The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in contrast to the *Newcastle Morning Herald* and *The Newcastle Sun* published large pictures frequently both down and across the page. *Herald* and *Sun* photographers who freelanced for Hunter Photographic Agency welcomed the much better presentation their photos got.\(^{52}\)

**A Girl a Week**

Fascination with the female form is firmly linked in the *audience* mind with *tabloidism*. This is largely associated in contemporary newspaper production with the evolution of the *notoriousness Page Three girls* in Rupert Murdoch's London *Sun* through the 1980’s and 1990’s. Yet this contrived genre of alluring picture and “chummy” caption goes back at least to the early 1950’s. It was then well-established practice in the London *Daily Mirror*.\(^{\text{51}}\)(The influence of the London *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Pictorial* on both the Sydney *Daily Mirror* and the *Sunday Mirror* has been emphasised earlier in this thesis - See chapters 3 and 4 ). The standard histories of photojournalism and news *pictorialism* are surprising coy about the development of this form of news entertainment. It has obvious links with the portrait, or posed genre of news photography. Going further back, it follows a long-established tradition of popular culture, exemplifying “smut” or mild obscenity. Over the decades, this encompassed blue jokes, naughty postcards sold at beach and other holiday resorts, music halls, peep shows, burlesque and striptease shows, ‘girlie’

\(^{51}\) Ron Ford, op.cit.

\(^{52}\) Elizabeth Morrison, op. cit., 1993
magazines, saucy advertising, mail-order catalogues illustrating lingerie, war-time pin-ups, and broadly-defined, male-interest "mags".

By the 1950's, its most common generic name was *cheesecake*, an American coinage which was widely accepted. The Australian-oriented Macquarie Dictionary defined *cheesecake* as "photographs of attractive women in newspapers, magazines etc posed to display their bodies and emphasising their sex appeal." (According to the Concise Oxford Dictionary, 1964 edition, *cheesecake* in the non-culinary sense was "display of shapely female body in advertisement etc"). The bulging photo folders in newspaper pictorial libraries containing stock material of this sort were often filed under 'cheesecake'. It was argued that neither the label nor the practice of using *cheesecake* in newspapers was sexist because the male physique was exploited similarly in what were known as *beefcake* pictures. It is a matter of record, though, that tabloids have not regularly featured Page 3 *beefcake* pictures. The closest connotation in the Australian vernacular to *cheesecake* is probably *perv*, a flexible neologism useable as an infinitive (to perv), a noun (having a perv), an adjective (pervy material), or a participle (perving). This was noted in Australian usage as early as 1941, in references to "perv books" available to the Australian forces. Possibly because of the obvious derivation from pervert, it has largely been avoided by newspapers, although still commonplace in the Australian vernacular.

Much of this *cheesecake* material had come from agencies and wire services. Newspapers conventionally have been inhibited in moving quickly to accommodate gradual change in public taste. Even *Truth*, with its reputation for sensation and lewdness had been restrained in its use of *cheesecake* photography. Its *perv* material was mostly confined to black and white art illustrations for the popular historical novels it ran frequently as serials. These
were mainly done by in-house professional artists, and they were interesting examples of traditional Australian black-and-white salaciousness. They had begun to look rather musty, though, with the increasing titillation of the post-World War II *cheesecake* era.

As ever, popular pictorial magazines such as *Pix* and *Australasian Post* set the lead, crafting local *cheesecake* using mostly advertising models. Reproduction in magazines had been greatly enhanced by rotogravure printing and better cameras and dark-room techniques. The Australian advertising industry, however, was still relatively small. Although career models and aspiring models were often eager to pose for *cheesecake* pictures to promote their careers, it was cheap and practical to create opportunities for enthusiastic amateurs. The Fleet St influence on how the Australian press presented girl pictures was enhanced with the publication by Consolidated Press in 1955 of *Weekend*, a basic letter-press magazine modelled on British lines and unashamedly oozing *cheesecake*. The *Daily Mirror* and the *Sydney Sun* enthusiastically adapted their formats to larger *cheesecake*-style pictures, bringing them forward into the early pages of the paper.

**Tasteful Cheesecake**

Tasteful *cheesecake* had been associated with newspaper promotions in Australia from the late 1920's when Robert Clyde Packer had conceived, and initiated, the first Miss Australia context. This inspired a host of imitators with beach-girl contests, sportsgirls, beauty queens, community chest and charity queens. Many of these contests included a relatively chaste parade of entrants in conservatively-cut beachwear, a socially-sanctioned outlet for newspaper *cheesecake*. Woman's sport, particularly athletics and tennis, also permitted acceptable varieties of mild *cheesecake*. 
Fleet St influenced how the Australian press presented girl pictures in the fifties:


The *Truth*, *Sunday Mirror* and the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* used similar layouts in their publications in the fifties.

Vicki Hammond, 22, a showgirl from Sorlies’ ballet - an examples of ‘tasteful cheesecake’ appeared in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* December 11, 1960 as a Page 3 Girl of the Week.
Pictures of comely girls had appeared in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* from its first issue, including some on Page 1. These had used a variety of motifs: sportswomen, ballet dancers, showgirls, actresses. What the *Sunstrip Girl* competition did, however, was insinuate beach girls firmly in the reader's consciousness as an anchor of content and presentation. It steered the selection of girls strongly to the outdoors, particularly the beach. The images were titillating but presented unobtrusively, almost innocently. Very few of the pictures had more than a mildly prurient quality. Youth and vibrancy mostly were emphasised at the expense of the seductive or suggestive. According to News Editor, Ron Ford:

... 1959, 1960 they were the heyday of the page three girls - there was no opposition whatsoever at using girls to decorate a newspaper, in fact it was the thing to do and we got into it as quickly as we could and the only thing that we wanted to do was to use it in a way that would help it to push the paper along, as I recall it.53

(Ford is using the tag, *Page 3 Girl* retrospectively here as the designation did not become commonplace until 20 years later in the London *Sun*.)

The *cheesecake* pictures in the early issues of the paper were essentially ad hoc presentations, not linked to any specific theme or promotion. Its prominence was largely a spin-off from an early promotion, the *Sunstrip Girl* competition which ran through the peak summer months of 1960.

It was a huge success and did much to establish the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in its regional *audience* settings. (See Chapter 7) Over four issues, the newspaper published more than 50 photographs of beach girls, plus pages of promotional material in each issue. When the competition ended, there was an

53 Ron Ford, op.cit.
inevitable *audience* let-down, and expectations were fulfilled in a more limited way with regular publication of local girls, many in beach or sporting gear, over the remaining 70 or so issues. Most were published on Page 1 and Page 3 with others sporadically on less prominent pages (see Appendix D). The publication program was given a semblance of continuity by using the tag, *Mirror Girl of the Week*, with each picture and caption. The first appeared on the front page of the 22nd issue on 3 April, 1960. It was formatted in a heavily-bordered box over three columns falling the full depth of the page, the picture falling just over two thirds of the depth. Tagged as *Our Girl of the Week*, Barbara Woodworth, aged 17, was photographed on the beach in a two-piece swimming costume, with a 5 x 4 inch camera on a tripod as a prop. A brief single-column caption read: “She’s sweet seventeen, her name is Barbara Woodworth, and she is our number one Girl of the Week.” The 13 paragraphs story was a longish sample of standard *tabloidism* but with a ring of the manifesto about it:

The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* camera this week set out roving as a brand new photo series - the Mirror Girl of the week... 

Barbara, and the girls we’ll be featuring from week to week will be our choice for Newcastle’s cover girls of the future... 

The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* camera will seek them in offices, shops and factories in the north. 

We pictured much of Newcastle’s glamour in our recent Sunstrip contest. 

Since then we have had lots of letters asking us to keep showing off the girls of the north. 

“We’re tired of seeing Sydney girls on the cover,” they said. 
“Let’s us challenge them with some of ours...”54 

Despite the impression of a roving camera operating in random, care-free way, there was more than a hint of artifice about the first *Girl of the Week*. The

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Barbara Woodworth, 17, of Speers Point, the first Mirror Girl of the Week on the front page of Issue No. 22, April 3, 1960.
subject was intent on a modelling career, according to the story, and had already “landed” several modelling jobs. While the elaborate camera prop may have dramatised the ‘right’ camera angle, it was not the sort of object commonly found in position on the beach. Clearly, a fair number of the girl shots were carefully contrived. Such contrivance is acceptable to the audience which assesses it as part of tabloidism conventions and doesn’t question too much the cliched phrasing.

Hold Page 3!

The tabloid newspaper trope of the Page 3 girl is largely a reflection of how a tabloid is read. A reader flipping over the tabloid paper from Page 1 automatically focuses the gaze onto Page 3, invariably on the right hand columns. A well-composed picture here, boxed or otherwise framed by typography, mostly induces captive reading. In terms of readership commitment, Page 3 ranks only behind Page 1 in terms of visual impact. It is matter of conjecture just which newspaper was the first to exploit the optical lure of Page 3 for pictures with a lascivious tilt. From the mid 1970’s, it has been largely identified with the London Sun. The evidence of the files clearly shows that the practice was used in varying degrees from at least the late 1950’s, possibly earlier. For the purposes of this thesis, it has been impossible to undertake the massive amount of checking to prove the matter conclusively.

Willis claimed that the Sydney Daily Mirror habitually used Page 3 girls from the late 1950’s, and the practice was emulated by the rival Sydney Sun. It seems, though, that neither Sydney tabloid used Page 3 girls consistently before the mid-1960’s. The Daily Mirror’s use of regular Mirrorbirds probably influenced the regular commitment of Page 3 for cheesecake. In turn, this may have stimulated subsequent placements in the London Sun, another News Ltd
masthead. Willis gives an interesting description of *Mirrorbird* fundamentals in the mid-1960's when the beachwear was relatively sedate:

The "Mirrorbird" achieves the unique distinction of appearing as sexually alluring as possible while remaining within the bounds of propriety. Her bikini may be tiny, but she never appears topless or naked. Fingers seductively fiddle with bikini strings or hands are placed on hips or thighs, never but never touching the pubic area. The narrow vertical format of the page three photograph eliminates distracting backgrounds and allows the girl's body to fill the whole picture, thus making it difficult for the reader to ignore. The picture is usually cropped at mid-thigh so as to include only the erotic essentials - torso and face.\(^{55}\)

In summary, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was responsive to the promotional and decorative appeal of young local girls, although mostly in sporty rather than sexy mode. As discussed in Chapter 5, Page 1 of the first issue (November 8) showed a 24-year old badminton champion, her skirts flaring high and her panties revealed as she smashed a shuttle. It was the only cheesecake picture appearing on Page 1 through the whole 87 issues that could be considered even mildly risque. The second issue's Page 1 (November 15) included a side-on shot of a leggy girl in a ballet tutu, on her toes and bending over to touch the floor with her finger-tips. Issue 3 (November 22) used a local beachgirl shot, (*Beautiful Stephanie Comes from Faraway Austria*), Issue 4 (November 29), three showgirls from Sorlies travelling show doing leapfrogs on Stockton Beach; and Issue 5 (December 6) a "Bubble Birth girl from Sorlies", known as "Bambi", in a one-piece bathing costume, (Sorlies was a well-known travelling vaudeville show.) The pattern seemed similar in Issue 6, with Page 1 showing a leggy ballerina, but it was Marilyn Jones, a celebrated dancer who came from Newcastle.

\(^{55}\) Anne-Maree Willis, op.cit., p.111
The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s ‘Girl of the Week’ didn’t conform to today’s image of the Page 3 girl as exemplified in:

2. the *Daily Mirror*, August 20, 1975; and

More conservatively attired *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* ‘Girls of the Week’: Barbara Woodworth (4) and Sandra Haddow (5) appeared on August 28, 1960 and October 23, 1960.
After this initial splurge, Page 1 was not used regularly for *cheesecake* pictures. The interest moved to the promotion and extensive pictorial coverage of the Sunset Strip girl contest. Appropriately, the winner of the contest appeared on Page 1 in issue 19 (March 11, 1960). Over the remaining 50 or so issues, Page 1 attention to young local girls was fitful, associated largely with *Girl of the Week* pictures which were run in consecutive clusters of three issues, or as one-offs.

In total, 27 girl pictures appeared on the newspaper's front page: the majority, designated *Girl of the Week* had no planned, or consistent, pattern. The final Page 1 beachgirl appeared in the second last issue, with the final front page featuring a child ballerina. Overall, the use of *cheesecake* and girl shots on the crucial Page 1 display generally was restrained, even conservative, by the standards of the time. The same judgment could be made of the *Girl of the Week* shots which appeared on Page 3 or further back. The prevailing themes were sport, entertainment, relaxation and the arts, particularly dancing. All of the shots were carefully posed, but most showed girls doing things in the open air - jumping, catching, hitting, reading, running, fishing, dancing and splashing.

Only 12 of the girls wore bikinis or two-piece costumes and seven wore concealing one-piece bathers. The other 15 *Girls of the Week* appeared in varied attire including a fur coat, overcoat, artist smock, sunsuits, jumper and slacks, jumper and shorts, Santa Claus outfit and ballet tights. Pets and props included dogs, books, swings, cameras, fishing rods and painting easels.

In all, 34 *Girls of the Week* were published in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Eighteen were run on Page 1, 14 on Page 3, and one each on Pages 5 and 7. Taking account of other genre pictures published without *Girl of the Week* tags, about half of the 87 editions ran pictures of this sort. Add in the intensive exposure given local beach girls during the two-month *Sunstrip Girl* competition. Overall, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* gave reasonable
prominence to a staple ingredient of tabloid fare, the girl picture. This emphasis, however, was not immoderate, and the presentation was restrained, consistent, and perfectly in harmony with the broad entertainment/family objectives of the newspaper. The girls were aged from 16 to 22 years and they came from Newcastle and Lake Macquarie suburbs in the target distribution area. Some of the girls furthered their careers by selection as models or cover girls after appearing in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. In short, the girl pictures did not clash with the healthy, homely image that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror tried to project pictorially. Indeed, it mostly complemented the striving for acceptable family material with a “girl next door” aura rather than conventional pulchritude. The Mirror Girls of the Week contributed with the Sunstrip Competition to the early success of the newspaper, building both readership and advertising. The editorial management could have adopted a strictly commercial approach, dumping into the columns shoddy cheesecake taken from agency stocks, largely of foreign origin and shunning Australian talent. They chose the tougher option and it worked well for them.

The place of girl pictures in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror has been explored at some length because the genre is central to the organisation of both content and design. Placement of these pictures and the nature of accompanying text do much to establish the ethos of a tabloid newspaper. The broad argument here is that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror followed a genre approach best described as “tasteful cheesecake”. Given the standards of the time, this may not have been a wholly altruistic approach. It could be argued that this was possibly all a family-oriented tabloid could get away with in the late 1950’s. A contrary argument would be that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was less daring in its use of this content than the Daily Mirror, which was not particularly daring. It also printed girl pictures which were conventional photographic portraits, not reliant on revealing the body. The overall approach was discreet
enough to win acceptance from an audience imbued with a strong familial/community ethos.

**Pictorial Content**

The placement of *Girl of the Week* pictures was also instrumental in determining the use of other pictorial subjects. If the prime Page 1 and Page 3 spots were inflexibly allocated to girl pictures, then other picture subjects would be forced further back in the paper. Prime picture spots on Page 1 and Page 3, however, were not allocated regularly to girl pictures. This allowed a significant range of other pictures to be placed on a fair judgment of their merits. Did the picture generate the design-linked caption or story, or was the picture itself an illustrative adjunct of the story? For similar reasons to those outlined in Chapter 5, the content assessment here is confined largely to Page 1, although some incidental attention is given to subsidiary pictures or single-column heads. Where a sequence of linked photographs is used, this is treated as a single pictorial subject.

Page 1 of the newspaper included a primary pictorial subject for every issue except the two *Sunstrip Girl* promotions. As noted above, 27 pictures were linked with girl pictures, the majority carrying the *Girl of the Week* tag. Other pictures fall into broadly--defined pictorial categories as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human Interest</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Hard News     | 10    | (*Includes pointers to inside stories*)
| Promotion     | 4     |
| Display       | 2     |
| Sport         | 2     | (*Excludes girl pictures*)
| Features      | 6     |
Animals 7
Children 20
Girl Pictures 29

(There is a small element of double-counting because some pictures have been included in two categories. This was done where substantial overlap made a categorical allocation extremely difficult. There were 87 editions, 80 Newcastle Sunday Mirrors, and seven Sunday Mirror-Pictorials, Newcastle Special Edition. There were 97 listings in all).

Some brief comments follow about the pictorial qualities of each category:

**Human interest**

Two important points can be made about human interest content on Page 1. Most stories were in the style identified in Chapter 5 as Nortonism, influenced by traditional patterns and practice of the Norton proprietary. They did not follow softer Fleet St models. Further, the variety of subjects was constrained by the limited audience size and spectrum of Newcastle. The harder-style, human-interest stories usually drove the pictures. At best they complemented the story, drawing out the allusiveness of the text, even re-stating the principal motif in a capsule fashion as much as possible. Often, they merely depicted the principal players, or illustrated one aspect of the story, not necessarily the pith of it.

One example of a successful distillation of the story point was a by-lined story by Kevin Plumier about a pony called Topsy who played euchre by counting off card numbers from the left of the hand. Topsy had become a big attraction at a local auto show. Topsy was pictured playing a hand with three men, one
Capture of gaol escapee, Kevin Simmonds at Kurri Kurri on Sunday, November 15, 1959. The Hunter Photographic Agency had been sent up to cover the search on the Saturday for the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. As the photos missed the Sunday editions, the pictures were requested by local and interstate papers. They were picturegrammed and the following day appeared on the front pages of The Sun, Melbourne, The Courier-Mail, Brisbane, The West Australian, Perth, The Mercury, Hobart, The Northern Daily Leader, Tamworth, The Adelaide Advertiser, and the Newcastle Morning Herald.
attired appropriately in the style of a river-boat gambler with string tie and stetson hat. The picture was run big at 5 columns and about half the depth of the page, with a 2 column box of text underneath. The story was well displayed with a reverse head cut into the picture (*Pony beats man hands down!*), a block line and a two-deck head over the box. It worked in an integrated “do-up” style with a mildly bucolic, country-and-western flavour. Yet its ingredients were distinctly *Nortonism* with no hint of Fleet St.

Generally, the visual tone of the stories was sombre even where the subject and text were lighter. Several were dominated by men, often middle-aged or older. An example was a traditional Anzac Day story written by Ron Ford illustrated with head shots of archetypal diggers. Rarely frivolous, these human interest subjects pictures contrasted starkly with the feminine textures and lightness of the girl pictures. It would be dogmatic to conclude that feminine represented Fleet St and male the *Nortonism* that it was allegedly supplanting. The disjunction is striking nonetheless.

**Hard News**

The *hard news* genre was moderately represented in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* because, given the size and nature of the audience, there was only so much news that could be generated in a single news day. (See Chapter 5) Topical “breaking news” beyond Newcastle was mainly covered in the *core Sunday Mirror*. As noted above, the most newsworthy story to break in the Newcastle region during the newspaper’s life was the Simmonds manhunt which was given only a Page 1 pointer. The other great crime story of these 87 issues, the Graeme Thorne kidnapping, appeared twice on Page 1 but, again, as pointers to the inside *Sunday Mirror* stories. Another sensational crime story, the discovery of headless bodies at Maitland, was also a story of national
While thousands of people join Newcastle's Anzac marches tomorrow, 35 forgotten men will attend a quiet service on the shores of Lake Macquarie.

The Newcastle story of the beheading at East Maitland was of national interest and appeared on the front page of the Sydney paper with only a pointer on the front page to the story in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

The Sydney Sunday Mirror front page April 24, 1960 (top), a magazine type layout similar to the earlier Truth, featured the man and wife beheading, with a large bold headline "Man and wife beheaded" and a smaller reverse heading "Maniac at large".

In contrast the Newcastle Sunday Mirror wraparound front page (bottom) on the same day had only a reverse pointer "Headless bodies in East Maitland hut - see inside" across the bottom of the page.

The magazine type front page which previously had been prepared was not altered to include the more newsworthy story. This practice was adhered to throughout the 80 issues of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.
interest, not treated on the front page of the wraparound. Stock photos were used for similar Page 1 pointers to a Royal baby (the Queen) and a Royal Wedding (Princess Margaret). The hard news stories needing pictorial linkages on Page 1 were solid local stories providing little scope for other than competent treatment. For example, full page treatment was given to a “silly-season” shark threat to Newcastle northern beaches, with a big picture whose blocklines identified it as taken on a trawler off Newcastle. It could just as easily have been a stock picture. Generally, during the period of publication of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, reporters and photographers had little luck with breaking hard news stories within their deadlines.

Promotion

Both major Sunstrip Girl promotions on the front page had small pictorial elements which were insignificant in the illustrative artwork. The principal exception was a four-column, down-the-page photo of 19-months-old Elizabeth Anderson holding the Sunstrip umbrella, captioned Put me in it too!, two weeks after the promotion commenced. About the mid-point of the newspaper’s run, a Holiday in Hawaii promotion on Page 1 was illustrated by a three-column block running almost the depth of the page. It showed a decorative south sea island woman with frangipani behind ear, bathing top and mu-mu. The subject was unidentified and, probably, was taken from a stock shot supplied by Sydney. Only scant use was made of photographs for promotions on Page 1, particularly by comparison with Fleet St and later Australian practice.
Display

Almost invariably, the ingenuity of Hunter Photographic Agency and the picture libraries was able to match the available stories and the layout whims of the production sub-editors. Given the production lead-times of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, little time was generally available for elaborate art work. The newspaper ran a number of public interest stories, but these were mostly linked to hard-news points that could be linked readily enough to hard news pictures. There were few polemical or speculative stories dependent on illustrative art work. Only once was such an exercise attempted as a primary visual element on Page 1, and this was based on an aerial photograph heavily doctored with art work. Headings and location tags were over-laid on the picture to designate a new Sunstrip Playground planned near Swansea south of Newcastle. The effort was respectable but did not warrant repetition. The page was balanced, and given a personal touch, by a heavily art-worked head of the Queen, who was about to give birth. (Forty years later, the projected development had yet to materialise.)

The other display picture appeared in the second issue as another pointer to the Simmonds manhunt stories inside. It featured a crude map of the region on which was superimposed a projected route that Simmonds could follow in his evasion of police. The locale covered was a heavy bush area inland from the coast. It was graphic enough, making the point that a dangerous criminal could materialise at virtually any point in the circulation area.

Sport

Apart from a few girl shots, sport was given minimal attention in Page 1 *pictorialism*. This followed the strong practice of largely keeping sport off the
front page. The two exceptions were long-distance running events, one male and one female, with strong human interest overtones moderating the sporting elements.

Features

The label, feature photos, is used here to designate the photos accompanying the feature-length stories exemplifying the Nortonism tradition of protecting the battlers, nurturing those down on their luck. These included the sensational story of the father offering his children for sale. (See Chapter Five) The other stories were about deprived, poorly-housed families, each with several children. The photographs here mainly reinforced the extended texts, essentially grim, grainy groups photographed without embellishment.

Animals

Front-page stories with a primary pictorial focus on animals were mainly about dogs. The subjects ranged from dogs threatened with extinction in dogs’ homes (a powerful sequence of four doomed dogs), to a cute shot, displayed only with blocklines, of an elongated dog on a piano keyboard, scanning a musical score. These front-page dog stories had ironic overtones of Ezra Norton’s renowned love of dogs and his sentimental attraction to dog stories in his papers. The other animal subjects were a parrot, a lamb and Bugsy, the white rabbit. The pictorial display of Bugsy was exceptional, as he had no human presence or accoutrements. Fully displayed across four columns, about two-thirds of the page depth, against a black background, Bugsy dazzled as both a white rabbit and striking piece of tabloid pictorialism. In pictorial and display terms this was one of the most visually appealing of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s front pages. And not a baby or Girl of the Week in sight!
Children

With girls and animals, children constitute three key elements of *tabloidism's* "Holy Grail". Using the Page 1 indices, children were rated more highly than dogs but not as highly as girls. (The use of children in feature-length 'battlers' news stories has been noted above.) Lighter subjects included conventionally-posed shots of four little girls in party dresses at a junior mannequin parade; a lottery winner playfully spanking her young grandson; a four-month-old baby at the wheel of a car she had won in an art union; twin girls who saved a young lamb; a nine-month-old baby in a bucket and another lifting a fake weight. Feel-good shots showed a five-year-old who had survived two tetanus attacks and a thriving baby who had been given only a week to live at birth. Two poignant shots of the doomed kidnap victim, Graeme Thorne, were used primarily in large pointers, but generated an independent power. Another anguished picture, presented big, showed a howling four-year-old child, physically handicapped, whose special stroller had been stolen. Whether standing alone with blocklines or given more text with extended captioning and longer stories, this *pictorialism* was professional, touched with visual imagination. Unquestionably, they added to the impact of the Page 1 human interest stories although, as noted earlier, hard-news opportunities were rare.

Portraits and Stock Pictures

These have not been included in the survey above because they do not constitute a primary area of visual display. They are important, however, in the composition of the page, filling dangerous holes, and balancing a layout, either of a pictorial box or a whole page. Stock portraits, or *skulls*, are invariably single column head and shoulders. The clumsiest use of a large picture for
obvious "filler" purposes was a grotesque shot of a two-miles long coil of rope on a specially-devised reel. The brief accompanying text had some local industrial interest, but hinging the pictorial emphasis of the page on a 4 column picture occupying about 20 percent of the front page was poor design. The slip-shod quality of the layout was accentuated by two other routine pictures of parking meters, and a seated guard holding a gun. This was the worst-designed page in the run of the newspaper, but it was not typical of the competent pictorial and design standards achieved under some difficulties.

Use of standard single column head and shoulder shots, usually well-known subjects whose blocks were filed, was kept to a minimum. Some attempt was made to vary the single-column, postage stamp dullness by running the pictures deeper. This was imaginative, but disappointing in impact because the single column width effectively shaved and distorted facial features because of the greater depth. The other stamp-sized subject shots were sparse: stock shots of Wollongong hospital; the steelworks; and a French bloodhound missile. Large portrait shots were also used sparingly; the most notable was the very effective use of deep two-column facial portraits of a young Newcastle schoolteacher and a venerable Anglican Dean. The portraits were balanced on a right hand-diagonal across the front page, complemented by subdued typography. Clearly, this mildly unorthodox approach was needed because none of the four contrasting stories provided a suitable pictorial accompaniment. This was a professional response to a complex layout problem, and it worked well.

**Tabloid or Sunday Pictorial?**

The short-lived transition of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* into the *Newcastle District Special* of the *Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial* has been discussed in Chapter 5. The conclusion made was that the adoption of the new masthead
had very little effect on the content patterns established in the previous 80 issues as the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Although only seven issues appeared in the new format, there is some evidence of a different emphasis in the primary picture. Of the seven pictures, four primary subjects were children, two were animals (one was Topsy the euchre playing horse discussed above), and one was a 17-year-old ballerina. (Another child subject was the anguished physically handicapped four-year-old whose stroller had been stolen, discussed above.) The other six subjects were in the lighter tabloid tradition. Each of the seven front pages published only a single picture, but all were expansive in dimension. One was five columns by half page depth; three were four columns by virtual full page depth; one was four columns by half page depth, and two were three columns by about 60 percent page depth.

Undeniably, this focus on only one big picture produces a much stronger pictorial impact. This, of course, does not create a pictorial newspaper by itself. In six of the seven pictures, however, the single picture contains only a single figure. (Even a euchre-playing horse needs partners to beat!) Only one of the pictures uses blocklines, morticed into the picture itself rather than run separately. Morticing, (a technique by which space for text is cleared by cutting out a chunk of the picture block), is also used to provide an extended captioning for another picture. The other five pictures are accompanied by conventional boxed stories. Morticing, with use of reverse heads, provides a white on black effect which under-pins the generally lighter texture of the pages. The heading types are smaller, with greater use of capitals, although not obtrusively so. It would be specious to make firm judgments on such a limited run. It does seem, however, that a conscious effort has been made, pictorially at least, for a lighter, less-cluttered layout, more consistently in a softer Fleet St tabloid mode.
Conclusion

The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* followed a line of newspapers that were firmly in a visual tradition of news presentation. True, this *pictorialism* often seems meagre to eyes accustomed to later popular tabloid production paring back the ratio of text to emphasise pictures and display. In the late 1950's, with the gleaming years of Australian television news at least a decade away, popular tabloids had to carry more news than in later years when the “tube” had lured away traditional *audiences*. Thus, tabloids were obliged to include more text than the productive development of *pictorialism* dictated. This constant tension between pictures is reflected in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, particularly on the front page. As also noted in chapter Five, the textual content of the newspaper was well maintained, in some ways at the expense of the layout and pictures. With four, even five, stories on the front page, pictorial presentation was bound to suffer because the text mostly dictated the selection and display of pictures. This did not mean that the pictures were obliterated by text, but good pictures able to stand in their own right could not be presented to maximum effect. Certainly, the changes in format and masthead of the *Newcastle wraparound* in 28 May 1961 represented a drop in status. Regrettably the new pictorial, a perceptible improvement in visual quality both with picture display and layout, appeared only briefly. This advance, of course, was negated when the *wraparound* was abolished after only seven issues, reverting to a traditional supplement in the bowels of the *Sunday Mirror*.

Without doubt, the consistency of the newspaper’s *pictorialism* was enhanced by access to the services of the Hunter Press Agency. This was initiated as a modest venture judged on the premise that there was sufficient work in the Newcastle region to sustain it, though by no great margin. For the agency, the
supply of photographs for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was a bonanza that evaporated when the *wraparound* was abandoned. Newspaper production is an inherently wasteful process, based on oversupply of content, particularly with pictures. The principal news publishers retained large corps of professional photographers and support staff, furbishing substantial dark rooms and transmission services, investing heavily in services provided by overseas photographic agencies. The discrepancy between pictures supplied and pictures used was invariably high. The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* avoided such heavy investment infrastructure by retaining Hunter Photographic Agency. This made it easier to plan picture production with greater certainty and economy, in awareness that the bulk of the output would be used. Such reliance on an agency was an innovation that had not previously been tried on such a scale in the Australian press. It has not been repeated. In current concepts, this was a venture in “contracting out” probably without parallel in Australian newspaper history.

If Hunter Photographic Agency had not been at the disposal of Mirror Newspapers, it would have had to fall back largely on the photographic services of either of the other two Newcastle dailies. This may have expanded its range of options but by a process certain to be expensive, restrictive in terms of competition and conflict of interest, and cumbersome to co-ordinate and organise. The combined services provided by Hunter Photographic Agency and the resources of Mirror Newspapers in Sydney sufficed to meet the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s needs, even though the supply line was stretched thinly on occasions. It gave the newspaper a valuable flexibility in mingling demand for local *pictorialism* with circulation-building promotions. The *Sunstrip Girl*, with its volume of spot pictures, would have been much more difficult to plan and schedule without the flexibility of the Hunter Photographic Agency. Furthermore, commercial secrecy would have been impossible to
maintain with picture generation in the hands of a local competitor. Unorthodox as was the arrangement with the Hunter Photographic Agency, no other formula would have provided the same consistent, regular flow of local pictures for a Sunday newspaper. Mostly, this *pictorialism* was consistent with the news values and favoured design practice of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. 
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE LIFEBLOOD OF NEWS

Introduction

So far, this analysis of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror has been dominated by factors of history, context and content. Little has been said about the lifeblood of any newspaper: the circulation lines that ensure newspapers get to readership before they are stale or obsolescent; the advertising that both provides the bulk of revenue for a newspaper and essential information services to its readership; and the self-promotion that stamps the newspaper's imprimatur on its readership and develops close linkages with it. There is a fundamental problem here in assessing these life-sustaining arteries that keep newspapers alive. It arises from the duality of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror; that it was both a regional newspaper and a metropolitan Sunday newspaper. To borrow a common analogy, it merged both the Dr Jekyll of the regional newspaper with the Mr Hyde of the metropolitan Sunday.

It is relatively easy when dealing with history and content to separate the dual elements coherently. It is much more difficult, however, to sift out for each newspaper integrated elements of circulation. (See below) With advertising and promotion, a reasonable differentiation is possible. It should be kept in mind, however, that at regional levels, both advertising and promotion are also part of a hierarchy building through state and national components. In short, regional advertising works alongside state and national advertising promotions. Regional newspaper promotions are supplemented by much bigger promotions directed to a substantially larger readership.
The account that follows tries to treat circulation, advertising and promotion as far as possible as discrete entities. Thus, the chapter is organised in a conventional way with each element treated in sequence. It should be borne in mind, though, that this is very much a micro-analysis, separated artificially at some points from an aggregate context. Accordingly, macro-elements intrude into the analysis at some points, particularly in the consideration of circulation.

(1) Circulate or perish

An intriguing conundrum of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror's circulation lies with the dual identity of newspapers discussed briefly above, and in earlier chapters. In short, how much of the newspaper's circulation was directly attributable to its identity as a regional Sunday. Alternatively, how much of its circulation was due primarily to the core Sunday Mirror (reflecting metropolitan Sydney), and not the Newcastle wraparound. To put the argument yet another way, how many readers bought the paper for both the Newcastle wraparound and the broader content of the core Sunday Mirror.

We lack the sort of sophisticated readership data which today could break up the component elements of an integrated newspaper and link them accurately with their readership. This would tell us much more about who bought the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and why the surviving data of Newcastle Sunday Mirror is so meagre as to make even a highly educated guess an extremely risky proposition. Thus, the estimates attempted below must be speculative and highly qualified.

A broad audience profile of regional Newcastle in the late 1960's has been painted in Chapter 2. Two other crucial points need to be made about circulation before proceeding further. Firstly, unit price of newspapers was not a crucial impact on circulation during the period under discussion. Prices of
evening dailies and Sunday’s fluctuated only slightly through the 1950’s. Price competition was not a factor when considering comparative circulation. In economic terms, the newspaper circulations were not price elastic during this period.\(^1\) Secondly, the period from 1954 to 1961 represented an historic low in the historical cycle of Australian newspaper circulation. In short, it was a period of very little growth in sales, despite a mostly buoyant economy.\(^2\) Accepting that price was not a major factor, the reasons for this trough are hard to define. It is not attributable to television which was not introduced until 1956, and grew very modestly during this period. This general lack of vitality in demand should be kept in mind when assessing the circulation performance of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*.

The circulation area of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* has been considered previously in chapter 2 in the context of an *audience* broadly conceived as Regional Newcastle. In terms of 1961 census figures, this included the two populous LGA’s of Newcastle City and Lake Macquarie, plus the two substantial mining municipalities of Cessnock, Maitland and Port Stephens shire (Nelson Bay and Tea Gardens). Given the relatively small population of Port Stephens (see Chapter 2), the circulation was limited but its existence should be noted.

Using Newcastle city as the locus, the boundaries for distribution of the newspaper to individual newsagents were Paxton in the south-west, Cessnock, Kurri Kurri, Maitland and Morpeth in the west; Swansea and Belmont in the south; Stockton, Raymond Terrace, Karuah, Nelson Bay and Tea Gardens in the north. The area covered an estimated total population of 300,000 in 1959. A map of the circulation area was included in the primary advertising for the

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2 ibid, p. 249
Circulation area of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* which encompassed Newcastle, Lake Macquarie, part of the Hunter Valley including the cities of Maitland and Cessnock, as well as Nelson Bay and Tea Gardens in the Port Stephens Shire.
Newcastle Sunday Mirror which appeared in the Newcastle Morning Herald and the Maitland Mercury.

In making even a crude assessment of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s circulation, some benchmark of newsagent sales is necessary. Reconstruction of newsagency distribution systems and newspaper sales is very much dependent on anecdotal evidence. There isn’t enough specific evidence surviving to make even a rudimentary map of what newsagents were trading in 1959-61, where they traded and the reach of each newsagent’s coverage. A major city or urban news agency could cover an indeterminate number of suburbs, townships or villages both in delivered newspapers and over the counter sales. According to Sprague Holden, there were 1,235 newsagents operating in non-metropolitan NSW in the late 1950’s.³

Newcastle newsagent, Eric Long, had a distribution area covering three major points of sale - the inner city suburbs of Wickham and Tighes Hill, and the BHP plant. According to Long’s estimate of peak sales,

"...we used to do 500 of each (the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, the Sunday Telegraph and The Sun-Herald) at Wickham and then we would do another, something like 300, at Tighes Hill and then we would sell 300 of each at the BHP...we were selling probably 3,500 papers all told, about 1100 of each."⁴

This indicates the Newcastle Sunday Mirror had equal distribution numbers with the other two Sunday papers. The interesting point here is that in Sydney the Sunday Mirror was doing much worse than the Sun-Herald and the Sunday Telegraph. (See below)

⁴ Eric Long, Personal Interview, 22 March, 1999
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Paper</th>
<th>Av. Net Circulation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/10/57 - 31/3/58</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>615,808</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>566,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>491,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4/58 - 30/9/58</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>611,099</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>570,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>479,767</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10/58 - 31/3/59</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>616,332</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>570,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mirror (changed from Truth 12/10/58)</td>
<td>405,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4/59 - 30/9/59</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>614,373</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>570,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mirror</td>
<td>400,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10/59 - 31/3/60</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>625,040</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>590,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mirror (includes Newcastle Sunday Mirror)</td>
<td>382,713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4/60 - 30/9/60</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>631,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>598,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mirror (includes Newcastle Sunday Mirror)</td>
<td>365,322</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/10/60 - 31/3/61</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>630,677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>593,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mirror (includes Newcastle Sunday Mirror)</td>
<td>352,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/4/61 - 30/9/61</td>
<td>The Sun-Herald</td>
<td>629,545</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Telegraph</td>
<td>585,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sunday Mirror (includes Newcastle Sunday Mirror)</td>
<td>Figures not supplied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figures supplied from the Audit Burea of Circulation, 100 Arthur Street, North Sydney.

* refers to circulation figures being more than 570,000 but less than 571,000
In the circulation period 1/4/60 - 30/9/60, much of it before the introduction and full implementation of the Credit Squeeze, the relative sales of the three Newspapers were: Sun Herald, 631,722; Sunday Telegraph, 598,000; Sunday Mirror (including Newcastle Sunday Mirror), 365,322. If the Sunday Mirror had sold as well in Sydney as its Newcastle edition, its aggregate circulation probably would have approached 600,000. Without knowing the proportion of Newcastle sales for each of the three newspapers, it is impossible to estimate with any accuracy the Newcastle Sunday Mirror’s circulation. Using as a rough guide, based on aggregate population, a proportion of 10%, and assuming that overall in Regional Newcastle, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror did at least as well as its two Sydney-oriented competitors, an optimum circulation of about 60,000 is at least notionally possible. But if performance in Newcastle was much the same overall as performance in Sydney, then a lower limit of about 30,000 is the plausible estimate. Again, anecdotal evidence provides only a few clues as to which estimate is the more accurate.5

Generally, former Newcastle Sunday Mirror staff and newsagents agree that the circulation figures in the Newcastle and Hunter district areas increased from the base set at the paper’s launch. According to Ford, the impact was phenomenal:

It turned around a falling circulation and actually added circulation which of course was not only in Newcastle but affected the circulation figures of the Sunday Mirror generally. It was an instant success and it also was an enduring success. The circulation continued to improve all the time in the Newcastle area.6

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5 The estimate here puts the audience for the metropolitan Sundays at around three million, taking account of Newcastle, the Illawarra and limited non-metropolitan audience readily accessible to the Sundays.
6 Ron Ford, Personal Interview, 30 December, 1993
Other evidence disputes this extremely bullish assessment. The office manager in charge of circulation, Alan Roger's' recollection is more conservative. He asserts that although the circulation improved in the beginning, it began to wane after the first twelve months. This suggests that Ford's recollection it did very well, is correct for the period he was associated with the newspaper (from November 1959 to July 1960). From late 1960, however, it started to fade. (This explanation also ties in well with the impact of the Credit Squeeze from late 1960.) Another factor here would be the competitive efforts made by the other two Sundays to counter the success of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Both *The Sun-Herald* and the *Sunday Telegraph* introduced Newcastle social news and pictures, and the *Sunday Telegraph* incorporated a Newcastle supplement inside the main paper from 28 August, 1960.

Very likely, these counter-ploys took at least some of the edge off the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*'s initially strong sales. This defensive strategy might even have prevented a circulation break-out, with the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* quickly building a local appeal and ample demand for it to surge away from the other Sundays in Newcastle. Without question, the newspaper inculcated a local spirit and loyalty eclipsing the other Sundays and impacting on the Newcastle dailies, complacent in their long ascendancy over the local market. Dalby believes that it sold "because it was the Newcastle paper. I don't think they would have the Mirror over the Telegraph if the Newcastle section wasn't there...it was all Newcastle stories, Newcastle reporters and Newcastle ads...it was our Mirror." Levi admired the "gungho" quality of the newspaper's approach, comparing it with his own later experience with "frees" in Newcastle:

\[\ldots\text{it was local people, local knowledge - that was the catchcry }\ldots\]
\[\ldots\text{all the editorial was local people, local knowledge and that was}\]

---

7 Alan Rodgers, Personal Interview, 2 February, 1993
8 Ethel Dalby, Personal Interview, 29 September, 1999
what Ronnie Ford tried to cash in on but Ronnie Ford's *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was much more sensational [than the *Newcastle Post*]...It was local people, local knowledge. So was Ronnie's but the difference was that he was going for metropolitan style hard news; I was going for suburban style soft news. *The Post* was grassroots - real, simple grassroots news.  

The point is interesting, but it rather begs the question. Obviously, a paying audience would have expected more from a Newcastle "Sunday" than the soft, grassroots approach of a weekly "free". What the audience got from the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was fundamentally hard local news in a metropolitan style. Plainly, it was a formula that proved successful in grabbing circulation. (The impact of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* on the Newcastle "frees" is taken up in Chapter 8.)

Another crude way of estimating an aggregate circulation for the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* is to project from the meagre information we have about results from individual sales points incorporating both delivery and over-the-counter sales. Using the estimated sales figures supplied by Long (see above), a crude average for each newsagent's territory can be worked out. Long's three areas of sale were the inner suburbs of Wickham and Tighes Hill, and the BHP. These accounted for some 1100 sales. Allowance must be made, however, for the population density of the two Newcastle suburbs, and the corporate demand of the industrial giant, BHP. If the average here of about 360 sales per area is discounted to about 300 for lower population densities and limited corporate demand, a crude aggregate estimate is at least feasible.

Regrettably, it is impossible to make even a reasonably accurate assessment of the number of newsagents and their areas of sale. Nor do we have any sort of clue as to the number of sub-agents in the territory of each authorised newsagent. Assuming a base figure of about a hundred newsagents, and an

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9 Vic Levi, Personal Interview, 27 July, 1999
average of about 300 Newcastle Sunday Mirrors sold in each of their authorised areas, a projected circulation of about 30,000 emerges. This is broadly compatible with the lower limit of the estimate reached above by the other crude notional point employed. The best estimate that can be made by juxtaposing the two systems of assessment is that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror may have sold about 35-40,000 at its peak in mid-1960. It is extremely unlikely that it sold below 30,000 at this time. Very likely, though, the newspaper descended gradually below this level over its final 20 or so issues.

**Mirror Under the Mat**

The foundation of circulation is the ability to get newspapers from printing presses to points of sale as quickly and economically as possible. While newspaper producers are fiercely competitive in the content and presentation of their papers, a degree of collusion often applies in distributing their newspapers, particularly in areas of smaller population. The principles involved were neatly summarised in a federal parliamentary inquiry into news media in the early 1990’s:

> Economies of scale are also likely to accrue with respect to distribution arrangements. A truck delivering bundles of papers to a particular locality will incur only marginally higher costs than a similar truck delivering only one bundle. An established newspaper with a sizeable circulation would obviously distribute more copies in any given area than a new entrant with a small circulation serving the same market. Consequently, the paper with the larger density of distribution would benefit from scale economies and would incur a lower per unit cost of distribution than its competitor. ...One way for metropolitan or national daily papers with a small circulation to reduce this relative cost disadvantage is to try to negotiate an arrangement to share the established distribution facilities of other newspapers. In some cases, this could lead to them becoming dependent on their competitors for distribution.10

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The short life of the newspaper has been described vividly by Francis who points out: "...newspapers are more quickly perishable than any other commodity, not excluding food." Thus, bitter competition in news, advertising and promotion terms may be set aside so all newspapers reach the distribution point at the same time. In effect, this establishes a level playing field by making all mastheads available at much the same time. This, of course, does not mean that the same quantity of each newspaper is made available, although at distributive points with smaller sales this can happen. At least since the early 1920's, the principal distributor of Sydney metropolitan newspapers has been the truck. According to Sprague Holden, six main truck routes fanned out from Sydney "like a giant outstretched hand with too many fingers." The truck line which serviced Newcastle terminated further up the coast at Taree. Rail transport was much less flexible than trucking, and air delivery was not a serious proposition at this time.

The Sydney-based publishers of the *Sunday Mirror* were acutely aware of the necessity of getting newspapers to Newcastle in bulk in the early morning, and then getting the smaller packages efficiently to the distribution points for early-morning delivery and sales. Co-operation was essential to minimise the costs of transportation. Thus, the three Sunday papers used the services of the one carrier, *Manhood*, to deliver the papers to various delivery points in regional Newcastle. The same system was used for the Sydney daily newspapers (the *Daily Telegraph* and *Sydney Morning Herald* in the morning and *The Sun* and the *Daily Mirror* in the afternoon).

The Sunday newspapers arrived at approximately 1.00am left in bundles outside the newsagents or designated areas. They had been despatched from

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12 W.Sprague Holden, op.cit., p. 203
Sydney by truck about three hours earlier. Newsagent, Eric Long remembers that his bundles were dropped off outside a nearby corner shop:

... and we had four billycarts - I think it was in somebody’s yard, they had a spare block of ground and we sort of paid them to allow us to leave the billycarts in the shed they had and then we would come - in our early days we rode our pushbike...13

Sunday newspapers mainly were either delivered to households where the money was left under a mat, or householders hearing the raucous call of “Paper, paper” or the whistle of the paperboy, would buy the paper from the billycart. A Mayfield newsagent, Merv Bridges, “had about 30 boys on a Sunday. It was all done by - it was not really deliveries - it was done by boys pulling billycarts.” Long elaborates the delivery process:

What we did in our case...they had a list with them and they were the ones that got them so-called delivered - they just dropped them into people’s houses - and the other ones either left money. Well back in the days of Wickham, I can remember running into people now and when they say where they lived, I would say: “Oh, you were the Mirror under the mat.” I never saw them in 10 years but every Sunday, the money would be under the mat...14

In its essentials, this reflects processes of newspaper circulation but little changed from the “horse and buggy” days. Street-corner news vendors for the dailies, boys with billycarts for Sundays, and a few coins under the mat were still fundamental to the trade even in the early 1960’s. Even so, it had a rough equity about it as the rival proprietaries mostly were serviced the same way in an accustomed system. Another irritant in circulation practice was the restrictive trade practices applied by the newsagents who exercised local monopolies ruthlessly and largely determined their own sales practices. Even the powerful proprietaries were unable to break their sway. Gauging the number of newspapers required for outlets reflecting different geography and demographics was often a chancy business, with the return of piles of unsold

13 Eric Long, op.cit.
14 ibid
newspapers the penalty for bad judgment or inefficiency on the part of the sellers.

(11) It pays to advertise, Your Majesty!

The umbilical connection between newspapers and advertising has never been put better than by Lord Palmerston, a Prime Minister in Victorian England. Fulfilling his constitutional responsibility to advise Queen Victoria, His Lordship gave Her Majesty a lucid disquisition on the economics of newspapers:

The actual price at which each copy of the newspaper is sold barely pays the expense of paper, printing, and establishment; it is indeed said that the price does not repay those expenses. The profit of the newspaper arises from the price paid for advertisements, and the greater the number of advertisements the greater the profit.15

The rationale of the circulated newspaper has never been put more succinctly.

Sommerlad defined advertising “as a desire to attract attention and to make certain facts known. Anything employed to influence people favourably is advertising.”16 Willey elaborated: “If news in all its variations, backed by analysis and comment is the soul of a newspaper, advertising is its life blood.”17 Berry maintained that “advertising is the principal upholder of the financial stability of the newspaper Press…”18

The success of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror depended overwhelmingly on the volume of local and national advertising it could attract. This, in turn, was dependent on establishing and building circulation. This demanded good

15 Letter to Queen Victoria from Lord Palmerston, 1861 cited in Ernest C. Sommerlad, Mightier than the Sword, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1950, p.17
16 ibid, p.146
content which was dependent on a ratio of news content to advertising capable of accommodating good stories and enticing layouts. So the wheel kept turning. According to Rodgers, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror's advertising management was impressive, particularly during the establishment period but consistently so through the newspaper's life:

They concentrated heavily on advertising and I think that the advertising content was even larger than it needed to be...it was very popular when they first started because they went about it the right way and they spent lavishly in the production.19

As noted earlier, Harry Johnston came from Sydney in October 1959 to sell advertising space before the first issue of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was published (see Chapter 4). Ford recalled the urgency of setting down this advertising base:

We were up against it in the beginning to get advertising for this kind of paper but the guy who helped us most was Glen Burrows who ran THE major advertising agency in Newcastle at the time. I don't know whether he was a bit jack of what the Herald had done to some of his clients, or what. Harry Johnston became a good friend of Burrows but it wasn't just that that did it. Burrows saw an opportunity to exploit this new vehicle for his ads and did put a lot of advertising our way, a lot of retail advertising which I am sure his clients benefited from (with) the run they got from us.20

Rodgers agreed that much of the early advertising came from the Glen Burrows advertising agency: "They played it together - Ron Ford, Glen Burrows and Harry Johnston were very, very close friends - also with the woman from David Jones' - Chris McConnell ... they were very successful to start off with."21 Wilf Southern who replaced Johnston as advertising rep in Newcastle, continued the profitable association with the Glen Burrows' agency.

19 Alan Rodgers, op.cit.  
20 Ron Ford, op.cit.  
21 Alan Rodgers, op.cit.
As outlined in Chapter 2, the launching of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in November 1959 came late in the protracted years of economic expansion epitomised as the “long boom.” This produced a remarkable development and diversification of traditional retailing merchandising in Australia. Major metropolitan retailers had set up branches in the bigger regional centres, particularly Newcastle and Wollongong. While much Australian advertising still depended on the expertise and resources of the newspapers, an independent advertising structure heavily influenced by Madison Avenue and “stateside” practice was starting to emerge. The appearance of a thrusting, professional advertising agency such as the Glen Burrows agency was one portent of this emergent industry. Another was the powerful impact of retail advertising from metropolitan branch stores, in Newcastle particularly David Jones.

The first issue of *the Newcastle Sunday Mirror* on 8 November, 1959 carried a full-page David Jones’ on page 4, manna from heaven for a new venture. There were three other full page advertisements: Goldsmith’s shoe store, page 6; Winns retail store, page 8; and Walton-Sears retail store, page 11. The advertising manager of David Jones’, Newcastle, Chris McConnell, recalled that the firm supported the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* right through: “How did we measure the effectiveness of the advertisement? What the cash register said, it was very easy.”

David Jones’, as well as other large state-wide retail stores, Winns. Marcus Clark, and Waltons, advertised consistently in all issues of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Other statewide and national firms advertised extensively as listed in the table below. (A full list of advertisers is included in the Appendix.)

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22 Chris McConnell, Personal Interview, 28 November, 1995
More value for your mone

You just can't beat D.J.'s for value! By careful purchasing D.J.'s always have 'bargains' that make your money go so much further... and give you top quality goods at the same time! To help you get these easy ways to buy... Hire Purchase, Account, Lay-by. You can't go wrong!

New styles in convertibles... priced to suit your be

What a boon for housewives! By day... or almost by night... a convertible 3'9" wide and a best of all, it takes just a few seconds to convert in double sewing, or in a small sewing change, in seconds. Only £3/9/- dep. weekly 15/11. Coin £24/19

Cute clothes for baby in soft, warm printed flannelette, at D.J.'s alone!

Now in flannelette! It's hard wearing, washable... and it's printed in delightful designs. Exclusive to D.J.'s, you can choose from a whole host of baby clothes, all so snug in warm! Bells in pink, blue, lemon, 5/9; Lace trim, 3/-; Lace-trimmed nightgowns, 21/11; Lace-trimmed negliges, 6/-; Baby's romper suit, 6/-

Special purchase!
Warm winter gowns

Short styles from 7/2; All styles are from 7/-11. Exclusive to D.J.'s, in washable, non-iron "Velvonyl". In blue, deep blue, red, lemon, reddish, cherry. 23/-19

Special Values in babywear

Flannelette pillow cases, each only 2/- top quality in white, pink, blue, red, floral, solid red.

Two-ways flannelette, 7/9;

Plain weave flannelette sheets, from 20/- queen sheet single 4/- 10/-; 6/- 8/-

Save white flannelette sheets, from 30/- 36/-, 5/- 2/-, 3/-

Warm, wool-filled blankets, from 4/- a yard or more, 5/- 7/-, 8/-, 9/-

Multi-check parasol blankets, from 4/-, and 5/-, 6/-, 7/-, 8/-

Wrap-over style dressing gown, 10/- for £2, £3 19/-

Special purchase!

Warms winter gowns

Here's real value for your money!

Heavy two-weight dressing gowns priced from a mere 12/-; Full styles are from 7/-11. Exclusive to D.J.'s, in washable, non-iron "Velvonyl". In blue, deep blue, red, lemon, reddish, cherry. 23/-19

Full page advertisements in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror of regional branches of Sydney department stores:

(top) David Jones', March 27, 1960, p.4

(bottom) Waltons, May 7, 1961, p.6
Local firms and utilities including NSW Motors, Wright Autos, The Store, Rundles, City of Newcastle Gas & Coke Ltd, and Nesca took full, half and quarter pages display advertisements throughout the entire period. It was an imposing representation of the developing retail and merchandising might of Newcastle at the peak of the long boom.

Publishing the results from a survey, in 1959 Newspaper News listed the following headings of advertisements that regularly featured in Sunday papers:
The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* regularly featured advertisements in virtually all of the prime categories set out above. Of local advertisers, the motor vehicle (new and second hand) retail industry was a major purchaser of advertising space. Classified motor vehicle advertisements did not appear in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. (In general there were no classified advertisements in either the Newcastle or Sydney editions, the only exception the free marriage, births and engagements offered in the Sydney *Sunday Mirror*.) The principal vendors of motor vehicles are set out in the table below.

The national and state advertisers ensured that the name and locality of the local representatives were prominently displayed. One of the largest used-car advertisers, Wright Autos, appeared regularly on the back page of the paper. Another advertiser, OK Motors, in a double page advertisement on 23 October,

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23 *Newspaper News*, 11 December, 1959, p.6
1960 listed over 500 cars and offered a "£20 cash giveaway on the car of your choice"\(^2\).

### NEW MOTOR VEHICLES

**NATIONAL DISTRIBUTORS AND LOCAL FRANCHISEES**

**ADVERTISERS IN NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Manufacturer</th>
<th>Dealer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>NSW Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>John McGrath Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holden</td>
<td>McLeod, Kelso &amp; Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Young &amp; Green</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morris/B.M.C.</td>
<td>Delore Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volkswagen</td>
<td>Lawton Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolsley/MG</td>
<td>P. &amp; R. Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard/Triumph</td>
<td>Doug Norton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goggo-Dart</td>
<td>F.L. Woodcock</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hillman/Humber/Sunbeam</td>
<td>Newcastle Automobile Exchange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chrysler/Simca</td>
<td>Deloraine Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peugeot/Renault</td>
<td>Bank Corner Motors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### USED CAR DEALERS

**REGULAR ADVERTISERS IN NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR**

- Wright Autos
- D L Motors
- Peter Langwill Autos
- Apex Autos
- Korna Car Sales
- T.R. Bennett Cars
- Valiant Motors
- Nova Motors
- Century Motors
- Vauxhall Park

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\(^2\) *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, 23 October, 1906, pp. 16/17
Local motor dealer, Peter Langwill, recalls the approach to him by advertising representative, Wilf Southern:

I did have an agent at the time but they suggested and, of course, Wilf Southern called to see me and Wilf in his inimitable manner told me always to advertise on the right hand page, if possible. He gave me all these little tips and I went along with it. I enjoyed my advertising with the \textit{(Newcastle Sunday) Mirror}.\textsuperscript{25}

Local stores provided the major proportion of the advertising revenue. From 14 August, 1960 the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror} secured the advertising of The Store (Newcastle and Suburban Co-operative Limited), one of Newcastle's oldest and best-used retail outlets. Full advertisements appeared regularly: "We (David Jones) regarded them (The Store) as our major competitor then," McConnell said.\textsuperscript{26} Long-term local advertisers included Rundles, tailors and men's clothing store; W.R. Clark and Sons, jewellers; A. Dodd & Co., tailors; Taylor Cycle and Motor Company; Mall Woolford, jewellers; Leo Jensens, gymnasium; Bos Bros. carpets; Mackies, furniture store; Reg.A. Baker, sports store; Goolds, furniture and furnishings; Cox Bros, furniture and furnishings; Latec Investments; and Northumberland Insurance.

The advertising rates for the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}, were slightly above both \textit{The Newcastle Sun} and the \textit{Newcastle Morning Herald} rates.\textsuperscript{27} \textit{The Newcastle Sun}'s rates were kept lower than the \textit{Herald} partly because of a lower circulation but also to discourage competitors. Levi said that "the \textit{Sun} in advertising was always the second class citizen to the \textit{Herald}".\textsuperscript{28} Although the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}'s rates were marginally higher, it made inroads into the advertising revenue of both Newcastle dailies, as Lewis conceded:

\textsuperscript{25} Peter Langwill, Personal Interview, 30 September, 1999
\textsuperscript{26} Chris McConnell, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{27} Ethel Dalby, op.cit. and Peter Langwill, op.cit.
\textsuperscript{28} Levi, op.cit.
See our delightful array of Graft carefree prints.

These gay Spring cottons are on Parl. tomorrow and all this week, in our Dr. Fabric section. All frocks to be shot are made from simplicity patterns, which are available to you from our pattern lib.

PARADE TIMES: 11.15 am, 3 pm, 7 pm.

All mannequins will be wearing:

KAYSER HOSIERY

Ladies, Barlines and
3D'x from our new Spring colour range.

NEWCASTLE AND SUBURBAN CO-OPERATIVE LIMITED, HUNTER ST. WEST

SUNDAY MIRROR, September 4, 1960
They (the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*) promoted it - they promoted it very well - because the other thing about it was that it did siphon a fair bit of advertising away from the (Newcastle) *Herald* and the *Newcastle Sun*.29

Ford attributes the success to the collaboration of the local advertising agency and an aggressive sales campaign by Mirror Newspapers:

> We cornered the advertising and we got them on good deals, long deals and we did extremely well in selling the advertising and that’s because the Burrows’ agency pushed a lot of stuff our way.30

Major advertisers such as David Jones spread their budgets widely, maintaining a strong presence in all regional newspapers. McConnell assessed the advertising in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* as effective, relative to its peers:

> Well, normally, we (David Jones’) would not be running the same ad in both (sic) papers and then we had what we call results slips so every department filled in its results for three or possibly four days and they came up to the advertising department where they were kept in large books like this and all the result slips were right by the ad. It didn’t matter how pretty the ad was, it was what the results were...so if the (Newcastle) *Sunday Mirror* hadn’t been pulling, we would not have been in it, I can tell you...31

Peter Langwill agreed that advertising in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* pulled in the consumers, making it the sole Sunday advertising medium for his cars:

> We chose to advertise in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*...it was the only Sunday paper available to us at a reasonable price. It was dearer [than the local papers] but it was a Sunday paper and to carry your ad on a Sunday was something special. Saturdays and Sundays were our main sales days...It [advertising on Sunday] worked well because of our sales, about 70 percent were weekend sales32

Langwill introduced a new concept into used vehicle advertising in Newcastle by including pictures of cars to be sold:

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29 John Lewis, op.cit.
30 Ron Ford, op.cit.
31 Chris McConnell, op.cit.
32 Peter Langwill, op.cit.
(top) Peter Langwill, former owner of Peter Langwill Autos, Mayfield, advertiser in *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* (photo taken in 1999)

(middle) Chris McConnell, former advertising director, David Jones', Newcastle (photo taken in 1995)

(bottom) Eric Long, former Newcastle newsagent. (photo taken in 1999)
I had a couple of ideas which are still going today. First... I used to use a bit of house paint and write on the inside of the windscreen which made it very hard because the glare - you wouldn’t see the price - and then I started writing the prices on the outside on the windscreen with a pot of paint and a brush and this was the first time virtually than any cars had their asking price available on the windscreen. Then the other thing, of course, was that particular Pontiac. That all happened because it was an American car and there weren’t a lot of them around. We would put a better price on them because nobody had anything to compare it with and we would put the price of an ad onto the price of the car and so that made it worthwhile advertising a particular car with a single photograph of that car...that sold very quickly. Another one, I had a Studebaker...I think I sold it twice or three time and I put in a little ad and away it would go again...a little ad with a photo.\footnote{Morrison’s emphasis}

The newspaper’s ratio of advertising to editorial varied according to seasonal factors. In the first issue on 8 November, 1959 advertising accounted for 60% of the total column inches over the 16 pages. The ratio in the second issue dropped to 50% over the same number of pages. Christmas 1959 saw an increase in the number of pages (24 in 13/12/59 and 20 in 20/12/59) with similar ratios to the second issue (49% and 58%). Predictably, the ratio and number of pages fell in January 1960 after the Christmas period (16 pages, 24%).

Before O’Connell Pty. Ltd. sold to Murdoch in May 1960, the paper size increased to 28 pages with a 45/55 advertising to editorial ratio. In the period May 1960 to December 1960, Murdoch maintained an advertising to editorial ratio of between 58 and 61% with between 16-24 pages. The down-turn at the Christmas period in 1960 saw the paper reduced to 8 pages. Even with this reduction the editorial content was 79% compared with the advertising 21%.

In 26 February 1961, for the first time there was no full page advertisement in the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}. This was, certainly the clearest signal in the newspaper’s history that it was starting to struggle, that the credit squeeze\footnote{ibid}
### Used Car Sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make</th>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Color</th>
<th>VIN</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ford</td>
<td>Zephyr Sedan</td>
<td>1955</td>
<td>Blue</td>
<td>MA1644</td>
<td>2-door sedan</td>
<td>£825</td>
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<td>12 Sport Sedan</td>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Brown</td>
<td>MA2976</td>
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<td>2-door convertible</td>
<td>£300</td>
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<td>Armstrong</td>
<td>Express Sedan</td>
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<td>2-door Sports Saloon</td>
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<td>Green</td>
<td>MA1644</td>
<td>2-door convertible</td>
<td>£350</td>
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### Used Car Divisions

- **DELORE MOTORS**
  - 77 MAITLAND RD, MATTYFIELD
  - Phone Enquiries: MW2991
- **PETER LANGWILL AUTOS**
  - 234 MAITLAND RD, MATTYFIELD
  - Phone: MW2991
- **G. L. MOTORS**
  - PTY. LTD. MA3603
  - 77 MAITLAND RD, MATTYFIELD
  - Phone: MW2991

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1. A full page of used motor vehicle advertisements in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, June 12, 1960, p.16. New and used car advertisements were a major source of revenue throughout the 80 issues.
imposed in November, 1960 was biting hard by then. Uncertainty over advertising and its reflection in the editorial ratio interfered with the careful planning of news coverage. Journalists had their stories slashed or held over when there were insufficient advertisements to carry an extra four pages. According to Dalby: "Stories were often cut half-way because they didn't have enough advertising...we sent all we could and hoped to goodness they had enough advertising for 8 or 12 pages." In the last 20 issues of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, the number of pages remained at either 8 or 12 with the percentage of advertising hovering between 21 and 36%, a substantial deterioration which dramatises the newspaper's plunge into oblivion. (See table below)

A Supplementary Business

News Limited tried to counter the gradual drop in direct advertising by the orthodox strategy of introducing advertising feature supplements in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, the first appearing in 17 July, 1960. The use of supplements to booster advertising had critics as well as enthusiastic supporters. Sprague Holden found that supplement editors sometimes felt strongly that they were given too little time by the advertising department to build material for a supplement. An editor might also feel that stories, tailored to fit the ads, were regarded by the business office only as a necessary nuisance to the supplement's income-producing purpose. Supplements could easily become dumping grounds for inferior content, but mostly they reflected the production standards of the main parts of the newspaper, sometimes even eclipsing them.

34 Newspaper News, 14 April, 1961, p.1
35 Ethel Dalby, op.cit.
36 W. Sprague Holden, op.cit.,p.151
### NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR

**ADVERTISING/EDITORIAL RATIO**

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<th>Pages</th>
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<td>69</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Murdoch</td>
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Name change to **Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial, Newcastle Special Edition**

Supplements were virtually extinguished by newsprint shortages during World War II (1939-45) and the immediate post-war years, but were back in vogue by the mid-1950's. In the late 1950s, Sprague Holden found that supplements
“proliferate in the metropolitan papers” and that they “appear sporadically and are usually tied in with advertising.” He concluded that “almost any field, business or activity that uses advertising is a potential subject for a supplement.” Although many might be considered worth preserving as reference or prestige material, (published without regard for the advertising content), others he saw as blatantly motivated by money. In the late 1950’s, most supplements were tabloid in format, even when published for broadsheet newspapers:

Newspapers used them to increase revenue and hold circulation; advertisers found them more useful than ever to push sales at a time when trading conditions were difficult...Biggest money spinners...have usually been in retail shopping, furnishing, construction and homemaker fields. Big industries like radio, motors, electrical goods, sportsgoods and theatres have also benefited from supplement promotions.”

The first supplements in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror appeared after Murdoch’s purchase of Mirror Newspapers in May 1960. At this stage, the “Credit Squeeze” was a mere blip on the horizon, so the decision to “supplement” seems a consciously-devised strategy to drive further advertising revenue. There were 12 supplements published in total featuring local advertisers, organised around events such as Newcastle and Maitland Shows and the Newcastle Motor Show. The numbers of pages ranged from 2 to 16 and the advertising to editorial ratio ranged from 48% to 77%, with an overall ratio of 65.6%. This was significantly higher than the ratio in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror during the period May 1960 to May 1961. Certainly, it would have staved off, at least, the encroachment of deteriorating advertising revenue in the newspaper from the “Credit Squeeze”.

37 ibid, p.150
38 Newspaper News quoted in W. Sprague Holden, ibid, p.151
A network of 23 power stations, part of a post-war plan, has greatly aided NSW's industrial expansion.

This means that coal has to be covered long distances.

By linking areas with a network of power lines, the Electricity Commission has been able to build new power stations and move coal to steelworks and other areas where fuel is needed.

Power is distributed in areas hundreds of miles away.

One发电机 situated in the Hunter Valley supplies power to hundreds of miles away.

Charges are among lowest.

Newcastle power charges were among the lowest in Australia, C. R. Wymer, chairman of the Shortland County Council, said this week. "We provide electricity for 18,000 consumers in an area nearly twice the size of Greater London," Mr. Wymer said.

The impressive administration centre of Shortland County Council in King St., Newcastle.

ON ALL THE NEW MODEL REFRIGERATORS

They're here NOW! The most spacious, most beautiful refrigerators you have ever seen in new colour combinations and featuring the "squeezine" look that fits your built-in kitchen like a glove. Big freezer lockers, door shelves, pantry bars, bottom-to-top storage.

ALL AVAILABLE ON NESCA'S BUDGET TERMS

THE SHORTLAND COUNTY COUNCIL

NEWCASTLE • GLOUCESTER • DUNGOG

SUNDAY MIRROR, October 2, 1960

First page of the sixteen page feature supplement in the Newcastle Sunday Mirror 'Live Better Electrically', an advertorial which appeared on October 2, 1960.
**Advertorial**

Few issues in news organisation and production are more contentious than what once was called *product promotion*, but now is known universally as *advertorial*. Although *product promotion* is probably more accurate in the context of the 1950’s, the generic “*advertorial*” is used here as a simplifier. Mention was made in Chapter 5 of the practice of placing ads in favourable conjunction with a related news story or stories. Even though the story
good enough to stand in its own right, this has connotations of *advertorial* practice, although less blatant than the widespread incursion of *advertorial* into newspaper content since the early 1980's. The main difference between *advertorial* and supplements, which also link ads directly with news content, is that the supplement is identified clearly to the *readership* as *product promotion*. In effect, the readers are warned and have only themselves to blame if they misinterpret or fail to see the advertising point of what they are reading. *Advertorial* can be far more insidious although the trend has been to ensure that it is clearly identified and differentiated from genuine *news content*.

The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was innovative in its approach to clearly identified *advertorial* in a widely-read column called "Jane Wisdom shops for You". The feature made its debut on September 11, 1960 on page 12 under a 72 point heading. Nine brief stories were show-cased, written in a 'chatty manner' to advertise items for sale in Newcastle shops. According to Kevin Plummer:

> We were looking for something new on the advertising front that we could use to entice smaller advertisers to advertise with us and to keep those already with us happy and Joyce Aird who had been advertising manager for Winns, one of Newcastle's biggest retailers at the time, came into the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* with this idea. She had left Winns to have a family and wanted some part-time work.39

Aird had left full-time advertising in 1956 but had retained her interest in the local retail market:

> I was always a window shopper, and it was just natural to gravitate to this advertorial idea. I used to read a similar feature in the *Sydney Morning Herald* - the Store Detective ad - but I thought it would be better in a smaller city like Newcastle and have greater impact placed together in a three column space.40

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39 Kevin Plummer, op.cit.
40 Joyce Aird, Personal Interview, 26 September,1996
The first feature was set over three columns in the centre of page 12 with the third column running completely down the page. The nine topics included advertisements from smaller retailers some of whom had never advertised previously in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* as well as two of the larger retailers (The Store and David Jones) that already had advertising contracts with the paper.

The first *advertorial* began with a drop capital and was featured across two columns:

STEP lightly into spring in the loveliest pastel Courts you’ve ever dreamed of!

Glamorous Italian copies in fashion right colors to take you right through summer are now available in YOUR fractional fittings in the Arcade Shoe Salon.41

This informal style continued throughout the feature which included other *advertorial*-style items on Hornby train sets; do-it-yourself balsa flying model kits from 16/- to £12/12/- at Playmates opposite the Technical College; treating yourself to a “Royal Jelly” natural wave at Vanity Fair (price £4/10/-); and luxury air beds recommended by Rubber Sales for long wear, keenly priced and offering interest free terms.

The next issue appeared with ‘Jane Wisdom Shops for You’ as a three column reverse heading with an illustrated face. Aird made a point of making personal visits to the advertisers: “I never copied anything they gave me. I had to make the personal visit and produce the topics myself”.42 The name ‘Jane Wisdom” was the sobriquet chosen Aird. “I insisted on a nom-de-plume and I remember I

41 *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, September 11, 1960, p12
42 Joyce Aird, op.cit.
STEP lightly into spring in the loveliest pastel Courts you've ever dreamed of!

Climbers Italian Vogue in fashion right colors to take you right through spring are now available in 1968 perforated fittings at the Trends Shoe Salon.

Step pastel into spring in the loveliest pastel Courts you've ever dreamed of!

SUNDAY MIRROR

ORCHIDS NOT HOBEB OF RICH

Orchid-growing is not a hobby for the rich alone.

Newcastle Orchid Society official told the Sunday Mirror yesterday that keen flower lovers could have an orchid collection for modest expenditure.

The society will hold an exhibition of some of the most beautiful plants in the world at the Newcastle International Exhibition Centre.

Some of the most beautiful plants in the world will be exhibited at the Newcastle International Exhibition Centre.

JANE WISDOM

FASHION TRENDS

Been wondering about the Autumn look? Then it's time to visit KINGS, in the City Arcade. They have unpacked some very exciting styles in Suits, Frocks, Coats, Knitwear (including some cuddly Mohair Jumpers) if you like to be first with the latest why not layby?

Crestknit ORLON Knitted Suits from £10/10/- ($21); Lambswool Suits from £9 ($18); Courteille Suits in popular colours, including the new KASHA, XSSW, to XSSW; from £10 ($20).

A range of plain colour Frocks in 'Mod.' or mature styles; XSSW, to OS sizes from £7 ($14).

*Lana* Jersey Shifts for practical wear (to XSSW) £12 ($24) — it's AUTUMN at KINGS - City Arcade.
spent much time discussing my choice. I kept saying that Jane was a good old-fashioned name and “Wisdom” would give confidence to those reading the column”.43

The “Jane Wisdom” column continued through the 80 editions of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in the same format. Aird was paid on a casual basis from the Mirror advertising budget. The *advertorials*, a public relations exercise, were free plugs for both current and prospective advertisers. After publication of the *advertorial*, if the firms were not already on contract, Wilf Southern would make a follow-up call hoping to secure their advertising. Aird was non-plussed by the sudden decision to kill the newspaper:

I thought everything was going along smoothly and then one Friday afternoon at the end of June 1961, I received a phone call from Kevin Plummer telling me that the Newcastle section was being discontinued and there would be no need for the column.44

Aird copyrighted the name, Jane Wisdom, and continued the feature for almost ten years in the *Newcastle Sun*, a measure of the concept’s appeal and durability. It attracted smaller firms who would not normally have advertised in a Sunday, and it also brought spin-offs from the major advertisers such as David Jones. In terms of quasi-news copy, the professionalism of the Jane Wisdom column was acknowledged by news staff:

... it was well written, the spelling was all right, grammar was pretty good and had punctuation. Some of the advertorials today are absolutely poor.45

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43 ibid
44 ibid
45 John Lewis, op.cit.
It is axiomatic that a measure of a newspaper’s professionalism is how well it promotes itself. It is, however, a process which must be undertaken with some subtlety. If a newspaper trumpets its own achievements too blatantly, or intrudes ineptly into the crucial relationship between reader and content, the effort can be counter-productive. In Chapter 3, some attention was given to the promotion which launched the Sydney *Sunday Mirror*. It was argued that this was generally professional and should have been effective, given the very strict constraints on the budget. The point made was the promotion was let-down badly by the poor quality of the content in the early issues. The launching of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was modest to the point of the threadbare. It did feature some display ads in local newspapers and radio advertising on stations 2KO and 2HD. Even so, much reliance was placed on the calibre of the early issues in building *readership*. As discussed at some length in Chapters 4 and 5, the concept, content and layout of the paper struck a responsive chord with the *audience* from the beginning. Furthermore, *readership* was secured and enhanced by excellent promotion over the first 20 or so issues.

Much of the space a newspaper devotes to self-promotion has to be directed to publicising its content, and attracting *readership* to it. The traditional mode of promoting content was the old street poster or banner, in earlier years hand-written on white sheets by the agents and street vendors. This crude system was supplanted in Australia by posters printed by the publishers and distributed to agents with the bundles papers. This produced uniform posters carefully devised by the editor or a senior editor to present the story of the day in large
black type as an enticement to the reader. (Quaintly, the old hand-written posters survived in the United Kingdom long after they disappeared in Australia.) These posters were firmly secured in special frames to ensure their durability on the street.

Newspapers also emphasised on their front pages particularly the use of dramatic pointers to lure the readership to prime material through the paper. As noted in chapter 5, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* devoted a significant part of the valuable front-page space to pointers, designed to link the reader to both its own stories and the top news stories in the *core Sunday Mirror*. This involved a trade-off between its own news content and the imperative need to get the reader inside the book and its concentrated mix of editorial and advertising pages. Pointers mostly were well done by the newspaper, whether in sensational form over three columns by the page depth, or smaller “teasers” diminutively displayed.

Apart from direct promotion of content, newspapers have long engaged in more subtle promotions which often have a news basis as well as providing entertainment and access to personal gain and advertisement. Mayer has summarised aptly the synergy involved in these exercises:

"Press campaigns and stunts - the two can hardly be distinguished - can always be argued to be related to newspapers' self-interest since they may increase circulation."

**The Sunstrip Girl**

The “Sunstrip Girl” promotion has already been treated in terms of textual and photographic content in Chapters 5 and 6. It is intended here to stick closely to

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the promotion ingredients of the exercise. To recap briefly, the promotion was designed to exploit the increasing popularity of regional Newcastle’s fine stretch of beaches. The choice of “Sunstrip” as a general identifier for these beaches in locational terms was clearly influenced by the booming “Gold Coast” in south-East Queensland. The promotion was designed to establish the Newcastle Sunday Mirror with a younger audience and across the whole span of the audience area. Its focus was on what might be called “chaste cheesecake”, the display of young women in bathing costume at a local beach. This followed a well-tried formula of beachgirl, beauty and community contests harking back in the Australian context to R.C. Packer’s introduction of the Miss Australia context in the late 1920’s. It was publicised, nonetheless, as the “The Contest with a Difference”.47

At first sight, Sunstrip seems a rather uninspired boom-coast label compared with appellations devised by many other emulators of the Gold Coast, (Sunshine Coast, Emerald Coast, Leisure Coast and the like). Its rather mundane quality probably served to its advantage as it had a local, home-town feel without hyperbole. Furthermore, it linked in closely with Hollywood imagery of Sunset Strip and its “showbiz” resonances. (77 Sunset Strip was a popular television series.) It was a concept developed by Ford, to promote the Newcastle area as a tourist destination. The main front page story on December 27, 1959 was headlined “They’re Off to our New Sunstrip!” and the lead paragraphs developed the concept:

Newcastle holidaymakers, this year’s end, are flocking to their own quickly-developing Sunstrip - the strip of sunlit beaches, scenic spots and anglers’ paradises north and south of the city.

47 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, Jan.17, 1960, p.3
The days when they went farther north, or down to the earlier-settled beaches, nearer Sydney, are gone.

Sunstrip authorities this year report record bookings, and say business is excellent.

*Newcastle Sunday Mirror* reporters at the week's end roamed up and down the coast to investigate latest developments.

Everything they saw, they reported, backed up the claims made by the Sunstrip businessmen and residents that the whole area was on the verge of a bigger-than-ever boom.48

Other Newcastle editors were envious. John Lewis of the *Newcastle Herald* lauded it as a "a pretty brilliant concept".49

Ford epitomised the Sunstrip concept:

...we had a Sunstrip Girl contest and through that we were trying to promote the Newcastle area as the Sunstrip and to promote our paper at the same time and to identify more strongly with Newcastle. To use girls, of course, was the simplest way to do that.50

Promoting the "Contest with a Difference", the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* ran a column on 'What Leaders Said' publishing comments from leaders of local government and business. All were delighted about the initiative. Newcastle Lord Mayor, Ald. F.L. Purdue commented "We commend ANY action which is taken to attract tourists to the district." Councillor Pendlebury of Lake Macquarie Shire hailed the concept and the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*: "At least it's one Newcastle paper that's trying to bring publicity into what should have been done years ago."51

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48 ibid, Dec. 25, 1959, p.1
49 John Lewis, op.cit.
50 Ron Ford, op.cit.
The magic of the concept was in the Sunstrip branding, not the nature of the contest. The idea of a Newcastle beach girl contest was not original. The Newcastle Sun for many years had published pictures of entrants and finalists in the annual Newcastle Beach Girl Quest organised by the Newcastle Surf Club in conjunction with the newspaper. On January 5, 1960 it published the three column photo of the first of the finalists selected in the 1960 quest. The accompanying article stated “The quest will again be a highlight of the Newcastle Surf Club’s annual carnival on Jan. 16” and outlined the prizes (which included interstate holidays with all expenses paid) for the winner and placegetters from the 12 finalists. The groundwork for a successful promotion had also been set partly by a beachgirl contest run in November 1959 by the Sydney Daily Mirror and the Sunday Mirror. Called the “Miss Sydney Gidget” contest, this was loosely based on a contemporary Hawaiian “surfie-style” book and movie called Gidget. This was also linked to the surf-club movement through the NSW Surf Life Saving Association. As the first issues of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror appeared through November 1950, the Gidget Girl contest was receiving lashings of publicity in the core Sunday Mirror which circulated in Newcastle with the local edition. Thus, the Sunstrip Girl contest piggy-backed to some extent on the publicity from the in-house Sydney promotion. As Sprague Holden pointed out, newspapers had few scruples in appropriating promotion ideas:

It does not take long for an idea in newspaper promotion to be born somewhere, be examined for its potentials, tried out and used until its usefulness in exhausted. The fecundity quotient for ideas in Australia is about what it is elsewhere: so proportionally about as many good promotional schemes are exported as are imported.53

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52 The Newcastle Sun, Jan. 5, 1960, p.3
53 Sprague Holden, op.cit. p. 208
Although the *Newcastle Sun* beachgirl quest overlapped, even clashed, with the *Sunstrip Girl* contest, it did not cause any serious problems to its success. The main advantage the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* had was the novelty of the regional tourism and pleasure context. This gave it a freshness and a vitality which made the conventional beachgirl contest based wholly on the traditional surfclub approach look a little old hat. The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* capitalised on the interest generated by *The Newcastle Sun*’s coverage of the selection of the Newcastle Beach Girl winner on January 16, 1960. The day following the judging, January 17, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s entire front page was devoted to advertising the ‘The Sunstrip Girl’ competition. Because of the elaborate art work and sophisticated photographic work and typography involved, it was a very expensive page to produce. But it was worth every penny. It was a front page which would have graced any contemporary tabloid.

Three full pages were devoted to promoting the competition. In particular, the promotion sought to differentiate the *Sunstrip Girl* from its rival “Beachgirl” contest. It sought to play down the increasingly cliched reiteration of the “vital statistics”, the tape measure of breasts, waist and bottom. The emphasis was placed on youth and freshness, the idyllic image of the girl next door:

- The Sunstrip Girl contest doesn’t aim at finding the girl with the most impressive set of vital statistics. It’s a search for any of those thousands of youngsters you find taking their leisure on our golden beaches - someone just like your own kid sister. Or your girl friend, maybe.

**So get the girl of your choice to enter your contest - freckles, big wide grin and all.**

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January 17, 1960 front page of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was a busy and costly introduction to the The Sunstrip Girl competition. It combined reverse headings, artwork, pointers and one photograph.

No! This definitely isn’t the Sunstrip Girl. But it’s how she may look when you see her on the beach. P 3 for the name!

**The contest With a Difference**
The competition took in all beaches from Toukley in the south to Nelson Bay in the north - the newly designated ‘Sunstrip’. It included 12 surf clubs: North Stockton, Stockton, Nobby’s, Newcastle, South Newcastle, Cook’s Hill, Dixon Park, Merewether, Redhead, Swansea-Belmont, Caves Beach and The Lakes. The contest was open to any girl over 16. Every participating surf club “would get a prize” and “among the competing girls, not only the finalists and runners-up will get prizes, but scores of others will as well”. The prizes were more generous than those of the Newcastle Beach Girl contest: for the girls, a first prize of £200 cash, second prize, £50, third prize £25 and all other finalists, £5 each. The clubs got surfing and rescue gear, swimming costumes, caps, pennants and other accoutrements of a great national pastime.55

Each Sunday for six weeks from the 17 January, 1960 the Newcastle Sunday Mirror photographer (from Hunter Photographic Agency) covered two of the dozen beaches between 12 noon and 2 pm, and between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. The first two beaches selected were inner city locations, Nobbys and Newcastle, a half a kilometre apart. The photographs and negatives of all contestants from nominated beaches went to Sydney for selection by sub-editors, with Sydney editor, Howard Young, having the final say. The following Sunday, five finalists from each beach appeared on a double page spread.56 Captions under the photos listed the name, age, address, occupation and hobbies (without any vital statistics). No attempt was made to conceal correct addresses to prevent nuisance telephone calls or harassment. Sydney tabloids, by contrast, often suppressed identifying details (in some cases the names or suburbs were altered) of beach girls or models they pictured because of potential harassment. The picture of the winner, Norma Aylett, appeared on the front page on March 13, 1960. The five column photo, 120 point heading and

55 ibid, Jan. 17, 1960, p.3
56 ibid, Jan. 24, 1960, ps. 14/15
(top) Double page spread of Sunstrip Girl finalists (ps 14/15 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, March 6, 1960)

(bottom) Double page spread of Swansea Belmont and Redhead Sunstrip Girl contestants (ps 12/13 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, February 28, 1960). All the unsuccessful girls whose pictures were published received one guinea (£1/1/-).
story on how Norma broke her honeymoon for the finals covered a full page.\textsuperscript{57} The second and third prize-winners were also pictured prominently in the paper.

To publicise both the competition and the \textit{Sunstrip} concept, each girl had to pose with a pink umbrella, commissioned by the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror} embossed with the word "Sunstrip":

\textit{...you'll be holding one of those Sunstrip parasols; or fiddling with it or standing by it when the picture is taken....After all, that what's our contest is for - to let everyone know what they're calling the sunniest strip of holiday coast in New South Wales.}\textsuperscript{58}

As a promotional gimmick, the following issue featured a 19-months-old baby, Elizabeth Anderson of Merewether, in a five column picture on the front page. She wore the \textit{Sunstrip} insignia of parasol and sunscreen. The heading in bold read "Put ME in it too!" The reverse box caption was a classic example of textual application of Fleet St \textit{tabloidism}:

\begin{quote}
We must say perky little Miss Liz Anderson, of Helen St., Merewether, took it like a Trojan when we said firmly: "No, pet. We can't put YOU in The Contest. At 19 months you're just a little under age." Brave girl. she just went on smiling for our cameraman - suntan lotion and all. Really sporting, we thought. So good luck to you, Liz. Here's hoping you'll be the Sunstrip Girl of... say 1976 maybe. Reckon?\textsuperscript{59}
\end{quote}

Over the eight weeks of the competition, 19 full pages without ads were devoted to the promotion, a ratio of about two-and-a-half pages an issue. In terms of pages, the paper was extremely buoyant in the summer weeks of early 1960, ranging from 16 pages on January 3, 1960 to a substantial 28 on March 6, 1960. Starting from a low base of 24\% in the slack weeks after Christmas, the

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{57} ibid, Mar. 13, 1960, p.1
\item \textsuperscript{58} ibid, Jan. 17, 1960, p.13
\item \textsuperscript{59} ibid, Jan. 31, 1960, p.1
\end{itemize}
Ten finalists of the Newcastle Sunstrip Girl competition parading at the Newcastle Show.

*Newcastle Sunday Mirror,* News Editor, Ron Ford, posing with beach girl entrant under the Sunstrip Girl umbrella.

(photos taken 1960)
advertising ratio rose quickly through the weeks of the Sunstrip Girl promotion, touching 45% in the issue of March 6, 1960. (The peak ratio was 61% in early July). Indisputably, the competition contributed significantly to the favourable impression created by the newspaper on News Ltd, its new owner. As a vigorous, imaginative promotion in the crucial early weeks of a newspaper's bedding-down in a difficult market, it was a nonpareil.

**Why Newcastle is my City**

For reasons explored in Chapter 2, the Newcastle audience was patriotic, parochial, sometimes insular and with an ingrained distaste for metropolitan Sydney. These foibles were exploited by the Newcastle Sunday Mirror from the very first issue in which Lord Mayor, Ald. Ernest Dunkley, wrote an article titled “Why Newcastle is my city”. The 17 paragraphs hailed the beauty and vitality of Newcastle, tracing its history from the early days of the coal and steel industry to the diversified industrial and cultural development of the contemporary city:

I decided to live in Newcastle because it was bustling, vital - and going places.

Yet at the same time it gave its people every chance for a happy, healthy life complete with all the amenities of a big city....

Yet I see beauty in Newcastle - the beauty of life and power, of progress and purpose.

That's why Newcastle is my city.

And I'm proud of it.60

The terse tabloid style of His Worship the Mayor was beyond reproach. A footnote followed the article: “This is what your Mayor, Ald. Dunkley, thinks

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60 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, November 8, 1959, p.12
“Why Newcastle is my city” competition was launched by the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* on page 12 of the first issue on November 8, 1959 with an article by the Lord Mayor of Newcastle, Ald. Ernest Dunkley. The competition ran for nine weeks until January 3, 1960. *The Newcastle Sunday Mirror* offered two guineas for the best letter of up to 100 words.
of your city. The Sunday Mirror will pay two guineas for the best letter up to 100 words. Now let us know what you think of it.\textsuperscript{61} For the next nine weeks, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror published 42 letters, paying two guineas each week for the winning letter. While at first these letters dealt with aspects of Newcastle which appealed to the residents, the theme changed on November 29. In the issue the week before, it was announced:

We’ve heard why Newcastle is your city. Now we’d like to hear how you think it can be improved, made an even finer place to live in. The Sunday Mirror will pay two guineas for the best letter up to 100 words.\textsuperscript{62}

This generated a series of letters criticising all aspects of city administration, the griminess of the city, Newcastle beachgirls, pothole roads, and lack of facilities. The competition as such ended on January 3, 1960 and was replaced with a standard ‘Letters to the Editor’ feature which retained something of a promotional flavour by continuing the cash awards for best letters.

This week we’re setting out the best bits from our mail bag under a new heading:

“TELL US - and we’ll tell ‘em ALL!”

The heading means just that, too. If you’ve got something to say about any topic under the sun, write and tell us.

If it’s smart and down-to-earth on a topic that matters we’ll publish it - and that way the rest of the world will get to hear about it, too.

Try to keep your letters short, snappy and to the point.

A prize of £2/2/- will be awarded each week for the best letter.\textsuperscript{63}

\textsuperscript{61} ibid
\textsuperscript{62} ibid, November 22, 1959, p.10
\textsuperscript{63} Newcastle Sunday Mirror, January 10, 1960, p.10
It's all right for you to criticise our girls, and economy, but do you ever stop to think where your livelihood and fare "home" comes from?

From Australia — so the least you could do is be grateful and leave quickly.

From "Mad as a hornet" (name supplied).

Noel Hudson strikes the right note in Tell Us (11/1/60) when he says:—"Thanks for your story about the neglect of Stockton. Now let us plug for a tunnel under the harbor so that we can put a depth charge under those 18th century car ferrles."

three million miles and save time.

Prospective industrialists are not likely to saddle their cost structures with an unnecessary 23 mile travel to the rail head or ships side. And there are 40 miles of the finest beach in Australia just crying out for tourist trade development.

What would happen if the mouth of the harbor..."
The competition provoked an avalanche of letters to the editor which followed the publication the previous week of a Melbourne visitor's letter criticising Newcastle girls. The paper commented: "Our mail-man has been running hot with letters of chivalrous defence, and some brickbats, too!"  

The prize for the best letter went to a Georgetown reader, M. Condron:

I've grown past youth myself, but I always find young people greatly fascinate me.

If Miss Brown had seen all the very lovely girls at one of our big dance pavilions on New Year's Eve, if she has an eye for beauty I'm sure she would have agreed they were lovely.

Also in the streets and on the beaches here there are many girls who can hold their own for beauty.

I suppose beauty depends on who is looking for it.

One reader nominated a thief who siphoned the petrol from his invalid father-in-law's motorised carriage, as the "Rat of the Week". This became a regular feature under the logo of a rat. It was followed by a "Halo of the Week" listings the deeds of local Good Samaritans.

The winning letters over the 25 issues covered a wide range of mainly social, sport and local political issues. (see Table below) The letters pinpointed many issues which the Newcastle Sunday Mirror journalists could follow-up. For example, the feature disclosed the 'give-away baby' from a father's letter telling of his decision to relinquish his five-years-old daughter. (See chapter 5) This story became front page on both the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and the Sydney Sunday Mirror Thus, a modest promotional investment produced a

64 ibid  
65 ibid  
66 ibid  
67 ibid, January 24, 1960, p.18
supreme spinoff in the form of the best news story that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror published.

LETTERS OF THE WEEK--THEMES AND ISSUES

Social

the beauty of Newcastle girls
beachgirl competitions
lonely hearts
lack of qualified hairdressers

Sport

money hungry football clubs
league football v Australian rules
spearfishers v anglers
the poor treatment meted out to Newcastle surf clubs

Local Politics/Issues

the neglect of Stockton
the lack of babyminding rooms
City council efficiency
hazards of public transport
war against the roadtoll
autonomy for Newcastle University college
flood boats at Raymond Terrace
hotel strike

The Sunstrip promotion apart, the investment of the newspaper in promotion was modest, though valuable enough in its readership effects. It was also in the mainstream of tabloidism designed to establish an intimacy with the readership, to “chat it up” a bit, making it feel that it was involved and that its interests were respected. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror also benefited from the promotions of its core paper, the Sunday Mirror, although it is hard to
On her honey-moon

Nineteen-years-old Norma Aylett, of Caves Beach, won our Sunstrip contest yesterday.

Norma broke her honey-moon to take part in the final.

She wins a £200 cheque from the Newcastle Sunday Mirror and about £80 worth of gifts from Newcastle business houses.

For her surf club she wins a surf reel and a full set of march-past costumes.

Carol Robotham, 17, of Cooks Hill, was second.

Newcastle's finalist, Janice Potter (17), was third.

The judges conferred for 45 minutes before they made a decision.

Norma, who had arranged to marry today, brought forward her wedding a week when she was selected as a finalist.

Next week she will continue her honeymoon with a tour of the Queensland coast.

Norma Aylett of Caves Beach, the winner of the Sunstrip Girl Competition appeared on the front page of issue No 19, March 13, 1960 which signalled the conclusion of the eight weeks intensive publicity of Newcastle and environs as the ‘Sunshine Coast'.
apportion the direct impact. (See above) Word-games with substantial cash prizes had been very much part of major newspaper promotions in the mid-1950's, but *readership* enthusiasm had waned late in the decade. According to A.H. Chisholm, this type of game had reached "an extraordinary" height in 1955 when both the *Sun Herald* and the *Sunday Telegraph* were running word games frenetic in their competitive promotion.\textsuperscript{68} These games were based on crossword puzzle techniques, with names such as *Telewords*, *Gold Words*, *Wealth Words* or something similar. The Australian infatuation with Fleet St *tabloidism* faltered a little here because the genre was largely appropriated from the US.\textsuperscript{69} The *Sunday Mirror* tried to revive the vogue in 1959 with a *Mirrorword* format, but the craze had largely subsided, and any direct impact on *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* sales was probably negligible.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Mostly, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* worked competently to safeguard its circulation, nurture its advertising, and promote its product, given the limited budgets and production constraints it had to work with. Its hands were largely tied with respect to circulation, a process largely inflexible and not susceptible to local manipulation. Regional Newcastle was part of a circulation line of communications shaped in Sydney and extending to the Queensland border. The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* office played its part by getting its copy and advertising to Sydney on time. Beyond that, it was largely at the mercy of Sydney production and logistics. Similarly, its local distribution was largely dictated by newsagents whose practice was governed by collusive, even monopolistic, practices beyond the local reach. Internal transmission of newspapers within the newsagency sub-systems was quaint to the point of

\textsuperscript{68} Chisholm's comment, from an article on Newpapers in the *Australian Encyclopedia*, is quoted in Sprague Holden, op. cit., p. 208.

\textsuperscript{69} ibid
obsolescence, but, again, impervious to overhaul and modernisation, even by
the powerful proprietaries.

Without qualification, the conduct of its advertising was a principal glory of
the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. The rapid build-up of advertising from a zero
base to flourishing success between late 1959 and mid-1960 was a superbly
professional accomplishment. Furthermore, it succeeded in an environment
which gave it little competitive advantage. Indeed, the slightly higher rate
cards exposed the newspaper to vulnerabilities which it was able to conquer.
The advertising ratios achieved in such a short space of time would be envied
by the majority of Australian newspaper in the 1960’s. This was supplemented
by one local promotion of some distinction, the Sunstrip Girl. Regrettably, this,
was not repeated, most likely because of the spreading malaise of the “Credit
Squeeze”. That the newspaper was unable to keep its “lifeblood” flowing
through this period of economic desolation cannot be attributed to any
blockage of the major arteries of circulation, advertising and promotion.
CHAPTER EIGHT

THE FINAL JUDGMENT

A bas the critics, Long live the tabloids.

Brian Hogben

Introduction

Newspapers are usually destroyed by the ravages of the market, driven out by competitors who have more power, resources and flair at their beck and call. Inability to counter legitimate competitive pressure in a major regional market, however, was not responsible for the sudden demise of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. Although much about the newspaper's history will always remain speculative, there is sufficient evidence to suggest that it competed effectively in a difficult market. Nor did poor journalism pull it down. Given the constraints of space and resources, the journalism of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was competent and often innovative. Its sensationalism was not to the taste of important elements of its audience. The newspaper did command respect for the quality of its reporting, its ability to break stories against both daily and Sunday rivals, the quality of its pictorial coverage and much of its design. Its clumsy, symbiotic relationship with the core parent newspaper was a negative because it limited flexibility of publishing and circulation. Commercially, its promotions were more sophisticated and attractive than tentative standard practice of the time. It had sound claims for judgment as guarding the public interest in its region. It made mistakes, some ludicrous, some negligible, some extremely damaging and unethical. Overall, it made a reasonable case for survival, perhaps to prosper. Yet it was discreetly, even stealthily, abandoned after only seven issues in a diminished regional form. No

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notice of its impending doom appeared in its last issue. Without fanfare or justification, it dwindled into the status of a conventional regional supplement inside the *Sunday Mirror*. Why?

Dramatic change in the structure and organisation of the Australian newspaper market created the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Dramatic change in the structure and organisation of the Australian news market largely destroyed it. The newspaper became a bargaining pawn in a major transformation of the Australian news media culminating in 1960-61. This transforming period began with Ezra Norton’s recruitment of Eric Baume as Editor-in-Chief of Truth and Sportsman in early 1958. Symbolically, it ended in late 1961, when an increasingly confident Rupert Murdoch asserted his hard-won place in Sydney’s formidable news industry by declaring his support for the Australian Labor Party in the federal elections. The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was a player in the passing of Ezra Norton’s tabloid empire to a young proprietor who was to establish a much greater international news conglomeration indelibly associated with tabloidism. This concluding chapter considers the consuming economic and market forces that killed the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. It tries to do some justice to a vanished newspaper by placing it firmly in historical and professional context.

**The Prince of Tabloids**

According to one of Rupert Murdoch’s numerous biographers, Michael Leapman, 1960 stood out as the most significant year of his career:

> In February [1960] he had nibbled at the fringes of [Sydney] by buying the Cumberland group of giveaway suburban weeklies for £1 million. Three months later came the really big break, when he began negotiations to buy the Daily Mirror, one of the city’s two evening papers. ²

According to another biographer, William Shawcross, it was in Sydney, in 1960, that the Rupert Murdoch whom the world came later to know was truly formed:

He did it by competing harder and more fiercely than anyone else. It was at this time, too, that he honed his instinct for the mass market.  

The Rupert Murdoch legend is well-enough known not to require lengthy reiteration here. As noted earlier, his father, Sir Keith Murdoch had been unable to formalise control of his Melbourne Herald group of newspapers before his death in 1952. His only son, Rupert, assumed control of the evening _Adelaide News_, the only company that his father left without encumbrance to his family. Rupert Murdoch developed the _Adelaide News_ to respectable levels of circulation and profitability, establishing News Ltd as the foundation of a mighty international news empire. By the late 1950’s, he was seeking opportunities in Sydney, and had been considered as a possible buyer of Truth and Sportsman when it came on the market late in 1958. The surreptitious acquisition of Truth and Sportsman by John Fairfax under the front of O’Connell Publications blocked this intrusion, at least for a time. As Leapman points out, Murdoch had got through the backdoor into Sydney when he purchased Cumberland Newspapers, a chain of suburban ‘frees’. He introduced a large-distribution, free newspaper, the _North Shore Times_, on May 11 with a circulation of 75,000 which would “go into every home from Kirribilli to Hornsby”. In theory, this meant saturation coverage of a free newspaper through the potentially lucrative market of Sydney’s affluent North Shore.

It is unclear why John Fairfax decided to dump Mirror Newspapers at this time. It is probable, though, that the mounting impact of the 1960-61 credit squeeze

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4 _Newspaper News_, 29 April, 1960, p.16
was making it increasingly vulnerable to sustaining two separate newspaper companies. The myth that O'Connell Publications and Mirror Newspapers ran independently of John Fairfax was increasingly harder to justify. Some rationalising was clearly necessary. News Ltd's purchase of a controlling interest in Mirror Newspapers stabilised John Fairfax, as the bundle of federal restrictive economic measures known broadly as the "Credit Squeeze" constricted the national economy. Furthermore, it removed from John Fairfax a nagging embarrassment which had lasted for almost two years. By selling Mirror Newspapers to a non-Sydney company, John Fairfax's Managing Director, Rupert Henderson had broken the long-standing compact that had kept interlopers such as Sir Keith Murdoch out of Sydney. The only alternative purchaser in Sydney was Packer's Consolidated Press, an unthinkable option for John Fairfax. The nationally inconsequential News Ltd was much less of a rival than the historical predator, the Melbourne Herald group.

The News Ltd coup was reported in the *Sunday Mirror* as an announcement by Mr A. V. Smith, acting-chairman of directors of O'Connell Pty Ltd:

> ...I wish to announce that all the shares owned by this company in Mirror Newspapers Ltd. have been sold to News Ltd. of Adelaide. As a result, the controlling interest in Mirror Newspapers Ltd. has now been vested in News Ltd. on terms which are gratifying to the vendors. Control of Mirror Newspapers Ltd. was taken over from Mr. Ezra Norton 17 months ago when he indicated his wish to sell owing to ill-health. The object of the shareholders and directors of O'Connell Pty. Ltd. then was to ensure the continued vigorous and independent existence of the Mirror newspapers. We have achieved this and have been assured that the independence of those newspapers will be continued.5

Mr Smith made his statement with tongue firmly in cheek. Rupert Murdoch was more expansive:

> We believe that the people of NSW will welcome a strong and completely independent new force in Sydney journalism. It will

5 *Sunday Mirror*, 22 May, 1960, p.3
be our privilege to work towards bringing to this State the highest qualities of news and features presentation and of informed and responsible comment. We have every confidence in the future of the company's publications and look forward to working for their development in association with the existing employees of the company.6

*Newspaper News* reported the acquisition in lurid prose that would have shamed the most blatant tabloid:

> With Northcliffian skill, Mr Murdoch made his swoop on the "Mirror" adding it to the "Adelaide News" assets while the glory of his recent purchase of the Cumberland chain of Sydney suburban newspapers still brightened the publishing skies...7

It was suggested in the context of the sale that the *Daily Mirror*, because of its ambiguity of ownership, had lost its competitive edge against the *Sun* and its circulation was slipping.8 According to Ron Ford:

> ...they (Fairfax) didn’t deliberately run the Mirror Group into the ground. They are not so stupid. They wanted to make money out of that but they also wanted to keep it like a tame dog and not allow any serious competition with their own papers in Sydney.9

In another interpretation, David McNicoll, for many years the chief acolyte of the Packer family, concluded that Henderson "saw the Norton papers as ailing nuisances, and he made one of his biggest blunders by deciding to sell them to young Murdoch".10 Leapman agrees that the sale of the *Mirror* to Murdoch was "an act of extraordinary misjudgment by the Fairfaxes". Henderson regarded young Murdoch as no threat and favoured the deal because of his respect for Sir Keith Murdoch. Henderson previously had assisted Rupert Murdoch to print *New Idea*, the magazine that had been included in the purchase of the Cumberland group, on the *Herald*'s rotogravure plant at

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6 ibid
7 *Newspapers News*, 27 May, 1960, p.1
8 Michael Leapman, op.cit., p.27
9 Ron Ford, Personal Interview, 30 December, 1993
bargain rates. Robert Falkingham, John Fairfax's company treasurer, opposed the sale. His memorandum began: "I do not think we should contemplate selling to Murdoch at any price". Murdoch would cut advertising rates, do backdoor deals with the unions and not stick to agreements. Many of Murdoch's critics expected him to fail but they soon changed their tune. Henderson later regretted the sale, and in ensuing years the Fairfax group was to spend millions of dollars mitigating its effect.

Murdoch and his assistants moved into the Daily Mirror building in Sydney on 25 May, 1960. Immediately changes were announced: Ian Smith, editor of the North Shore Times supplanted Lindsay Clinch as editor-in-chief who then resigned. Advertising and publishing circles viewed the acquisition and rejuvenation of both the Daily and Sunday Mirror with curiosity and interest. Murdoch immediately put his stamp on both newspapers. Journalists and printers who had rarely, if ever, glimpsed Ezra Norton or his top executives were confronted with a genial, hands-on dynamo omnipresent in every facet of daily news production. On 29 May, 1960 the masthead Sunday Mirror was changed from sans serif to serif. On 17 July, 1960, Sunday was placed above the Mirror similar to the London Daily Mirror, a paper Murdoch had admired since his student days in England and hoped one day to acquire. According to Tuccille: "Murdoch worked harder than ever before, remodelling his Sydney tabloid along the lines of the London's Daily Mirror, the biggest-selling newspaper in the world, in an effort to turn it around".

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11 Michael Leapman, op. cit, p.26
12 Quoted in Michael Leapman, op.cit, p28
13 ibid
14 ibid, p.26
15 Newspaper News, 27 May, 1960, p.4
16 ibid, p.1
17 Jerome Tuccille, Murdoch: A Biography, Judy Piatkus, London, 1990, p.15
18 ibid
Murdoch’s direct involvement often irritated his senior staff, particularly those on the *Sunday Mirror* “where the weekly rhythm, leading to a climax only once every seven days, is different from that on a daily paper”.\(^{19}\) Leapman quoted a former *Sunday Mirror* executive:

> You’d slave your guts out over the paper for the first four days of the week, see nothing of Rupert, and on the fourth or fifth day Rupert would bowl in, be very nice and breezy and so on but he’d want to push you a bit, inject an idea or two of his own into it. I’d be irritated about this, frankly. I used to think that he was a bit of a dilettante. He had nothing to do with it for most of the week and then suddenly he’d show up and expect to run it.\(^{20}\)

It is impossible to tell whether the creative tension generated by Murdoch had any effect on the production or content of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Probably, the small staff and irregular production schedules for the *wraparound* largely kept it beyond his direct oversight. Certainly, he would have been aware of its circulation dynamics and market effectiveness.

Ron Ford, who had done much to galvanise the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, returned to the Sydney *Sunday Mirror* at the end of May, 1960, but kept out of Murdoch’s orbit:

> ...the editorial manager wanted me to take over the group of free newspapers on the strength of - we had been quite successful in Newcastle - and he said “well take over this group of newspapers and you can do what you like with them” but ...I didn’t want to work for free newspapers. The *Newcastle (Sunday Mirror)* *wraparound* was a ‘free’ in some regards but you still had to buy the Sunday paper. So I said “No, I don’t want to work for free newspapers and I’d sooner not do it” so they kept me in Sydney as a feature writer, special writer. So then I went to England at the end of the year.\(^{21}\)

Ford recalled that Murdoch soon embarked on strict cost-cutting. It was probably on Murdoch’s mind to close the *Sunday Mirror* “because it was a

\(^{19}\) Michael Leapman, *op.cit.*, p.29  
\(^{20}\) Quoted in Michael Leapman, *ibid*  
\(^{21}\) Ron Ford, *op.cit.*
loss, it was losing money". Overall circulation of the Sunday Mirror had dropped in the six months to 30 September, 1960 (382,713 to 365,322) and fell a further 13,000 in the next six months. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror's circulation was included in these figures. It was Ford's belief that Murdoch "didn't care about the Newcastle operation".

Death of a tabloid

Whether or not Rupert Murdoch cared about the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, he kept it going for more than a year. This may have been largely inadvertence, bad memory or sheer disinterest but given Murdoch's volatile talents, and imposition of stringent cost-cutting, it seems unlikely. It is a reasonable argument, therefore, that the newspaper must have been profitable or at least around break-even point when he took it over. It would have taken only the stroke of a pen to put it down with barely a ripple. This in fact is what he did a year later. Clearly, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was cost-effective and it was earning its keep at the time of the takeover and for some months thereafter. Ford's assessment is most likely correct:

...they (News Limited) squeezed as much out of it as they could and then they wound it down to where it was hardly worth bothering.

There is evidence in the paper's content that its proprietary looked favourably on the newspaper and, perhaps, even contemplated further promotion and, perhaps, expansion. On 30 October, 1960, five months after the Murdoch takeover, a front page three column article lauded the achievements of the first year and promised a radiant future:

22 ibid
23 Figures supplied by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, North Sydney
24 Rón Ford, op.cit.
25 ibid
OUR FIRST
BIRTHDAY

Today is the first birthday of the special Newcastle edition of the Sunday Mirror.

When this paper first appeared twelve months ago it offered Newcastle people something unique - their own Sunday paper.

It was unique in that besides the full cover of news and brilliant features that came with the Sunday Mirror, it gave a big news and feature-packed section which covered every aspect of Newcastle life.

It was unique too in that the Newcastle section made the opening pages and local news made the main headlines.

It was a true Sunday paper for Newcastle.

You loved it and your support made it an instant success.

In the 12 months since it has become Newcastle's Number One Sunday newspaper, with a complete coverage of local news, the activities of district societies, all the social news, and a vivid round-up of sports news.

One thing we promise - an even better and brighter Newcastle Sunday Mirror.26

The sentiments are unambiguous, and there is no reason to question their bona fides in the context. Ironically, also, this manifesto was phrased in classic Fleet St tabloidism style.

Any hopes that the Newcastle Sunday Mirror would suddenly blossom as a London Daily Mirror of Novocastrian Australia were soon rudely dashed. For a start, the full implications of the fiscally daring takeover of a major company by a smaller one began to permeate News Ltd's revenue and debt structures. More importantly, the financial perils of the impending Credit Squeeze became

26 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 30 October, 1960, p.1
visible in stark relief. Prime Minister, Robert Menzies, introduced post-budget, anti-inflationary measures in November 1960 to curb the excesses of the long boom. In August 1960, imports had reached their highest level with £103.5m worth of goods pouring into Australia, Production of cars and housing surged to high levels, and hire purchase was a way of life for most Australians. By January, 1961 the Menzies' Government was under fire for delaying too long to restrain the boom. In February 1961, dismissals from motor companies totalled more than 2700 men and unions sought urgent discussions with Government to ameliorate unemployment from credit restrictions and increased sales tax. Through 1961, the economic news was grim and the Menzies Government reeled towards defeat.

The media and communications industries, particularly newspapers, were hard-hit by reduced advertising. Papers were slashed in size and staff retrenched, including News Ltd journalists. Newspaper News commented:

Newspapers have always been particularly vulnerable in times of financial stress... working on huge turnovers with relatively small profit margins, they are hit disproportionally hard when advertising drops. A reliable index to the state of the newspaper industry is the size of the papers - newspapers now are much thinner than before the [credit] restrictions were introduced. One Sydney Sunday paper has dropped from its pre squeeze 130 page to about 100 - a reduction of approximately 13 percent. A peak edition of one of the world's largest medium for classified advertising has shrunk from 80-82 pages to an average of 60-62 plates - a reduction of about 25 percent.

By February, 1961, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror had shed pages (See Table below) and lost advertising, as a contemporary letter records:

...last year, (1960)...when the advertising slowed down owing to the period of slack business after Christmas, they still kept the paper up to sixteen pages, and filled it with editorial and pics. Now they cut it down to 8 pages (TO MAKE IT PAY) but the

27 Newcastle Morning Herald, 11 February, 1961, p.1
28 Newspaper News, 14 April, 1961, p.1
29 ibid, p.7
£139,000 haul from investors

BIG LAND SHARE FRAUD

Two share sharks — both with gold records — have walked out of a Gold Coast rocket with £139,927 in their pockets.

Most of this money has come from the savings of Queenslanders and southern investors.

The share sharks are Gregory William Kenneth and Donald Hammond — accused of cheating people into their houses on Trusts Ltd.

The Trusts, based in Victoria, were also accused of misappropriating £139,927.

Hospital board inquiry ordered

Tears for baby croc

Government to in

Evicted - after 65 years

UNIVERSITY TO GET £40 MILLION

City to have cooler day

Car slum despite tax cut

2 weeks to go

As economies were introduced in 1961, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror editions became smaller and many Newcastle based picture stories taken for this paper appeared in the Sydney Sunday Mirror: 1) Front page pic of Ken Morris and his three sons on front page, March 5, 1961; 2) 'Her finest hour', February 19, 1961, p.10; 3) 'Orphans find happiness in white home', January 29, 1961, p.3; 4) 'Tears for baby croc', inside page, February 26, 5) 'Evicted - after 65 years', April 16, 1961, p.2
result is pretty awful. Still... [the Circulation Manager) told [Morrison] yesterday that the circulation hasn’t suffered yet.30

In the six months to 31 March, 1961, the Sunday Mirror’s overall circulation including the Newcastle Sunday Mirror dropped from 365,322 to 352,308. In comparison The Sun-Herald slipped only 1,045 and the Sunday Telegraph by about 8,000.31 After peak Christmas advertising, the Newcastle Sunday Mirror dropped to eight or 12 pages an issue in February 1961 compared with 20 to 28 a year earlier. The Sunday Mirror in comparison was much the same at both periods (averaging 44 pages). This suggests very strongly that the Newcastle paper was doing very much better than its parent in February 1960, and somewhat worse a year later. Strict economy measures were imposed at News Ltd’s Sydney headquarters, and these measures were quickly transmitted to Newcastle.

The Newcastle Sunday Mirror reported in a front page story in May 1961 that the Lord Mayor, Ald Frank Purdue, had appealed to the Newcastle Trade Union and commercial leaders not to panic over unemployment. About 800 men had lost their jobs or were facing dismissal in the steel industry. Purdue expected an improvement from the Federal Government’s further easing of credit restrictions during the week.32 Although the impact of the credit squeeze began to ease slightly from May, it was much too late to save the Newcastle Sunday Mirror.

The head of the Newcastle office, Kevin Plummer, was called to Sydney early in 1961 to discuss the future of the newspaper. Management told him it was scaling it down because technical problems and prohibitive costs made it more profitable to concentrate on the Sydney suburban ‘frees’, then

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30 Ron Morrison letter to Ron Ford, 6 February, 1961
31 Figures supplied by Audit Bureau of Circulation, North Sydney
32 Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 14 May, 1961, p.1
distributing about 600,000 papers each week.\textsuperscript{33} After this plain warning, it was only a question of time before the paper folded. The capitulation was done in a phased way that largely concealed the imminent euthanasia. The last issue of the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror} was on Sunday, 21 May, 1961. It, carried a display advertisement on the front page for 'THE NEW MIRROR' next Sunday.\textsuperscript{34} This signalled the re-launching of the \textit{Sunday Mirror} in an effort to staunch both circulation and advertising haemorrhages. It was re-badged as the \textit{Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial}. The trade journal, \textit{Newspaper News} later that week announced the venture under the headline, 'NEW SUNDAY PAPER LAUNCHING MURDOCH OPENS SECOND STAGE OF CAMPAIGN':

A new, bright newsy paper called the "Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial" hits newsstands in Sydney and other parts of New South Wales this weekend (Sunday May 28, 1961). Replacing the "Sunday Mirror" (established in 1958) the new paper will place special emphasis on pictorial coverage. Mr. W. Lean, the acting Sunday Mirror editor, said the new paper will be the liveliest Sunday paper in Sydney... "The special emphasis on pictures is designed to meet the trend created by television, which has educated people to the pictorial presentation of news..." Circulation of the Sunday Mirror stood at 340,000 when the final issues rolled off the presses last Sunday ...The paper is expected to be more than double the size of the old "Sunday Mirror", the last issue of which ran to 44 pages.\textsuperscript{35}

On Sunday, 28 May, 1961, the \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror} became the \textit{Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial} Newcastle Special Edition. In short, its masthead discarded the distinctive Novocastrian identity. The paper remained a \textit{wraparound} until 16 July, 1961, after which it became a mere supplement inside the Sydney Sunday. Some Newcastle stories were still featured in the main \textit{Sunday Mirror News Pictorial}, either on the front page or page 3. This was really the only evidence that the separate newspaper had even existed. It was not even given the dignity in its final issue of an epitaph, an apologia or even

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\textsuperscript{33} Kevin Plummer, Personal Interview, 20 November, 1993  
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Newcastle Sunday Mirror}, 21 May, 1961, p.1  
\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Newspaper News}, 26 May, 1961, p.1
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Source: *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, 8 November, 1959 to 21 May, 1961

an explanation. The Sydney *Sunday Mirror* underwent several name changes during its 19 years under Murdoch until, as the *Sunday* it finally ceased publication in September, 1979. It had some reasonable years, and showed occasional glimmers of greater things, but never really threw off the stigmas of its spectacularly disastrous early career.
Post Mortems

The expiring of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was canvassed at length in the ensuing months. While the "credit squeeze" accounted for much of the blame, news media professionals largely blamed intrinsically high production costs. Lewis concluded that it "finally perished on the rock of funds":

"...there is extra newsprint and right at the start all the cost of extra content and you are doing it in large measure by remote control and if you are going to try for local advertising, you find that it starts to dry up after a while...the local advertisers just don't have the money to be, well in the case of the [Newcastle] Sunday Mirror, they didn't have the money to be in the [Newcastle] Herald which obviously was their prime advertising medium and I think at that stage too television was starting [in Newcastle] so you had your television salesmen going around and trying to sell television sports. Radio in those days was always very strong so the competition for the advertising dollar was tremendously difficult and the money they were getting for the ads would not have begun to cover [the costs]..."36

Even though the newspaper did well in a difficult advertising environment, it was defeated by heavy continuing costs which were inflexibly resistant to market factors. For example, the printing presses had to be replated extensively to wrap the Newcastle edition around the core *Sunday Mirror*, a highly expensive process. Ford conceded the high production costs but believed the Newcastle wraparound "was a genuine attempt to build up the circulation of the *Sunday Mirror*".37 It is difficult to understand why these basic, invariable costs would have been incurred for some 20 months unless the paper was either profitable or considered likely to achieve sound profitability. Facing the daunting prospect of establishing News Ltd in a vigorously competitive market with limited resources, Murdoch could not afford to be altruistic. But for the Credit Squeeze, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* might have survived and flourished, setting a new benchmark for economic and innovative regional

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36 John Lewis, Personal Interview, 16 June, 1998
37 Ron Ford, op.cit.
Land release delays

POLICY MAY LOSE US INDUSTRIES

UNLESS there is a change in government policy, valuable industries may be lost to Newcastle district.

The Minister for Public Works, Mr. Ryan, has stated that the first industrial land on the Hunter River Islands will be made available in 1963.

The Lord Mayor, Alderman Purdie, said this delay could be disastrous to Newcastle's industry.

Although the only access by the Ash Island Bridge, many industries are clamoring for the land.

If the minister's plans are not affected by the bridge, many industries may be lost.

Concern

Business and industrial interests in Newcastle also expressed concern at the government's plan.

"There is land on Wallsend suitable for industrial purposes," the minister said.

"The government is not the only one with land," he added.

"We have the land and the public has the right to use it," he said.

Queries sent to councils

The minister of Industry and Commerce said that councils are not affected by the government's plans.

"They can do what they want," he said.

The minister also said that the government is not the only one with land.

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"We have the land and the public has the right to use it," he said.

STREET TREES UNDER THREAT

Two hundred and forty trees in two Stockton streets may be under threat of being cut down.

Residents say they have given every assistance to the council, but the council has refused to listen.

The council says that the trees are a threat to public safety.

Queries sent to councils

The minister of Industry and Commerce said that councils are not affected by the government's plans.

"They can do what they want," he said.

The minister also said that the government is not the only one with land.

Concern

Business and industrial interests in Newcastle also expressed concern at the government's plan.

"There is land on Wallsend suitable for industrial purposes," the minister said.

"The government is not the only one with land," he added.

"We have the land and the public has the right to use it," he said.

The front page of the last issue No. 80 of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror dated Sunday, May 21, 1961. The following Sunday the masthead was changed to Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial, Newcastle Special Edition. The paper remained a wraparound until July 16, 1961 when it became a supplement in the Sydney Sunday Mirror.
newspapers based on a metropolitan *core*. In the event it was an isolated example of what might have been done.

**Enduring Influences, Lost Opportunities**

Although the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* was never imitated directly, it had some interesting consequences. In 1964, Rupert Murdoch embarked on the most ambitious Australian venture of his risk-laden career. He tried to establish a national daily newspaper published in Canberra, a quixotic venture whose success was elusive in its Canberra days. (*The Australian* established itself and eventually thrived from headquarters in Sydney.) Murdoch's strategy in the early Canberra days was curiously similar to what had happened with the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*:

The paper [*The Australian*], after first high curiosity sales, hovered around the 50-60,000 mark in 1964-5. From July 17, 1964 to June 19, 1965 it ran a **special and costly wrap-around Canberra supplement** in an attempt to have the best of both the national and Canberra worlds.38 [Morrison's emphasis]

What Murdoch did in Canberra was fundamentally what Mirror Newspapers, and then News Ltd, had tried to do with the wrapround in Newcastle. Furthermore, the Canberra *wraparound* was much more strategically placed for success than the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* because it was produced and printed wholly in Canberra. Its functions were not bisected by the clumsy logistics of production at two centres 160 kilometres apart. In short, the Canberra edition of the *Australian* was produced with significant economies of scale not available to the Newcastle paper, making allowance for the daily publication of the *Australian* and the weekly publication of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. It must be purely speculative that Murdoch tried the *wraparound* in Canberra because he had given the principle a go for a year in Newcastle, and had found it had some merit. With the economy booming again

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in the mid-1960's, it was reasonable to argue that good Canberra sales would under-pin the struggling national editions, particularly as both newspapers shared the same production facilities. (The Canberra edition was known, not altogether affectionately, as the "Little Digger" because it was a wraparound of the "Big Oz".)

More directly, the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* influenced the development of "free newspapers" in the Newcastle region. It demonstrated that a local focus and regional commitment were strong factors in building aggregate circulation. Of course, a free newspaper has insuperable advantages in circulation. It also should be borne in mind that a free paper is not necessarily accepted or read at the point of free distribution. There is more incentive for a paying readership to at least peruse the newspaper, even if fleetingly. The *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* in a sense was a free newspaper because it was circulated without extra charge as an adjunct of the metropolitan *Sunday Mirror*. Thus, it was argued, the Newcastle reader got the local paper for the price of the metropolitan paper. To an extent, this is correct, accepting that at that time direct inserts into newspapers were rare. Even in the early 1960's, supplements were usually published in the normal text of a newspaper and not inserted into them. If the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* had been published separately and not as a wraparound, its total cost might well have approached the 6d charged for both newspapers. Thus, it is a little simplistic to describe the Newcastle edition as a free paper because part of its significant extra production costs would have been factored into the overall cost of the dual newspaper. Certainly, though, the core *Sunday Mirror* subsidised the wraparound in some degree, this also reinforces the conclusion that the Newcastle paper was fundamentally profitable and potentially more profitable, given a favourable economic climate. Furthermore, if the Credit Squeeze hadn't killed the wraparound, its continued successful publication would probably have meant that its costs could have
A year after the News Limited purchase, the masthead changed from the Sunday Mirror to the Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial. The Newcastle Sunday Mirror masthead was dropped and the paper became the Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial Newcastle Special Edition for the first three issues and the fourth front page appeared under Newcastle District Special. It remained wrapped around the main Sydney newspaper and was reduced to 8 pages of Newcastle news, social and advertising.
been incorporated into a higher charge for the dual product without serious commercial risk. Alternatively, it might have been floated off into a separate newspaper with its own cost structure. All of these factors should be considered when looking at the contribution of the Newcastle edition to the circulation and success of "frees" in Newcastle. (See below)

The competitive relationship between regional newspapers circulated at unit price and newspapers distributed free has been stressed by Kirkpatrick:

Regional newspapers have to keep an eye not only on maintaining their own readership, but also on the emergence of competitors, especially in the "free-distribution" newspaper market. It has been shown that the general technique adopted by entrenched newspaper interests is to produce a weekly publication from the daily newspaper's stable to discourage potential competitors.39

In a sense, this is what happened in Newcastle. Although the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was published from Sydney, its success in Newcastle had the shorter effect of choking off the development of further weekly "frees". In the longer-term, after it ceased publication, it had the paradoxical consequence of stimulating publication of regional "frees" because of its demonstrable impact and success, at least for a time.

The history of "free" newspapers in Australia is extraordinarily difficult to write. Many were short-lived, and copies very rarely kept. Many were published with little editorial content and were basically collections of advertisements. Regional Newcastle from the late 1950's spawned many small suburban "frees" with home-delivered distribution of between 2,000 and 9,000. They carried local advertisements usually from main street businesses. John Lewis, who published a four page "free" Hamilton Advertiser in Newcastle in 1961,

The front page of the last wraparound on July 9, 1961. The last issue of the wraparound with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror masthead was May 21, 1961. From May 28 a reduced paper appeared with the masthead Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial, Newcastle Special Edition.
recalled their problems in surviving against the paid high-circulation dailies and Sundays:

...there were little suburban newspapers [that] struggled on and never made any money - in lots of cases, I think, lost money and had a really difficult time against the [Newcastle] Herald and to a lesser extent the [Newcastle] Sun. They were there but they never ever got to the stage where they would be registered. In lots of cases I would imagine they weren't even registered as companies or registered as newspapers...⁴⁰

To be successful in regional Newcastle, a ‘free’ newspaper had to circulate and attract advertising in both the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie LGA’s, as the Newcastle Sunday Mirror had done. It had competed successfully in readership and national/state and local advertising with the major dailies, the Newcastle Morning Herald, The Newcastle Sun and the Maitland Mercury. If the “frees” were to succeed, they had to do the same.

Rumours were rampant in Newcastle during the early 1960’s that a substantial ‘free’ was to be launched by Sir Frank Packer’s Consolidated Press using the resources of the recently acquired Maitland Mercury. This reflected the profits that Consolidated Press was pulling in from television, prompting it to seek further newspaper opportunities beyond metropolitan Sydney.⁴¹ Although a new press was put into the Maitland plant, and editorial staff increased, a Packer “free” did not directly challenge the broader regional Newcastle circulation area, the turf of the Newcastle dailies and the Newcastle Sunday Mirror. It did, however, start smaller “frees” in Maitland and Cessnock, certainly part of the circulation area of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, but not a crucial one. (See Chapter 2)

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⁴⁰ John Lewis, op. cit.
Although further “frees” were mooted over the next 20 years, no serious attempt to conquer regional Newcastle emerged until 1979, when The Newcastle Star launched its first issue. It was a ‘free’ tabloid of 56 pages home-delivered to 83,000 households in Newcastle and Lake Macquarie.\(^\text{42}\) Despite the overwhelming odds against its survival, The Star proved extraordinarily resilient, and eventually emerged as highly profitable. Its fierce competition contributed to the closure of the enfeebled Newcastle Sun in 1980. The Star was bought by the Rural Press company and remained in publication, with a weekly circulation of some 113,000 in 1999. (In an ironical resonance with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, Rural Press published it profitably from Canberra.) The John Fairfax group which had acquired the Newcastle Morning Herald responded by launching its own weekly “free”, The Newcastle Post in September 1981, According to its former manager, Vic Levi, its rationale and promotion closely resembled the Newcastle Sunday Mirror:

...it was local people, local knowledge that was the catchery and I had an ad that said that and all the editorial was local people, local knowledge and that was absolutely the catchery and that was what Ronnie Ford tried to cash in on [with the Newcastle Sunday Mirror]...\(^\text{43}\)

This raises again the question of whether the Newcastle Sunday Mirror was a lost opportunity. Superficially, it seems that it might have been. The successful establishment of two "frees" 20 years later, however, should be evaluated with care. By the early 1980’s, regional Newcastle was much bigger, more prosperous, and significantly more diversified in its demographics. Family formation and urban settlement had increased dramatically, stimulated by the affluence and ready consumption of the post-war baby-boomers. There was

\(^{42}\) *The Newcastle Star*, 10 October, 1979, p.1  
\(^{43}\) Vic Levi, Personal Interview, 27 July, 1999
The front page of the first issue of The Newcastle Star, Wednesday, 10 October, 1979, a weekly ‘free’ delivered to 83,000 homes in the Newcastle and Lake Macquarie area. Management claimed 300,000 residents read the paper weekly.

The front page of the first issue of The Newcastle Post, Wednesday, 9 September, 1981, a weekly delivered free to Newcastle homes. This ‘free’ appeared after the closure of the afternoon daily, The Newcastle Sun, 4 July, 1980 and was the Newcastle Morning Herald’s attempt to counteract The Newcastle Star’s competitive inroads.
substantial spending power generated largely by national TV advertising campaigns but with ample opportunities for local advertising in newspapers.

By contrast, urban growth and consequent consumption and demand were only starting to stir in the late-1950’s heyday of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. It is certainly possible, though, that the newspaper, if it had survived the “Credit Squeeze” could have emerged as a power in an ascendant media, rich in opportunities. Probably, this could only have been achieved if the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* had been severed from the *Sunday Mirror*, and revamped as a “free” weekly, while retaining the distinctive content, presentation and *persona* that it had assembled. Such an option was unrealistic in the repressive, constipated investment atmosphere of 1960-61. The judgment of a former senior Newcastle journalist, John Armstrong, is particularly apposite:

> ...the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* [wrapped] around the *Sunday Mirror* and sent up [from Sydney to Newcastle] just became virtually too difficult. The interesting thing was and the more I read about this, I think that it still was the forerunner to [weekly Newcastle ‘frees’] *The Post* and *The Star*.44

**Last Thoughts**

This thesis has combed remorselessly the regrettably meagre body of surviving documentation relevant to the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*. Every attempt has been to limit conclusions to what might be substantiated from these written and oral sources. Where resort has been made to speculation, again every effort has been made to exclude the fanciful and emphasise the plausible. The essential conclusions have been stated and reiterated throughout the thesis, perhaps to the point of tediousness. In particular, major points have been summarised at the end of chapters, particularly in Chapters 4–7. It is not intended, therefore, to recap them comprehensively here. Consequently, this section tries to make

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44 John Armstrong, Personal Interview, 10 July, 1999
tersely a few final points on the major historical and conceptual issues involved in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*’s life and death.

Most importantly, the experience of the newspaper through its life of 20 months tells us much about the evolution of Australia’s newspaper industry, particularly the sensational tabloid side. The analysis here has been dominated by the elusive concept of *tabloidism*, a general term which covers a variety of news formats, styles and philosophies. It is concluded here that the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* exemplified aspects of three major genres of *tabloidism*.

Firstly, it was a *hard-news tabloid* in that the majority of its issues were imbued with the writing and layout principles of *hard news*, emphasising strong news values in tightly written stories presented graphically, often sensationally. Overlapping with the hard-news approach was an idiosyncratic form of *tabloidism* identified here as *Nortonism*. This combined the hard-news approach with themes and methods of presentation deriving from long-established practice of a distinctive company: here, the 70 years experience of Truth and Sportsman, the family company of John Norton and his estranged son, Ezra. *Nortonism* permeated the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* most powerfully in its vigorous, often sensational assertion and protection of the public interest.

Fleet St *tabloidism*, the third genre identified here, was diffused more subtly and allusively. It was a *tabloidism* redolent of the London *Daily Mirror* and its Sunday version, the *Sunday Pictorial*. As noted earlier, such *tabloidism* was extremely influential in the conception of the Sydney *Sunday Mirror*, although badly botched in execution. Fleet St. *tabloidism* was not a consistently robust presence in the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, although when it did occur the genre characteristics were unmistakable. It was argued, notably...
in Chapter 6, that Fleet St. tabloidism was evident in the early issues of the Newcastle Sunday Mirror, particularly in front-page text and layout. It was then largely subordinated to hard-news tabloidism and Nortonism, although traces remained. Fleet St tabloidism re-emerged in the final 20 or so issues, particularly those under the new masthead of the Sunday Mirror News-Pictorial. This may have reflected Rupert Murdoch’s enthusiastic espousal of traditional Fleet St tabloidism, particularly of the London Daily Mirror brand. It may also have been a spin-off from attempts to replicate a Sunday Pictorial tabloidism in the hapless Sydney Sunday Mirror. Possibly, it was due to the inclinations of a sub-editor trained or adept in Fleet St. tabloidism.

Although emphasised particularly at the beginning and end of the 87 Newcastle issues, the softer tabloidism was present in a muted form, even when the harder style dominated the front pages. The most pertinent examples were the continuing strand of “girl of the week” pictures on Pages 1 and 3, and the less frequent, softer-focus pictures of children and animals. A sort of pidgin Fleet St patois can also be detected consistently in the associated stories and blocklines. The tensions between the subtle, softer tabloidism and the hard-news traditional tabloidism makes the Newcastle Sunday Mirror a valuable source in the study in newspaper philosophy, presentation and production. Without question, the harder style was pre-eminent, but in a modal balance which provided an interesting glimpse of the future.

Rupert Murdoch was to become a legendary practitioner of tabloidism in the 1970’s and 1980’s with the development of the phenomenally successful London Sun. In the process, he moved the Sun decisively away from the traditional Fleet St tabloidism exemplified in the London Daily Mirror of the 1950’s. Many attempts have been made to distil the peculiar alchemy of the London Sun which assured it of a massive readership and, over many years, a
conspicuously loyal one. A careful study of the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* supplies some clues.

_The Newcastle Sunday Mirror_ was a newspaper mixing elements of hard-news sensationalism and softer elements, often crudely, but sometimes with an assurance that under-scored the potential of a new, synthesised tabloid genre. In many ways, the mixing in the Newcastle paper of seemingly discordant elements gave a vision, albeit limited, of a vibrant, vitalised tabloidism. This had all the surface trappings of novelty and innovation, sufficiently seductive to capture and hold a huge mass *audience*. Yet it did not discourage a traditional *audience* accustomed to hard news and conventional tabloid presentation. In short, it provided an insightful template, in an attenuated regional form, of what a new, or renewed, tabloidism might achieve.

The influence of idiosyncratic Nortonism was receding as the Norton company faded in the contemporary memory. Substantial sensationalism remained, although increasingly reliant more on design than text, counter-pointed by softer news writing and presentation. The cumulative impact of television drove tabloidism into entertainment and curbed the long-dominant news imperative. It would be over-dignifying the _Newcastle Sunday Mirror_, a humble regional wraparound, by linking it directly to the emergence of the mighty London *Sun*. Yet it came from the same News Ltd stable and it flourished at a time when Rupert Murdoch’s production strategies were still coalescing. In important respects, the _Newcastle Sunday Mirror_ provides an excellent template of an experimental tabloidism clinging to much fundamental practice but also looking at retaining and building *audiences* in an increasingly electronic era. Its files provide a fascinating conspectus of evolving tabloidism in 1960-61, a transitional period we now recognise as decisive in both Australian and international news media history. Certainly, it is much more relevant to how
tabloidism eventually evolved than the stagnant Daily Mirror and floundering Sunday Mirror, the major metropolitan tabloids inherited by Rupert Murdoch. There is much that is rewarding and surprising to be learnt from the greatly neglected history and archives of Australia’s regional and rural newspapers.
APPENDIX A
(This code was applicable to Australian journalists in 1960-61. See Chapters 5 & 6)

The Australian Journalists' Association

CODE OF ETHICS

Members of The Australian Journalists' Association are reminded that: Observance and enforcing of the Ethics Code is an important duty. Rule 49 (a), which deals with this matter, reads:

Each member of The Australian Journalists' Association shall observe the following Code of Ethics in his employment:

(1) He shall report and interpret the news with a scrupulous honesty.

(2) He shall not suppress essential facts and shall not distort the truth by omission or wrong or improper emphasis.

(3) He shall in all circumstances respect all confidences received by him in the course of his calling.

(4) He shall observe at all times the fraternal obligations arising from his membership of the Association, and shall not on any occasion take unfair or improper advantage of a fellow member of the Association.

(5) He shall not allow his personal interests to influence him in the discharge of his duties nor shall he accept or offer any present, gift or other consideration, benefit or advantage of whatsoever kind if such acceptance or offer is of a character which may have the effect of so influencing or benefiting him.

(6) He shall use only fair and honest methods to obtain news, pictures and documents.

(7) He shall reveal his identity as a representative of the Press before obtaining any personal interview for the purpose of using it for publication.

(8) He shall do his utmost to maintain full confidence in the integrity and dignity of the calling of a journalist.

- Issued by Federal Executive, 1956
  (later amended in 1985)
APPENDIX B

(See ethical issues raised in chapter 6)

PHOTOGRAPHIC ETHICS

Photojournalism as a profession imposes a set of responsibilities. Some are fairly routine and fall neatly in the 'daily duties' category: get to the scene, frame and focus the shot, collect the caption info, and so forth. Beyond - or perhaps beneath - these functional tasks lie broader ethical considerations. Almost every day, photojournalists face decisions of morality - ranging from removing a distracting item from a photograph to taking a gruesome picture at a murder site. But a looming deadline...can pressure the photographer into making snap judgments about even the most morally delicate situations.

Arthur Rothstein

Evans believes "the power of the news photograph is such that it brings difficult judgments for all of us". Charges are often levelled at the photojournalist for a lack of ethical sensitivity; for preferring the sensational. The old photojournalists' maxim 'shoot first, edit later' is often used by the photographer to dodge the ethical question. In the photographer's defence, there are many instances where some photographers have refused on ethical grounds to press the shutter, whereas alongside them, less sensitive press photographers have taken the photo and later won international acclaim.

Photographers have been criticised for the 'spot' news photo taken when the subject is too preoccupied or distressed to realise the intrusion into their privacy. Morgan in his introduction to "What is Journalism" describes a cartoon depicting a photograph of a peasant woman, arms folded, one hand to her face, lips and eyes tight and her brow creased with grief. "Where did you

2 Harold Evans, Pictures on a Page, Heinemann, London, 1982, introduction
Photographers and editors confront ethical considerations daily.

Should photographs of accidents, murders and atrocities showing dead bodies be taken and, if photographed and submitted, should the editor include the pictures in the newspaper?

Local car accident (pic No. 1) with visible dead body was not published.

The Newcastle Sun instead published front page a photo (No. 2) showing the car in the river being pulled out surrounded by spectators. (Monday, September 24, 1956)

Pic No. 3 shows a mangled car with a dead man’s hand visible - again this was not published.
NEWCASTLE, Tues. — A gleaming red sports car was cut completely in two, when it broad­sided at high speed into a tele­
graph post at Mayfield last night.

The driver, Neville James Ritsby, 21, of Lockyer St., Adamstown, was killed instantly.

Paul Dobson, 21, and his brother, John (17), of Rowe St., Mayfield, had amazing escapes.

Paul suffered a broken nose and was treated with a deep gash in his right cheek.

Profile: In the picture above, the boys' father, Mr J. Dobson, had to console his weeping son John as the boys were being treated in the casualty room of the Mater Hos­

table...
take this?" queried a voice outside the frame. "In a village in Umbria" answers the photographer. "On f/8 at 1/50th of a second." "What you took", says the viewer, "was a liberty". Morgan comments that this cartoon represents two theories of photography: one deals with what was done and how; the other with what should have been done. Where a photographer taking this picture for his own purposes might be criticised for this insensitivity, the news photographer might be excused if this was an illustration of an earthquake victim. Lewis queries, however, whether the camera should be used even if the photographer happens to be present? Is the event history or is the photographer intruding? Do the victims have a right to suffer in private? When do the readers' need to know override those of the individual? His conclusion is that he doubts any consensus will be drawn as perhaps "the photo of tragedy has more impact than words because the photo leaves so little to the imagination".

As pointed out by Anton Sailer,"in general photojournalists see things through different eyes from the amateur. It is their job to dig the decisive details out of the total scene, and so they pass up the "beautiful" photo...What they are looking for and what they react to are events...".

A news photographer sent out to cover an assignment would be expected by his editor to take the unexpected, perhaps potentially embarrassing, photograph if it occurred in a seemingly mundane news coverage. An example of this was a trainee's collapse at an Air Force National Service parade in Newcastle in 1956. Sent to cover the Empire Day celebrations, the photographer was present when the young trainee fell to the ground. The

Trainee's Collapse

Last Week

TRADE-IN YOUR OLD, out-of-date, battered, rusted motor car! Trade it down for a new, shiny, smooth motor car! Trade it in for a car fit for the 21st century! Trade it in for a car that will make you feel like a king! Trade it in for a car that will make you feel like a bus driver!

Lomo Orso Of Ban

MELBOURNE, EDT. — It was all a bad idea. As the collapse was the cause of panic, the trainee had taken the decision to be covered photographically but when the trainee collapsed, one of the officers very quickly tried to stop any photographs being taken telling the photographer to "Piss off, you bastard". As the collapse was the highlight story, the photographer was hardly back to the office when the editor rang asking for pics - the reporter had already rung the story through. The photographer would have been in strife if he had followed the officer's advice.

Photos taken of a National Service air force trainee collapsing at an Empire Day celebration published in The Newcastle Sun, May 24, 1956. Should the photographer have taken this photo? It doesn't constitute an invasion of privacy as it was a public parade. The RAAF was happy for the occasion to be covered photographically but when the trainee collapsed, one of the officers very quickly tried to stop any photographs being taken telling the photographer to "Piss off, you bastard". As the collapse was the highlight story, the photographer was hardly back to the office when the editor rang asking for pics - the reporter had already rung the story through. The photographer would have been in strife if he had followed the officer's advice.
immediate reaction of the photographer was to take the photo. This action resulted in an immediate hostile response from the parade commander who tried to stop the coverage. The photos made front page of *The Newcastle Sun* (May 24, 1956). Although it could be questionable on ethical grounds, undoubtedly almost every photojournalist on both local and metropolitan newspapers would have taken and submitted the photo. In fact, the editor in this instance, already informed of the event by the reporter, immediately demanded the pictures of the event.

Charges of intrusion into privacy could be levelled against the *Newcastle Sunday Mirror* with its front page story and pictures on the Platts Estate inhabitants.\(^6\) (See Chapter Five) The headline ‘The Shame of our City’, together with photo showing a group of Aborigines huddled together outside a galvanised iron shanty, could be considered a liberty but the story could be justified as an exposure of an untenable situation.

Another area of contention is the increasing prevalence of faking and manipulating of photographs, particularly in this digital era where images can be moved, rearranged and distorted at whim. The first major digital manipulation was recorded on the cover the *National Geographic* in February 1982 when the Egyptian pyramids were moved closer together to accommodate a vertical image required for the cover.\(^7\) Manipulation is not a new phenomenon as evidence exists of early photographic faking in newspapers. In April, 1911 a photograph was reproduced in the Sydney *Daily Telegraph* titled “On the Wings of the Morning Breeze” showing aviator Joseph Hammond on his first flight in his Briston Box-Kite to Sydney ten days previously. The photo, taken by William Kimble, was actually a composite of two negatives created to give an impression of the romanticism of flying’s

\(^6\) *Newcastle Sunday Mirror*, May 15, 1960, p.1

\(^7\) *National Geographic*, February, 1982, Vol 161, No. 2, cover
pioneering days.8 Kimble superimposed the image of the aircraft and the clouds onto a separate photo of the swans in the water.9

Goldberg asserts "because photography appears so truthful, it is almost the perfect shill, and the deceits that have been practised with it are endlessly inventive.10 Posing, subject control, directing and set-up are all deceits universally practised.

Most press photographers will request a reenactment if they miss the unveiling of a plaque, the cutting of a ribbon or cake, the raising of a flag, or personalities receiving presentations. A young boy playing with a toy gun in a park on Remembrance Day is asked by a Newcastle Morning Herald press photographer to pose arms reversed similar to the guard of honour (November, 12, 1970).11 The question is asked: is this truth or fiction? Ethically, should this photo have been taken?

The conservative Newcastle Morning Herald also stands accused of faking. A press photographer covering the search for two boys missing in a canoe in floodwaters, submitted two photographs: one of a RAAF helicopter assisting in the search and another of two small boats searching for the boys. The editor requested the photographer to make a composite of the two photos, putting the helicopter above the boats. The composite picture made the front page (and it was later suggested that the photo be entered for an award!).12 Although the helicopter had been in the rescue operation and had been flying over the boats, ethically the faking was not justifiable. The substitution of a sea water mullet for a fresh mullet in a photo of a young boy posing with a fish that was stunned by his golf ball hit across a creek (Newcastle Sunday Mirror, March 19, 1961) was exposed by an angler who recognised the difference in the fish. (See Chapter Four) As pointed out the picture would have been acceptable if the

8 The Fairfax Library, Fixed in Time, John Fairfax, Broadway, NSW, 1985, p.29
11 Newcastle Morning Herald, November 12, 1970, p.1
12 Newcastle Morning Herald, February 4, 1971, p.1
A directed photograph poses an ethical question. Is this reality?

A *Newcastle Morning Herald* photographer covering an Armistice Day service at Civic Park spotted a young child playing with a toy revolver in the park vicinity.

To illustrate the story, the photographer with the permission of the child's mother, persuaded the young boy to copy the arms reversal of the RAAF guard of honour.

The photo appeared on the front page of the *Newcastle Morning Herald*, November 12, 1970.
Even the conservative and cautious *Newcastle Morning Herald* has been guilty of editorial faking:

A *Newcastle Morning Herald* photographer after covering two boys in a canoe missing in floodwaters at Raymond Terrace in February 1971 submitted two pics to the editor. One pic showed a RAAF helicopter searching for the boys (Pic No. 1). The other was of searchers in two boats, the occupant of the boat in the foreground in radio contact with the helicopter. (Pic No. 2)

The editor suggested that the helicopter be superimposed above the boats. The photographer stated: "I don’t fake pictures". The editor replied: "Try it".

The first attempt at combination printing resulted in picture No 3 that became the front page pic (No 4) illustrating the story.
caption had included the fact that the boy had already eaten the fish and the substitution was intended for illustration of size only.

The press photographer (or the editor) can also be selective. A photo taken when a famous person (and this is particularly so in the case of politicians) is smiling, frowning or yawning, can distort reality. A wide-angle or telephoto lens can also distort reality as can the angle at which the photographer takes the photo. A meeting can be interpreted as being successful if a photograph taken from the back shows a multitude of heads but at the same meeting, a photo of two almost empty front rows, can signify to the reader, a lack of attendance. As Evans points out: "the camera cannot lie; but it can be an accessory to untruth".

Beyond the press photographer’s control is editorial interference, as in the case of the padlock painted on the photo of a chained cow during a milk strike (Newcastle Sunday Mirror, January 10, 1960) or in obviously false and misleading captioning. (See Chapter Four) Webster points out:

"Words and pictures interact in an intricate, mutual, relationship. Visual images strike hard at the viewer with an immediacy words can scarcely ever capture. Yet a nod from the latter can transform the interpretation of a photograph way beyond its initial recognition."  

Ethically, press photographers have a responsibility to portray events as they occur, as objectively and sensitively as possible. Evans comments: "Photojournalism requires intelligence, knowledge, sensitivity and scepticism". The press photographer, ultimately, has to make the decision whether a particular photo should be taken.

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APPENDIX C

(See discussion on Circulation in Chapter 7, and Chapter 8.)

Excerpt from a letter to Ron Ford dated 6 February, 1961 from Ron Morrison, Hunter Photographic Agency:

At last I’ve got down to write you a few lines. I only hope that the letter gets over to England before you leave. Actually things haven’t changed much here in Newcastle as far as the Mirror’s concerned, it’s still going, but only to-night Betty and I were looking over the Mirrors at the same period of time last year. We found a terrific difference in the size of the paper. Last year as you remember when the advertising went down owing to the period of slack business after Christmas, they still kept the paper up to sixteen pages, and filled it with editorial and pics. Now they cut it down to 8 pages (to make it pay) but the result is pretty awful. Still, Alan Rogers told me yesterday that the circulation hasn’t suffered yet!

Wilf Southern, told me last week that our friend, Mr. Beckett, was back on the Sunday Mirror - as a sub editor, what a come down! There has also been a lot of changes in Sydney on the Mirror, they seem to be in the middle of an economy drive. Max Ross told me in Sydney that they are not paying any overtime whatsoever; if they can’t do a job in normal working hours, they DON’T DO IT.

The economy drive also affected me, when just before Christmas, I received a letter from Bateson (Editorial Manager at Sydney Mirror) saying that the managements thought they were paying me too much at £2/10/- a job, and suggested that it should be £1/15/- a job, and we were prepared to tell them to stick their £1/15/- you know where! Anyway, Betty and I went down to see them, and finally we decided on £2/2/- per job. We thought it was weak for them to try and chop us down 8/- per job. On the outcome of the negotiation, we actually came out on top. We managed to get Sunday & Monday completely off, with no obligation whatsoever to the Mirror - THIS was worth £15 per week to us as it is now - allowing us to lead a more normal life. If a job comes on Sunday or Monday, they can ring us and if I want to do it, I received a 1/2 or full day engagement for it, or I needn’t do it, and it’s on the Mirror to find and pay someone else.

The Telegraph is still going the same as it was before with the Newcastle supplement. Although there a lot of rumours hanging around about a big free paper coming out by Packer in the Hunter district and Newcastle. The Maitland Mercury has increased its plant and editorial staff 100%. John Richardson is now officially the editor of the Mercury. John Lewis has started a free paper in Hamilton, Islington, Broadmeadow and Adamstown, in his sparetime - only 4 pages - but not BAD. Guess what - Perce Haslam is now writing a few stories for the Ncle(Sunday) Mirror (maybe he must think that the S------T paper has improved (remember what he first said about the Newcastle Sunday Mirror?)...
APPENDIX D
(See chapters 5, 6 and 7)

NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR

GIirls of the Week

front pages

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<th>No of Cols</th>
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*These girls appeared more than once as 'Girls of the Week'
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APPENDIX E (See Chapter 7)

NATIONAL/STATE ADVERTISERS
(NEWCASTLE BRANCHES)
NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR (1959-1961)

Frederick Ash Limited
Astor Leisure Line
Ashley Buckingham Group
BHP
Briscoes Limited
David Jones
Cambridge Credit Corporation Limited
Carmichael Gas Range
Castlemaine Woollen Co Ltd
Channel Master
Civilian Maimed & Limbless Assoc. Xmas Art Union
Civil: Land and Real Estate Investments
Commonwealth Trading Bank
Continental Business Shirts
Dri-Glo
Drymaster
EMI (Aust) Pty Ltd
English Electric Co of Australia
Eta Peanut Butter
The Farmers Rural Co-op Society
J Farren Price
Felix Knives
Fowlers Vacola
Frazers
H W Frost & Son Pty Ltd
Hill’s Hoists
Glen Rossie Scotch Whiskey
Dr Tommy Hicks Evangelist
Healing Thor-Tri-Matic
HMV
Hodges for furniture
Hot Point
James Hardie
IXL Wheelbarrows
Karpet Kraft
Karpet Shampoo
Keatings
Liebman’s Tailors
Maceys
Marcus Clarks
Marie Manners
Marshall Batteries
Metters
Mick Simmons Limited
Mobile Oil
Morris Trucks
National Co-operative Housing
Nightingale Chemical
Nile BVD
Northumberland Insurance Company
Oriental Cavalcade Revue
W H Paling Pty Ltd
Palmers Stores
Pamm Paints
Parade Magazine
Pascol Paints
Paynes-Hustlers
Philips Electrical
Police & Citizens’ Boys Club Art Union
T Pollock & Sons Pty Ltd
Robbialac Paints
Rubber Sales
Sabco Flexrite
Sawtell’s of Sydney
Selley’s
Septic Tanks Pty Ltd
C Sleigh Limited
Smartee
Smith Family Christmas Appeal
Sorboys
Sorlies
Swedish Synteko/Syntax
Televendors Pty Ltd
Tommy Steele
Tracavs
Universal Car Radios
W E Walker Ceramic Tiles
Walton-Sears
Winn’s
Wunderlich
The United Insurance Co Limited

Source: Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 8 November, 1959 to 21 May, 1961
APPENDIX F (See Chapter 7)

LOCAL ADVERTISERS
NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR 1959-61

| Eric Anderson, Electrical               |
| Apex Autos                              |
| Arcade Shoe Salon                       |
| Reg A Baker, sports store               |
| Ralph Bakewell                          |
| Bank Corner Motors                      |
| Beautyrama Salon                        |
| J R Bennett cars                        |
| Beveridges TV Specialists               |
| BGE Lighting                            |
| Bolton Radio & TV Company               |
| Bos Brothers, carpets                   |
| R W Brown & Sons Pty Ltd                |
| Butler & Pryke, produce merchants       |
| Caldewells Jewellers                    |
| Camera Corner                           |
| Cameron’s Television                    |
| The China Shop                          |
| Churchill’s, Hunter Street              |
| City of Newcastle Gas & Coke Company    |
| Civic Radio                             |
| W R Clark & Son, jewellers              |
| Cleaner People                          |
| Compound 6-40 Cough Mixture             |
| Co-operative Home Building              |
| Corneys Radio, Television Repairs       |
| Country Club Cafe, Shoal Bay             |
| Country Club, Shoal Bay                 |
| J A Crockett, builder                   |
| Dawson’s Hardware                       |
| Delore Motors                           |
| Dickens and Carey                       |
| Die Wire Industry                       |
| A. Dodd and Company                     |
| J R Dodd, wine merchant                 |
| Doug Norton Motors                      |
| Drinkwater Bros, builders               |
| D.R. Motors                             |
| Earp Bros Pty Ltd, timber merchants      |
| Edmunds Moir Pty Ltd                    |
| Empress Electric                        |
| L W Everitt, Real Estate                |
| Florida Flats, Shoal Bay                 |
| Frith’s Hardware                        |
H.W. Frost & Sons
Gannix Brick & Coal Pty. Ltd.
Don Gardiner, Master Builder
Geni's Boutique
Gibson Steel Fabrications
Gillies & Appleby Electrical
Reg Glass, tailors
The Great Northern Hotel
Goldsmiths Shoes
Goolds Furniture
Gordon Ross
Greenleaves Studio
Home Builders Plan Service
Hamilton Co-op. Trading Society
Hamilton Timber Merchants
Eric Hardman, carpets
H & H Constructions
Hi-Q Television
Hirecraft, Toronto
H.T.A. Builders and Home Design
Hunter Valley Photographic Industries Assoc
Investigation Services
Invincible Press
Jaybee Engineering
Leo Jensen, gymnasium
Kings Electro Plating Works
Kings for Carpets
Richard King
Korna Car Sales
Latec Investments
Lawton Motors
Lesters Health Centre
Peter Langwill Autos
M Light & Sons, furniture
Linehams Estate Agency
Mackies, furniture
Mac's Meats
Mayfield Motor Cycle Club
Maywal Building
John McGrath Motors
McLeod, Kelso & Lee, motors
McMillan Manufacturing Company
Mater Hospital Children's appeal
A B Meller Investments
Evelyn Mellor Studios
Middleby Bros, builders
Midways Shoe Salon
S & W Miller Radio and Television
Moads Refrigeration and Electrical
Motel Blue Pacific
H Munro, painter
Murray Permanent Building and Investment Company
NESCA
New Blue Moon nightclub
Newcastle and Northern Inquiry Service
Newcastle Automobile Exchange
Newcastle Co-operative Society
Newcastle District Abattoir
Newcastle Freehold Trust
Newcastle Heights Motel
The Newcastle Landscape Company
Newcastle Skating Rink
Newcastle Standard Laundry
Noval Camera Company
Nova Motors
New Holland Blinds
Ronald Newbury Estate Agents
Northern Refrigeration
NSW Motors
Nurseryland
O K Motors
Oldham's Smallgoods
Organization Pty Ltd
Palais Furnishing Company
W A Palett, builders
Parisienne, lingerie
Partridge Engineering
Paul Bros, laundry
Persian Carpets and Rugs
John Peschar, hardware and furnishings
John Philips, tailor
W Pinfold, master builders
W H Powell, floor specialists
Price, Curtiss & Momsen, cars
Radio Station 2HD
Rayberne Studio
Rayfords, music store
Raymond Terrace Olympic Pool
W H Rogers, joiners
Rundles, tailors
Saunders Lighting
TV Saunders & Company
Sea Air Holiday Flats, Nelson Bay
Sea Breeze Hotel, Nelson Bay
Shoal Bay Post Office and General Store
L K Simpson, boating specialist
A F Sinclair, master builder
Sobbs Pty Ltd, furniture and furnishings
Sportsman
Staces Upholsterers
Steggles Pty Ltd
Stewart Hunter Cars
Stewart's Radio and Electrical
Stone Court Nursery
Stone's Federal Hotel
The Store
Studderts
Super Aerial and TV Installation Co
Suttons Tape Recorder Centre
Taylor's Cycles
T E Taylor & Sons
Televys Television Specialists
Mark L Thompson Ltd, enquiry agent
Thorpe Sewing Machines
Turnbull's Land and Homes
Tyrrell's Records
Uhrig & Allen, electrical
N J Ure, real estate
Valiant Motors
Vanity Fair, hairdressers
West End Motor Parts
Werner Installations
Westholme Units
Wilks Refrigerators and TVs
P & R Williams, cars
Wilmore & Randell, solicitors
Wilson's Saws and Hoes
A E Wood, real estate, Pindimar
F L Woodcock, Motors
Mal Woolford's, jewellers
Mal Woolford, jewellers
Worth's TV Centre
Wright Autos
Young & Green car sales

Source: Newcastle Sunday Mirror, 8 November 1959 to 21 May, 1961
**APPENDIX G**
*(See chapters 6 and 7)*

**ORIGINAL NEGATIVES FROM HUNTER PHOTOGRAPHIC AGENCY**
1959 - 1961

**ASSIGNMENTS FOR NEWCASTLE SUNDAY MIRROR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Jobs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>w/e 8.11.59</td>
<td>Wedding, Standing/Robertson, Trinity New Lambton</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wedding Adamstown Methodist - Foot/Throsby</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wedding St. Andrews Presbyterian Church - Mahomed/Sutton</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mrs Ritchie and family</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Blood bank at Royal Newcastle Hospital</td>
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<td>Engaged couple at Gordon Ave, Hamilton</td>
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<td>Wedding Thatcher/Johns</td>
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<td>Beach pictures, Merewether/Nobbys/N’cle Baths</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wedding Kenny/Skehan, Sacred Heart, Hamilton</td>
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<td>Wigmakers</td>
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<td>Newcastle Baths - girls swim race winners</td>
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<td>Meters at “T” intersections</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Illawarra v Newcastle cricket</td>
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<td>Garages handing out free cigars</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Saddington, personality</td>
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<td>Newcastle Wool Sales</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr Armstrong</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Sue Gamble model at Leo Jensens</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Stockton Surf carnival</td>
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<td>Beresfield Newsagent - Beresfield, town without a policeman</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| w/e 15.11.59| Margaret Mead and Joan Clifford playing squash at Newcastle Squash centre. |
|            | Wedding St Peters C of E, Ray/Malcolm                                 |
|            | Wedding St Phillips C of E, Waratah, Partland/Buckley                 |
|            | Mrs Reg Turner                                                       |
|            | Tatts Club Cup Newcastle Races & Grandad Jockey                       |
|            | Dr Vince Shepherd and his dutch organ                                 |
|            | Smiles in rain, girl heat winners at Baths                            |
|            | Wedding Merewether Methodist - Stevenson/Post                         |
|            | Hen at West Wallsend that laid square egg                            |
|            | Wedding Hamilton Wesley, Prout/McCormack                             |
|            | Fencing at WEA                                                       |
|            | Ballet girl off to England - Margaret Akerman                         |
|            | Toronto rail crossing - story and personalities                      |
|            | Escaped convict Simmonds captured at Kurri                           |
|            | Bill Reay, Harbour Master at Nobbys                                   |
Father Cody’s funeral & Les Darcy’s brother
Social pics at Newcastle races

w/e 22.11.59

Hamilton Wesley wedding, Wild/Mizen
Nobbys Surf carnival
Bowls singles
Athletics at National Park
First grade cricket at Wickham Oval
Greater Newcastle Premier Club swimming races at Newcastle Baths
Wedding at Sacred Heart, Hamilton - Brown/Tyfee
Wedding St Andrews Presbyterian, Nele - King/James
Wedding at Adamstown Methodist
Dr Allsop WEA
Alderman Skelton
Fox as pet at Maitland & boy “Rodney” with white rabbit
Man who received 6,000 votes
Stephanie Husak - beach pics

w/e 29.11.59

Cutting cake at reception - Barret/Harie wedding,
St Peters C of E, Hamilton
Wedding St Columbanis Catholic, Power/Wilshaw
Wedding at Sacred Heart - Edgar/McMillan
Wedding St. Marks C of E, Islington - Butler/Watson
Wedding Adamstown Methodist - Smith/Johnston
Cricket at Waratah Oval
Wedding St Johns Catholic, Lambton - Ridgeway/Hartcher
Race finish, Newcastle races
Athletics at National Park
Bowls at Wickham
Heat winners at Newcastle Baths
Womens Basketball - Mens Rules - Tangoes v Deltones
Basketball presentation at Mara Lynne
Christmas Tree festival preparation at Bar Beach
Nola Mears - Merewether space girl
WEA lessons to New Lambon housewives
Golf at Merewether
Toronto’s smallest police station
Parking meters story
Ballet girls from Sorlies at Stockton Beach

w/e 6.12.59

Mrs Daniels, 92 yrs, appendicitis at Mater
Baby for sale pix
Smith Family packing Christmas toys and food
Speers Point baths
“Living Doll” on Christmas tree
House removal - Railway St Merewether “Miss Stayput”
Micc McNab of Merewether - social
Beach pix - Miss Black
YWCA girls judo class
Wedding Friday night Trinity Church New Lambton
Lorraine Bailey/Jones
District Cricket at Harker Oval - Waratah/Mayfield v New Lambton
Bowls Newcastle South
Golf at BHP Links
Boy in hospital, nail through leg - Steven Birt
Wedding St Augustine’s Merewether - Bailey/Webster
Wedding at Sacred Heart - Arlitsch/Grys
Wedding Hamilton Presbyterian - Gillian/Zok
Wedding All Saints CofE, New Lambton - Joice/Fox
Ald Purdue voting at RSL Hall, Mayfield
Bambi, Sorlies and Sue Hills, beach pics
Children at Wickham Kindergarten making Christmas toys
Cooks Hill surf carnival

w/e 13.12.59

Miss Sawyer, Hunter Valley Research Foundation
Basketball Tangees v Paramount
Girders for new Wallsend hospital rusting
Beach pics - Rita Clarke
Crippled boy bronze medallion lifesaving at Newcastle Baths
9 months Paul Newey - hot weather pix
Golf at Merewether
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sportsground - Rosebuds v Hamilton
440 yds races athletics at National Park
District cricket at Harker Oval
Newcastle Races
Bowls at Hamilton
Wedding at St Peters CofE Hamiton - Foster/Green
Wedding St Lawrence O’Toole Church, Broadmeadow - Shepherd/Kennedy
Wedding St Philip’s Presbyterian, Watt St - Tapp/Wilson
Friday night wedding St Peters, Hamilton - Leary/Wilmott
Council free parking area and gates
Beach, surf etc
Turkey farm, Mr Brown, Mt Hutton
Girl in Wallsend Hospital - new breathing machine
Lady Alderman, Mrs Martin

w/e 20.12.59

District cricket at Waratah and cricket personality
Bowls presentation at Newcastle City Bowling Club
Athletics - Men and Women at National Park
Mr Ron Buckley, social service story, Waratah
Beaumont Park dog course races
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground (Arthur Boswell)
Swimming races at Newcastle Baths
Tennis at District Park
Engagement - Rose-Maree Thompson/Phil Billings
Mrs Wicken & son Phillip of Kurri - leukemia story
Peter & Pat Minter - bantam pet story at Maitland
Santa at Ells books store with kiddies
“Ruthean” Vic Tolls boat, Hobart yacht race
Wedding at Adamstown Methodist - Davis/Bates
Wedding at St Andrews, Mayfield - Must/Medley
Wedding at St Andrews Presbyterian, Laman Street, Inglis/Foreman
Friday night wedding at St Peters, Hamilton - Jones/Wilson
12 yr old girl at Bellbird dying with disease
Mrs Mason and her dog (social pic)
Mr Gordon Booth, bowler at Kotara
Grass in park at Shortland
Line up at Hexham rail crossing
Dangerous cross streets at Junction, result of new highway

w/e 27.12.59
Mrs Jill Foster (social)
New anti-Communist candidate, Mr Col Shearer
Man who goes 1,000 miles from Newcastle every holiday
Mr Fryer, man who poisoned dog
Margaret Whitson, beach pix (girl winking)
Golf at Merewether
Newcastle v Sydney cricket match at Harker Oval
Wedding Sacred Heart Church, Hamilton - Lyle/Gale
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley - Wallace/Williams
Wedding St Johns Catholic Church - Reynolds/Howland
Bowls at Newcastle City
Newcastle races - Boxing Day - personality Jack Skelton
Beach pix - Carol Lethbridge
New alderman, Newcastle City Council - Mr. Wymer
Floods in Newcastle streets
Trunk line girls Newcastle Post Office - New Years Story

w/e 3.1.60
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Tyler/Pugh
Cathedral Wedding - Thompson/McEwan
Corpus Christi Wedding - Hayes/Doran
St Mary’s wedding - Cole/Shean
Golf at Merewether
Athletics at National Park
Cricket at Harker Oval - New Lambton v Canberra
Bowls at National Park
Dog coursing at Beaumont Park
Mr West, Golf Secretary, Merewether
Panto pix - Elizabeth Ford
House moved at Morpeth
Miss Parbury, hospital almoner
Park at Birmingham Gardens cut by Council
Boy who took first step at 18 yrs - Newcastle Baths
Baby in bucket at Belmont South - Kerry Whitaker
Pics at RSPCA Wallsend - Large litters, dog and lamb

w/e 10.1.60
Wedding St George’s CofE Ham St - McCloskey/Cochrane
Wedding All Saints CofE Belmont - Tozer/Clachan
NJC races at Newcastle Races
Summer tennis competition at District Park
Bowls at Merewether
C& S Cricket at No 2 Sportsground
Wedding Corpus Christi Church, Waratah - Milne/Tozer
Wedding St Peters Catholic, Stockton - Kelly/Robinson
Greater Newcastle amateur athletics swimming club races
District cricket at Waratah Oval
Butler children of New Lambton given horse for Xmas
Athletics at National Park
Mr and Mrs Mansfield - luxury tent at Belmont Park
Golf at Newcastle Golf Club
Building that cannot be sold - David Cohens
Informal dress at Sunstrip - Marguritte Colletti at Capri Cafe, Shoal Bay
Iris Nelmes, secretary of Actors Equity
Beach girls - Lynette and gidget girl
Sunstrip series at Nelsons Bay and Shoal Bay
Equipment damaged at Merewether - rescue in surf by Reg Gazzard
Mr Burges - Town Clerk
Mr Baddeley - City Engineer
Alderman Edwards - personality pics
Marilyn Burns, swimmer
Neglected Stockton Beach
Connie, the Nelson Bay hospital cow whose milk was stolen

w/e 17.1.60
Wedding Christ Church Cathedral - Morris/Waters
Wedding St Marks CofE Islington - Piper/Trelfo
Wedding St Peters CofE Hamilton - Short/Middlemas
District cricket at Wickham Oval
Dog races at Beaumont Park
Police boys club races at Newcastle Baths
Golf at Newcastle Golf Club
Wedding St. Mary’s Catholic Church - Deane/Toohey
Pennant Bowls at National Park
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground
Much travelled Harrison family
Boy from Kenya travelling around Australia
Council repaired Dixon Park Surf Club’s ladies dressing sheds
Strike meeting at State Dockyard
Statues at Cultural Centre
Recreation centre for old age pensioners at Civic Park
Miss Coughtree - artist
Newcastle Surf Carnival
Sunstrip Girl competition - negatives sent to Sydney

w/e 24.1.60
Greater Newcastle Ladies Amateur Swimming Club races at Newcastle Baths
Garden Club presidents
Jan and Bruce Atcheson
Rat of the Week - garbage tins stolen at Elderly Citizens Centre
Wedding Christ Church Cathedral - MacKinnon/Folas
Bowls at National Park
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground
Womens Athletics at National Park
Wedding St Joesphs The Junction - Mason/Curley
Wedding St Columbanus Catholic Church - Fox/Williams
Wedding St Peters CofE, Hamilton - Gay/Page
Girl who witnessed new cult - carving initials into flesh
Mr Moore examines appointment card for dead mother
High grass outside shop premises at Maitland
District cricket at Waratah Oval
Novelty “Bisque” par competition at Merewether
Golf Club
Races at Newcastle
Wally Prigg, famous footballer now bowler
Sergeant Symons, Greta police
“Quick-mud” at Heshbon Street, Gateshead
Junior Sunstrip Girl 1976? Elizabeth Anderson
Sunstrip Girl competition negatives sent to Sydney

w/e 31.1.60

Chinese girl from “Oriental Cavalcade”
Chinese man who was naturalised
New garbage bin for Elderly Citizens Centre
Bowls at Hamilton
Lake Macquarie Amateur Golf Championships Belmont
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sportsground
Greyhound racing at Beaumont Park
Athletics at National Park
Greater Newcastle Amateur Ladies Swimming Club
races at Newcastle Baths
Wedding at St Paul’s Stockton - Hunt/Burt
Wedding St Johns CofE, Parry St - Alcorn/Whitaker
Wedding St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Laman St - Wilson/Fraser
Sunstrip Girl competition negatives sent to Sydney
Wedding at Holy Family, Merewether - Flanagan/Taylor
Northumberland Championships at District Park Tennis
Fijian Cricket Match at No 1 Sportsground
Nelson Bay supplement - Shoal Bay series
Mrs Duncan - marlin fisherwoman
Newcastle Sunstrip competitin negatives sent to Sydney

w/e 7.2.60

Greyhound meeting 1st Adamstown Stakes
Athletics - Peter Langley, High Jump
Barry Lane, 16, of Broadmeadow (Caves Beach
Sunstrip Competition)
Newcastle South Surf Carnival
Parking Meters
Men in Northern Sport - Personality Syd Grant
Wedding Waratah Catholic - Parker/Bendeich
Wedding Sacred Heart, Hamilton - McLean/Dobb
Wedding St Augustine’s CofE Merewether - Saunders/Peattie
Wedding St Andrews CofE, Mayfield -
Stephenson/Postlewhaite
Woman storekeeper with sunstrip poster
Woman with sunstrip posters over cup of tea
Sisters meet at Young Wallsend after 50 years
Golf at Merewether
Police Boys swimming
Greater Newcastle Ladies Swimming at Newcastle Baths
Under 16 C&S Cricket at Adamstown -
Adamstown RSL v West Wallsend
Mr Les Ford, pilot and taxidriver
Bowls Newcastle City
Mrs Jones, pottery maker
Man shakes fist at tow truck
Girl rock and roll fan, Waratah West
Bart Richardson, secretary NDBA
Sunstrip Girl competition negatives sent to Sydney

w/e 14.2.60
Intersection at Parkway Avenue
Hamilton Presbyterian wedding - Kellett/Bone
Wedding St Andrews C of E Mayfield - Genders/Mehan
Novacastrain Athletics at National Park
District Cricket at Wickham Oval
Pennant Bowls at Wickham
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground
Ncle Baths swimming races
Golf at Merewether
Tatts Cup at Newcastle Races - race finish & winning jockey
Tennis at District Park
“Figs Club” at Bar Beach
President of Figs Society
Paddy Ryan retires
Personality Peter Kirkham
Personalities Mrs Sutherland and Mrs Richards painters
Harold Partridge at Wickham Kindergarten
Wedding at St Therese’s Catholic Church - Botham/Bennett
Wedding St Marks C of E - Marchant/Anderson
Sunstrip Girl competition negatives sent to Sydney

w/e 21.2.60
Miss Peg Birtles, YWCA
“Rusty” Collie dog who saved woman’s life
Mrs Martin, schoolteacher
“Rusty” collie dog hero - Sunday Mirror gives $1 for feed
New prize from Goolds for Sunstrip winner
Top Men of Northern Sport - Cyril Burke
Don Cox, competing with Police Boys at Ncle Baths
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground
Tennis at District Park - Summer teams competition
Golf at Merewether
2nd grade district cricket at Waratah Oval
Bowls at Mayfield West Bowling club
Athletics at National Park
Wedding St Peters C of E Hamilton - Dunkley/Newman
Wedding Sacred Heart Church - Breen/Doyle
Wedding Church of the Holy Family, Merewether - Bousfield/Anderson
Wedding St Johns C of E, Parry St - O'Malley/McCutcheon
NJC Committee members at Nele Races
Miss E Towler, Show Secretary
Sunstrip Girl competition negatives sent to Sydney

w/e 28.2.60
Professor Newton-John at Nele University College
Sunstrip finalists at Newcastle Show
Trotting at Newcastle Show
Margaret Hayles - Engineering student
Ron Buckley at his new job
Johnny Delarno - Delmore Motors Show
Woman with 1894 calendar
Wedding at Sacred Heart Church - Doran/Carroll
Wedding at St Philips C of E Waratah - Sharp/Roberts
Wedding at Sacred Heart Church - Drain/Hilton
Wedding at St George's, Ham Sth - Rowland/Holmes
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground
Greater Nele Amateur Ladies Swimming Club races at baths
Tennis finals at District Park
Athletics at National Park
District Cricket at No 1 Sports Ground
Golf at Steelworks Golf Club
No 1 Pennants - Newcastle City v Stockton
A boy gives winning advice to his collie dog at Nele Show
Mr PH George and his prize winning onions
William Bell - Top Men of Northern Sport
Les Miller and his bride to-be
Mrs Bodi, Hungarian

w/e 6.3.60
Alderman Bates
Golf at Merewether
Det.Sgt James leaves Nele Court for last time
Sunstrip finalist, Norma Aylett weds
Veteran car for rally at Katoomba
Susan McLeod, child actress
Swimming championships at Nele Baths
Sunstrip girls at Great Northern Hotel
Mrs Stocker, buyer (social story)
Bowls personalities
Wedding at Mayfield Methodist - Kissell/Richards
Wedding at Merewether Methodist - Herbert/Hepplewhite
Wedding at Adamstown Methodist - Hadley/Taylor
Wedding at Trinity Methodist, New Lambton - Cox/King
Maiden Handicap at Nele races
Record walk from Sydney to Newcastle
Marching girls team
Mr McDonald, renegade Shire Councillor
Master Bowls finals at Newcastle City Green
Amenities at North Stockton Beach
Margaret Masters, child actress
Baby Toni has 10 grandparents
Winner of $15,000 lottery
Sunstrip judging at Great Northern Hotel
Rehearsal of judging Sunstrip girls
Bomb at Medowie School
Mrs Crossland’s Aust Terriers Puppies
Presentation by Managing Director, Mr Scotford to beach girls at Merewether Beach
Gold at BHP Links, Shortland
Wedding at All Saints C of E New Lambton - Hallam/Day
Interstate surf carnival at Merewether Beach
Wedding at St Marys, Ncle - Tewkesbury/ Joyce
Wedding at Birm Gardens Methodist - Wells/ Hungerford
Athletics at National Park - Mens/Womens
Miss Sunstrip 1960 and Mr Scotford presenting sash
Swimming at Ncle Baths
Veteran Bowlers at Wallsend
Jan Pardy, San Clemente School
Mr and Mrs Price, social story
Bowls personalities
‘Council made’ track at Kahibah
Complaints about industry at Adamstown
Gloria Wright surfboat and Ron Wright story
Mr Frazer, estate agent/author
Mr and Mrs Leonard Price, travelling Americans
Policeman who saved lives at night in surf
Wedding at St John’s Pres Church, War - Devenshire
Overcrowding on Stockton Punt

Mr Doyle and Mr Buxton at Tatts Club
Bishop Hewsdon CoF E Bishop of Newcastle
Mrs Purser, Children’s Library
Baby Health Centre, King St, Ncle
Steggles Supplement, interiors and exteriors
Toilets on wharf - stopwork threatened
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Hughes/Waterman
Hamilton Presbyterian wedding - Jones/Campbell
Wedding Trinity Methodist, New Lambton - Lawson/Evans
Mrs Moore - surfboat left in front yard
Hole in the road in Laman St, Ncle
Steggles supplement - personalities
Dr Tommy Hicks
Bowling personalities
Mr Carpenter (Top Men in Northern Sport)
Mr Parker (weather man)
No 1 Pennants Bowls at Hamilton Bowling Club
Swimming Championships at Merewether Baths
Golf at Steelworks Golf Links
C&S Cricket Semi-Finals at No 2 Sports Ground
Novocastrian Athletics at National Park
Race finish and personality at Ncle Races
District Cricket Finals at No 1 Sports Ground
“C” Grade Tennis Championships at District Park
Dixon Park surf carnival

w/e 27.3.60

Wedding Mayfield Methodist - Davis/Say
District Cricket Final at No 1 Sports Ground
No 6 Pennants at National Park Bowling Green
Dogs at Beaumont Park
Tennis at District Park
Myer Park athletic championships at National Park
C&S Cricket final at No 2 Sports Ground
Swimming races at Newcastle Baths
Mr Alex Cameron - Top Men of Northern Sport
Bishop Moyes visits two hotels
Tommy Steele presenting bouquet to Dawn Flanagan
Jantzen parade of new seasons swimsuits
Copy of Steggles building at Beresfield
Derek St John and his bike ‘Sparkle Plenty’
Flooded Milroy Street, Swansea
Mr Noakes and his service station on Maitland Road
Mrs Dingle (social)
Mrs deBoer - Dutch women from Raymond Terrace
Dave Brown - footballer
Shiplowers Society with cups given to them by shipping lines
Golf at Merewether
Hamilton Wesley wedding - Anderson/McVie
St Andrews Presbyterian wedding - Andrews/Hill
Wedding St Peters CofE Hamilton - Richards/Wright
Mrs Bennett wore wedding dress on 50th anniversary
Eve Duncan, jockeys banker
Wedding St Philips CofE Waratah - Elliott/Smith

w/e 3.4.60

Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Anderson/Allsop
Wedding Trinity Methodist - Halliday/Johnson
Wedding Hamilton Presbyterian - McDougall/Jones
Wedding St Mary’s Tighes Hill - Lee/Diamond
Swimming at Newcastle Baths
Golf at Merewether
Races at Newcastle race course
‘A’ Grade athletics championships at National Park
Rugby League, Harker Oval Toronto v West
Mr Molloly - Top Men in Northern Sport
Newsagent at Windale
Singers with their babies - Estelle Prior
Smoke over city
Stockton punt series
Congestion at Steel Street markets
Roslyn Jones and her letter from Malaya
Testimonials at the Tommy Hicks meeting
Barbara Woodworth - Mirror Girl of the Week

w/e 10.4.60

Mrs Robinson with the Tommy Steele show
Tattooist - Les Lee
Const Ken Morris and his wife
Bob Whitelaw - Top men of Northern Sport
Norma Aylett in Goold’s supplement
Marilyn Froome - girl of the week
Wedding Mayfield Baptist - Musgrave/Marshall
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Roach/Pascoe
Pennant Bowls at Newcastle City
Golf at Merewether
Woolf family at NSW Motors
Norma Aylett ‘Sunstrip Winner’ at Great Northern Hotel
Bottle collection at Stockton
St Aloysius Girls competing for bronze medallion
Basketball march past at National Park
Rugby League at Wickham
Dog coursing at Beaumont Park
Const Ken Morris - fought shark with spear gun
Singer Joan Holmes with baby
Fire at Mayfield
£30,000 lottery winner
Badminton winter competition on ‘new look’ courts
Mr and Mrs Kent and baby - 11 grandparents
Paralysed boy ‘off to Rome’
Mrs Biggins (social), wife of University professor

w/e 16.4.60

Races at Newcastle
Soccer at Adamstown
Easter Tournament at Merewether Golf Club
Easter carnival at National Park Bowling Club
Bernadette Mackaway - teaching ballet to deaf pupil
Veterans at War Memorial Home at Bolton Point
Mirror Sunstrip girls - finalists
Wedding at All Saints CoE Belmont - Wilkinson/Twyford
Children with easter eggs and bunnies
Cracks in wall at Kotara
Soccer personalities
Baby with 12 grandparents at Pelican
Mr and Mrs Ron Wright
Errol Moyle with his uncle - artificial legs in family
Young golfer struck by lightning at Belmont
Wedding St Andrews Presbyterian - Bush/Bond
Wedding St Andrews Presbyterian - Les/Lorna
Wedding St Peters CoE Hamilton - Johnson/Wood
Wedding St Augustine’s CoE Merewether - Baldwin/Holme
Wedding Baptist Tabernacle - Hutton/Disch
Wedding St Andrew’s Mayfield - Wade/Lochrin

w/e 23.4.60

Double murder at East Maitland - baby survivor
Wedding Lockyer Street Catholic - O’Keefe/Black
Wedding St Lawrence O’Toole,B/meadow - Spinks/Hendry
Wedding Church of the Holy Family, Merewether - Craig/McNaughton
Wedding Christ Church Cathedral - Schrader/Kimble
Basketball at National Park
Soccer at Adamstown
Hockey march past at National Park
Val Elloy - Mirror Girl of the Week
Ellen O’Connell, dramatic art
Shane - dog who is allowed to bark
John Cook given football by Delmore Motors
Kevin Lee, survivor of Stockton disaster
Newcastle woman doctor appointed to Iran
Miss Christian, YWCA
Scouts Firelighting competition at Hamilton
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground

w/e 30.4.60

Girl of the Week - Dianne Brough
Wedding St George CofE Hamilton - Lane/Sharpe
Wedding St Andrews CofE Mayfield - Muller/Smith
May Day preparations
Wedding St John the Baptist, Mayfield-Marshall/Edwards
Women parachuter trainees at Williamstown
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground
Man who found head in harbour (Mr Ramsden)
Hockey at National Park
James Kirby - trucks and interior office pix (supplement)
Golf at Merewether
Rugby Union at No 2 Sports Ground
Miss Griffen - travelling puppets

w/e 7.5.60

Wedding Tarro-Beresfield Baptist Church - Leayn/Ralton
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - King/Butcher
Wedding St Andrew’s Presbyterian -Raglan/Fitzsimmons
Wedding All Saints CofE New Lambton - Whittle/McQuillan
Rugby Union supplement - NSW v Qld
Basketball at National Park
Dog races at Beaumont Park
Golf at Steelworks Golf Course
Rugby League at Wickham Oval
Rugby Union - New England v Newcastle
Mrs Sommerville - seeing eye dog story
Rats from rubbish dump at Gateshead (Macquarie St)
Bridge at Jesmond never completed
Miss Smith (social worker)
Alsatian dogs to guard car yards
Baby born while husband locked up with jury
Marjorie Gilbert, Highland Dancing Australian champion
Opening money boxes for Mothers Day presents
Iris Nelmes, May Queen

w/e 14.5.60

American sailor visiting woman friend after 14 years
Boy with kite fell into quarry
American sailor with his fiancee - given permission to arrange marriage
Girls come to town to meet American sailors
Speech training and deportment classes
Dianne Carling - Mirror Girl of the Week
St Vincent di Paul Society
Australian Silky Terrier with broken leg owned by
Mrs Johnson
Miss Cunningham, social
Mrs Stucky, New Lambton Hts - social
Preview of summer fashions
Platts Estate series
Royal Newcastle Hospital
Wedding Tighes Hill Catholic - Fox/Callaghan
Wedding Sacred Heart - Bernasconi/Kearney
Wedding St Peters CofE - Vercoe/Hartley
Races at Newcastle
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground
Soccer at Adamstown
Junior ‘A’ grade basketball - Booragul High v Hunter
High 4
Australian Rules at Islington Oval
Harbour series
Wedding St Andrews Presbyterian - Greenwood/Cummings

w/e 21.5.60
Newcastle v France Rugby League
Wedding St Paul’s Maitland - Capper/Lawrie
Wedding Carrington Catholic - Bird/Morris
Wedding St Andrews, Laman St - Carter/Masters
Wedding St Marys, Newcastle - Kelly/Hudson
Mrs Davey interviews Sunstrip & Mirror Girl of the Week girls for Miss Australia Quest
Young girl model
Mirror Girl of the Week - Beverley Dangar
Mirror Girls of the Week receive jobs from published pix
Geoff Blanche of Wickham - boy who saved dog
Top men in northern sport - Mr Curran, West Wallsend
Helen Rabenau (social)
Club members building fencing Adamstown soccer field
Womens basketball at National Park
Junior Aust Rules at Islington
Pennant Golf at Merewether

w/e 28.5.60
Peter Sparkes - art exhibition in Sydney
Wharf Road parked cars emergency - tidal wave scare
Top Men of Northern Sport - Tom Maguire
Quarry at North Lambton where kids eat dumped fruit
Erosion at Swansea Heads
Wedding St Therese’s Catholic, New Lambton - Mulherin/Bland
Wedding St Georges CofE, Hamilton - Murnane
Wedding St Marys Catholic - Defina/Sheppard
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - Toronto v North
Basketball at National Park
Danish actress Mrs. DeCartier (social)
Mud from drains in Civic Hotel
Mr and Mrs Aldag of Cardiff give dogs for seeing eye dog centre
Jeanette Cranny - Mirror Girl of the Week
Explosion in Japanese ships
Wedding St George’s CofE Hamilton - Baker/Gardner
Road dug up at Mary Street, Jesmond
Miss Davey teaches Watt St mental home children at YWCA
Civic Hotel personality - Ray Mahoney
Sydney yacht towed into Newcastle Harbour

w/e 4.6.60
Brownies give chairs to old peoples homes
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - Central v Wests
Junior Aust Rules at Islington
Golf and wet weather at Merewether
Theatrical couple marry at Hamilton
Wedding Hamilton Presbyterian - Doherty/Thomas
Wedding Adamstown Catholic - Sparke/Webber
Wedding St Peters CofE Hamilton - Stanborough/Robins
‘Little Toot’ - small vehicular ferry - Stockton to Newcastle
Ice hockey match - Australian Lions v International Bankers (ice skating supplement)
Ice rink and skating personalities - ice skating supplement
‘View from Bridge’ couple to marry
Mrs Rosell - social
Woman and cat on world yacht cruise
Mirror Girl of the Week - Jann Voysey of New Lambton

w/e 11.6.60
Wedding Lambton Calvary Baptist - Cater/McCormack
Wedding Hamilton Presbyterian - Jarrett
Wedding St Andrews CofE Mayfield - Smith/Southern
Wedding St Andrews Presbyterian - Schuck/Hall
Mr Cameron, Charlestown, looks after 7 children
Lord Mayor’s car
Mirror Girl wins special part in “South Pacific”
Beryl Boardman (social)
Mary St, Jesmond waterfall
Mrs Buckham, Hamilton- orange grew on lemon tree
Mrs Clack with exhibition painting in aid of Dr Bernardo Homes
Mr Bond - Top Men of Northern Sport
£1,000 offer for kiddie Sharon and Mr Little
State Junior hockey at National Parkl
Rugby League No 1 Sports Ground - North v South
Golf at Merewether
Mrs Anlezark wife of £6,000 lottery winner now on stealing charges
Mrs Rodway seeking £16 million estate
Flooding in Baird Street Hamilton
Lesley Harrison - Mirror Girl of the Week
Soccer at Adamstown - Merewether v Lake Macquarie
Wedding at St Andrews CofE Mayfield - Baker/Hancock

w/e 18.6.60
Merewether Methodist wedding - Agland/Moore
Wedding St Marks CofE Islington - Ch ilcott/Boyd
Wedding St Columban’s Catholic Adamstown-Yeark/Knight
Mrs Shiner - wife of American major at Williamtowm
Mr Lowe - social
Car and fire engine smash at Hamilton
3 yr old soccer player, Christopher Koosman, Jesmond
Mr Docking at Art Gallery
University girls run to Sydney for cause of autonomy
University students take round street petition for autonomy
Rugby League, No 1 Sports Ground - North v Maitland
Soccer at Adamstown - Adamstown v Lake Macquarie
Blind bowlers practise at National Park
Top Sportsman in North - Mr Russell
Miss Joyce Williams (social)
“Rastus” - Mrs Coburn’s budgie
Wedding St Columbans Catholic, Mayfield - McHenny/Milso
Mirror Girl of the Week - Rosalind Harris

w/e 25.6.60
Wedding Christ Church Cathedral - Roberts/Hall
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - Maitland v West
Mr and Mrs. Reynolds off on ‘honeymoon’ trip to USA with stud horses
Pam Withers - champion Newcastle fencer
Child custody case - Mr and Mrs Downey at Ncle Court
Smith Family expands
Little family reunited
Little family reunited - Sharon gets her mother back
Mr Docking with Dobell painting
Engagement - Mr John Glass to Israeli woman soldier
Wedding St Mary’s Catholic - Remington/Ray
Headmaster at Raymond Terrace High School, Mr Hodge makes movie film
Mr Tickle - 40 years in RSPCA
Wedding Wallsend CofE - Streeter/Warby

w/e 2.7.60
Wedding St Mary’s Catholic - Zeenus/Roessner
Wedding CofE West Wallsend - Burton/Pritchard
Wedding Sacred Heart Church - Maloney/Robson
Rugby League - North v Central
New shopping centre at Rutherford
Post Office at Windale
Mrs Cochrane - pensioners living in shocking conditions in Scott Street, Newcastle
Dixon family of Maitland - family and son worked together in same firm

w/e 9.7.60
Wedding Mayfield Methodist - Bowd/Jones
Wedding St Pauls CofE Maitland - Lawrence/Brown
Wedding Mayfield Catholic - Feeney/Farrell
Mrs Blanch - lady station attendant at Whitebridge
Miss Fisher - new almoner at Royal Ncle Hospital
Dawsons Feature - Personalities
Dawsons Feature - Bank and Lottery Office Mr Dawson and Mr Pearce
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - North v Lakes
Car port Valencia St Mayfield ordered to be pulled down by Council
Mr Holland of Farley - made iron lung for dog
Stephen McClung with cat and white micer
Dawsons Feature - section of stop, TV, glassware etc

w/e 16.7.60
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Huxley/Baker
Wedding Tighes Hill Catholic - Broad/Price
Wedding St Andrews CofE Mayfield - Willis/Gibson
Miss Hewsdon - girl who made own furniture
Old age pensioners co-op, Mayfield
ABC TV Childrens hour personalities at Nele Childrens Library
Suzanne Crosland - 5 title winner in badminton
Catholic missionary sisters off to New Guinea
Halt signs at Dent St and Newcastle Rd, North Lambton
Dawson feature - ‘Pirate on Treasure Chest’
Small room at Commonwealth Employment Centre
Wedding Adamstown Methodist- Hutchinson/Taylor
Rugby League - West v Lakes
Clocks in Newcastle not on time

w/e 23.7.60
Mr Whalan - “Champion of Trees”
Wedding Sacred Heart, Hamilton - Rodgers/Kane
Wedding Mayfield Methodist - Kelson/Clayton
Rugby League No 1 Sports Ground - West v Kurri

w/e 30.7.60
“Funland” - fun parlour, Hunter St
Sisters send Nele Sunday Mirror to brother in navy
Wedding St Peters CofE Hamilton - Cameron/Ferrier
Wedding Hamilton Presbyterian - Moncrieff/Moran
Wedding Baptist Tabernacle - Marks/Prentice
Mr and Mrs R Wright back from world trip
Mrs Boyson, YWCA - social
Elderly Newcastle couples marry - Mr and Mrs Street,
Mr and Mrs Webber
Elderly couple marry at St Johns CofE Cooks Hill -
Mr and Mrs Street
Boy who went to gaol for day at Nele Court
Mr Wright - man who found gold
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - Cessnock v Central

w/e 6.8.60
Mr J Aird, Sec of Paraplegic Society
Wedding St Peters Cof E Hamilton - Daly/Wilson
Rugby League No 1 Sportsground
Mrs McKim trying to locate her son
Wedding St Phillips CofE Waratah - Murname/Trow
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Smith/Howe
Anti-supermarket sign at Hamilton
Parking signs and parking booklet
No meters in front of Water Board offices in Hunter Street
Motor Show feature - veteran cars and TQ pix and copies
Motor Show feature - Mr Wain, Secretary of Nele TQ Club
Motor Show feature - Hamilton Apex committee members and personalities
Motor Show feature - pix of Mercedes 220

w/e 13.8.60
2 miles of wire rope leaves Auswire Rope Works
Cessnock v West Rugby League semi final
Girl who lost horse at New Lambton
Mr Irwin - fowls killed by dogs
Smith Family receive summer dresses
Man who escaped train-car smith in Wallsend Hospital
Boy saved from burning cot
Mrs Martin - social
Wedding St Georges CofE Ham Sth - Procter/Ingersole
Wedding Sacred Heart Church - Wallace/Hughes
Wedding St Johns CofE Cooks Hill - Slater/Jackson

w/e 20.8.60
Bar Beach presentation - Cooks Hill Surf Club receive
Sunday Mirror surf reel
Govt Tourist Bureau - ‘Point to Public Convenience”
Johnny Devlin at Co-op Store
Kidnapping hoax (Mr Vercoe) arriving at Court
One of Australia’s youngest car owners- Judy Jensen of Belmont
Motor Show - Apex Club Hamilton
Hypnotism story at Windale
Mrs Smith YWCA music teacher
Pre Olympic athletics at Newcastle Sportsground
Man falls 50 feet off ship at floating dock
Rugby League semi-final - North v Maitland No 1 Sportsground
Wedding St Augustine’s CofE Merewether - Murray/Apitz
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Steele/Baber
Wedding Holy Family, Merewether - Jarvis/McEneaney
Mrs Young and family of Merewether - social pix
Wedding Tighes Hill Catholic - Reay/Tearl

w/e 27.8.60
Mrs Moon, social
Mr Ron Wright gives another surf boat
“These dogs will die unless you help” series at RSPCA
Rugby League final - Maitland v Cessnock at No 1 Sportsground
Wedding St Andrews Laman St - Allsopp/Lobacht
Wedding St Augustine’s Merewether - Bishop/Clark
Wedding Laman St Presbyterian - Hughes/Parker
Kookaburra rescued from 60ft TV aerial
Make-up to match hats - social pix
Mr Ruggero, solicitor for Vercoe - kidnapping hoax case
Barbara Woodworth - first Mirror Girl of the Week
Sydney Rock ‘n’ Roll stars visit Rayfords
Dirt from train on cars in Hunter St
Wedding Mayfield Catholic Church St -
Griffiths/Tolhurst
Mrs Watson, War Widows secretary

w/e 3.9.60

Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Wivell/Price
Mrs Probyn, English opera singer
Fashion parades at Nele Co-op Store
Gary Hooper presented with Olympic kit
Children’s Arts Festival at Toronto School
Tape recording from Formosa - Mr Cullen of Carrington
Dutchman whose wife injured by propellor, wishes to thank Australians
North under 10 yrs grand final winners
Boys rescued from cliff
Gary Whitmore - horse in pound story
Wendy Smiles - Mirror Girl of the Week
Wedding Sacred Heart Hamilton - Vial/Bailey
Wedding St John’s Catholic, Lambton - Pearce/Davis
Fire at Carrington - Kelly family
Flora Grubb’s happy parents when Flora acclaimed world champion in highland dancing
Dinner dance at the Great Northern
Rugby League 2nd grade grand final - Maitland v West
Rugby Union finals - Wanderers v Mayfield East
Spring Fashion parade at Cliff House in aid of Belmont unit of Crippled Children’s Assc
Ald Terry refunds money to Gary Whitmore for horse
Boy first to get Brutus the boxer from RSPCA home
Wedding at St Philips Presbyterian, Watt St - Allan/Phillips

w/e 10.9.60

‘Dog’ star in “Wizard of Oz”
Wedding All Saints CofE New Lambton -
Fisher/Lean
Wedding Merewether Methodist - Gould/Harper
Wedding St Peters Catholic, Stockton - Collins/Cook
Rugby Union Grand Final at No 2 Sportsground
Dickens and Carey supplement - exteriors
Dickens and Carey supplement - presentation to first customer and personalities of directors
Dickens and Carey supplement - girls tea room and dolls display
Soccer at Adamstown
Wedding at St Therese, New Lambton -
Neylan/Sokolowski
Newcastle Cup and Flying Handicap at Nele Races
Miss Betty Battle, social pix
Miss McGuinness, Girl of the Week
Therapist at Royal Newcastle Hospital - off to America
Boy with bag - lost $300
Good Neighbour Council meeting
Replacement Parts cabaret at Princeton
21st birthday at Mara Lynne
School boy song composer

w/e 17.9.60

WEA Fencing Club Mannequin Parade
Dickens and Carey supplement - staff personalities
Twins who saved baby lamb
Man on cliff for 2 hours rescue by police
King Edward Park series
Dickens and Carey supplement - interiors etc
Soccer semi-final at Adamstown
Highland Gathering at Newcastle Showground
Cheque presentation at Wright Autos to Redhead Surf Club
Wedding Waratah Methodist - Nielson/Ward
Wedding CoE Waratah - Oughton/Markey
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Erskine/Kosjanow
Smash at Petrol Station at Hexham
Mirror Girl of the Week - Miss Bellaby
Lions Club Ladies Night at Winns
Business and Professional Ladies 29th anniversary dinner
Wedding Adamstown Catholic - Jones/Gorman

w/e 24.9.60

Musicians Union dance at City Hall
Jeff Brain, singer
Fashion parade at Newcastle Store
Mrs Colin Chapman, social
Dr Joan Allsopp, social pix
Dust menace in shopping centre at Gateshead
Basketball at National Park
Magpie dive bombs residents in Church St Newcastle
Old man inventor at Cooks Hill
New Lambton School Masquerade parade at Winns
Mr Evans, Snake story
Det Ken Steele, policeman who saved man from cliff
Social - Madame Fontaney
Wool Ball at Mara-Lynne
Girl of the Week - Carol Jones
Athletic trials at National Park
Golf at Merewether
Bowls at Newcastle City
Badminton A Reserve Grade winter team winners
Wedding New Lambton Presbyterian - Douglas/Breeding
Wedding St Peters Hamilton - Cheetham/Sanders
Wedding St Kevins Catholic, Cardiff - O'Connor/Swadling
Wedding St Josephs Catholic, Junction - Coaldrake/Purdon

w/e 1.10.60

Social pix - Mrs Judy Jones of New Lambton
Electricity feature - Wendy Newton with electronic keyboard
Electricity feature - Dianne Carling ‘Electric Girl’ series
Masonite Ball at Palais
Basketball at National Park - Shamrocks v Hepcats
Magpie attacks residents at Church Street
Smashed windows at council incinerator
Mr Mulligan, district registrar for 40 years
Woman car driving teacher - Mrs Wilson
Mater Hospital wine tasting afternoon at Princeton
Mirror Girl of the Week - Pamela Sticpewich
Tatts Pairs bowls final at Newcastle South
Grammar School P&C dinner dance b-b-q
Athletics opening of season - 100 yds finish
Electricity feature - Francine Hughes with TV and a/c
Electricity feature - girl with portable sewing machine
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley - Cremor/Wilkinson
Wedding Sacred Heart, Hamilton - Sinclair/Gardiner
Wedding Adamstown Methodist - Cairns/Humphries
Wedding St Johns CofE, Cooks Hill - Gelfius/Boyd

w/e 8.10.60
Jones family of 8 living in tent at Stockton Bachelors’ Ball at City Hall
13.1/2lb baby born at Royal Ncle Hospital - Mrs Elphick
Siamese cat in “King and I”
Mr K Booth, ALP, Kurri
Wedding St Josephs Catholic, Merewether - McQuade/Boswell
Wedding Wallsend Methodist - Bayliss/Nolan
Semi-finals of bowls at Wickham
Zelda Churchill - Mirror Girl of the Week
Bon Voyage dinner at Hotel Hunter - Girls from Wallsend Hospital
District cricket at Waratah and New Lambton
Wedding St Josephs Catholic, M/wether - Johns/Fleming
Mr Carney (Alcoholics Anonymous)
Teachers College sports presentation night at City Hall

w/e 15.10.60
Mr Pallett - builder back from world tour
Wedding St Josephs Catholic, M/wether - Wilson/Bailey
Engagement - Ron Wright and financee
Victoria League fashion parade
‘Sgt Blue’ army adoption story
Pic of electric machines at NESCA (Shortland CC)
Wedding at Wallsend CofE - Wallace/
Wedding Laman St Presbyterian - Grierson/Schiavon
Wedding New Lambton Methodist - Mitchell/Boyce
Custom officers seize ‘whip/daggers’ from ship
Symphony concert at Century
Legacy Rose Show at Legacy House
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sports Ground
Miss Thomas University Visitor

w/e 22.10.60
Attina Lancaster, model - social
Basketball player, Marie Ruggeri - personality
House on Main Road that has been smashed 3 times in three months
Raymond Terrace family moved from home after 37 years
Mr Clifford Morgan, decorator
Commercial travellers officers at Air Force Club
Dinner dance at Great Northern and pics of industrial group
Nurses from Royal NcLe Hospital celebration dance after NRB exams
Rodney Brent, young tennis player off to USA
Golf at Merewether
Sandra Haddow, ballet dancer - Mirror girl of the week
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Tharle/Haling
Wedding St Johns CoF, Cooks Hill - Engel/Balcord
Wedding Belmont Methodist - Young/Whan
Wedding Holy Family, Merewether - Teirman/Porrep
Bowls at National Park
Athletics at National Park

w/e 29.10.60
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sportsgrnd - Police Boys v New Lambton
Edna Brown, girl cricketer from Wickham 3rd grade team
Matron Savage at Rankin Park Hospital
NcLe Boys High School Father and Son dinner at Winns
Vogtmann family living in tent at Anna Bay
Sgt Bradbury, Boolaroo - 5 sons in police force
Wedding Hamilton Presbyterian - Myles/Bland
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - McLardy/Colley
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Edmonds/Sims
Wedding Junction Congregational - Heyman/Coxhill
4th year farewell to ‘fifth year’ at NcLe Girls High
Rosalind McLaughlin - Mirror girl of the week
Vaughan Bryant - won trip to Melbourne Cup
Clyde, wrestler back from America
Mrs Sutherland and Mrs Martin to exhibit paintings
Kerosine heater blew up in old couple’s home at Hamilton
Mrs Maher, building supervisor (social)
Peter Kirkham and friend - back from world tour

w/e 5.11.60
Swimming at NcLe Baths and election of club captain
Buffaloes’ Ball at City Hall
Broadmeadow Station overhead bridge
Exhibition of Newcastle painters and sculptors at NcLe Art Gallery
Possums make trouble at Coal Point
C&S Cricket at No 2 Sportsground
Athletics at National Park
Wedding St Andrews CoF, Mayfield - Reynolds/Urquhart
Aust Basketball finals at new Wickham stadium
Sgt Noel Jury (Newcastle Driving Range)
Wedding St Josephs Catholic, M/wether - Baker/Collins
Wedding St Peters CoF, Hamilton - Richmond/Gamble
Wedding St Marys Catholic - Smith/Gilmore
Dancing girl champion at Swansea - Miss Wakeman
Woman assaulted at Georgetown
Miss Windridge at Bar Beach - Mirror girl of the Week

w/e 12.11.60
Mr Garner visited Kruschef
Mrs Cunningham with Thai cutlery for YMCA exhibition
Girl with hepatitis who sat for Leaving Cert in caravan
Girl who wore neck to knee costume on Nele Beach for dare
New Domestic supplement - interiors
Shower tea for Margo Tate at Mrs Dodds' home
Dinner dance at Great Northern Hotel
Narelle Swan - Mirror girl of the week
Mr Siggers, visiting English judge for the Northern All Breeds dog show
New Domestic supplement - personalities
New Domestic supplement - copies of old photographs
District cricket at Wickham
Wedding Tighes Hill Catholic - Fletcher/Whalan
Wedding Stockton Methodist - East/Slade
£30,000 lottery winner at Georgetown
'Lady', dog who had 27 pups in two litters
Australian/American Thanksgiving Dinner
Wedding Adamstown Methodist Taylor/Fairweather
Wedding St John's Catholic Church, Lambton - McDermott/Mullins

w/e 19.11.60
Welcome to British High Commissioner at Victoria League Rooms
Stewards at Winns Shortland Rooms - served over 2.1/2 million drinks
Policemen do judo course at Police Boys Club
Dinner dance at Great Northern Hotel
Pre-wedding party for Wendy Connelly
Golf at BHP Golf links
Swimming at Newcastle Baths
Athletics at National Park
District cricket at No 1 Sports Ground - University v Wallsend
Alex Maracic - social back from Paris
Dog and rabbit pals at Cooks Hill
Mr Bald, 73 yrs, who gave up driving licence
Pre-wedding party for Elaine Saunders at Hotel Hunter
Federal Legacy Conference at Legacy House and Winns
Mrs. Turner, home economist for 2HD
Ilga Sakalis - Mirror Girl of the Week
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley Tate/Campion
Wedding Corpus Christi, Waratah - Rowan/Chidgey
Wedding St Mary's Catholic, N'cle - Dudgeon/Doyle
Wedding Adamstown Methodist - Hanson/Moon

w/e 27.11.60
Atina Lancaster - Girl of the Week
Vicki from Sorlies, social story
Engaged couple, Helen O’Neill, Hamilton South to
Geoffrey Brown, Georgetown
Jumble sale by children to aid Vogtmann family
Athletics at National Park
C&S cricket at No 2 Sportsground Ham v Police Boys
Bowls at National Park
Wedding at New Lambton, Trinity - Bryant/Williamson
Wedding at Carrington Catholic Doherty/Giles
Cardiff Catholic Wedding Rowe/Winch
Wedding at Broadmeadow Methodist - Pepper/Shoesmiths
Bass Trader near completion at State Dockyard
Mr Thomas, veteran cars
Junior mannequin parade St Drostans’ CofE, Kotara

w/e 3/12/60
Christmas decorations at Store
Mr Boyson, YMCA opening Migrant Information Centre
Vicki Hammond at Nobbys Beach
Betty McIntyre, therapist at Royal Ncle Hospital
Badminton presentation dance
Albert Tucker, Art exhibition at Art Gallery
Engaged couple Tighes Hill - Ann Peacock/David Shanks
Swimming at Ncle Baths
Golf at Merewether
Athletics at National Park
Wedding at St Phillips C of E Waratah - Lyons/Braye
Wedding at Park St Methodist Church - Skeet/Lawson
Wedding at St George C of E Ham Sth - Ross/Clayton
Miss Gumaleck, German girl refused job
Wedding at Sacred Heart Church - Smith/Deans
Elderley citizens club choir and duo pianists
Father Christmas for 40 years - Mr Tilden

w/e 10/12/60
Store Christmas Party at Princeton
Newcastle Bach Society concert
Grammar School christmas dance
Badminton junior semi finalists
Special ‘thanks’ badge present to Mr Taylor at lst
Charlestown Scouts
New American corning ware at David Jones
Smith Family shop ‘full’
Mrs K Cameron - girl from New Hebrides
Cooks Hill Surf carnival
Delore Motors Christmas party
Albert Tucker, art personality
Wedding B/meadow Registry Office - James/Robinson
Wedding St Philips CofE, Waratah - Powell/Stow
Wedding St Columbanus, Mayfield - Ball/Gillies
Girls High hostesses for post leaving dance, Mara Lynne
Wedding Sacred Heart Ham - Faulkener/Toniguzzi
Golf competition at Merewether (in rain)

w/e 17.12.60
Orthopaedic Hospital Christmas party
Victoria League Christmas party luncheon
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Milne/Olsen
Wedding Laman St Presbyterian - Foley/Reid
Robin Edds - Christmas Mirror girl of the week
Wedding Hamilton Wesley - Thompson/Billings
Shooting tragedy at Bulahdelah
Mixed teams competition squash at Broadmeadow

**w/e 31.12.60**

Mrs Lee Reid & son John on holiday from Bombay
Engagement pie - Margaret Whitson to John O’Hara
Sharks caught off Newcastle beaches
Wedding Boolaroo CoF E - Hughes/Steel
Julie Eckford - Mirror Girl of the week
Mr Barney Tildon makes warts disappear
Wedding St Josephs Cath, Junction - Whitton/Kennedy
Mr and Mrs Robson - 60 yrs married on New Year
Wedding St Paul’s CoF E Stockton - McElhinney/Sutton

**w/e 7.1.61**

Mrs Jenkins back from overseas tour
Dinner dance at Great Northern
Mr Stott - “Drummer”
Florence Thirkell - girl who won State Highland Dancing competition
Athletics at No 8 Sportsground
Bon voyage party for Mrs Harrison
Wedding at Watt St Presbyterian Church - Kafer/McNeill
Wedding at Newcastle Cathedral - Charker/Reese
Wedding at Watt St Presbyterian Church - Stones/Gray
Wedding at CoF E Mayfield - Duckworth/Cheetham
Mr Don Martin off to London

**w/e 14.1.61**

Surf Events at Newcastle Surf Carnival
Workmen leaving BHP - strike pics
Newcastle Surf Carnival - 1961 Beach Girl of the Year judging etc
Deaf and dumb girl whose fiance was killed in accident
Swimming at Newcastle Baths
Wedding at St Josephs Catholic Church, The Junion - Maguire/Fleming
Wedding at Newcastle Cathedral - Hannan/Perry
Wedding at St Therese’s Catholic Church, New Lambton - Beattie/Kerr
Opening of Pennant Bowls at Hamilton Green
Two of remaining triplets in humicrib at Mater Hospital - and Mrs Ramsey
Post Leaving Certificate examination dance at Princeton
Deaf and dumb couple marries
YWCA personality, Robyn Bignall
Mr Moore, bowls personality

**w/e 21.1.61**

Wedding at St Peters CoF E, Hamilton - Wendtmann/Beck
Wedding at St Peters CoF E, Hamilton - Jones/Williamson
Tomatoes growing in City Street
Mrs Rooke and Aboriginal babies
Wedding at St Josephs Catholic Church, Merewether - Maxwell/Howard
BHP strike personality - Publican Mr Burke
Swimming at Newcastle Baths
BHP strike personality - Mrs Shillingworth and daughter affected by strike
“Simba” - dog found by Mirror story
Miss Watson - social personality
Mrs Stone - social personality

w/e 28.1.61
Wedding at St Mary’s Catholic Church, Nele - Hicks/Doherty
Tennis at District Park
Fibreglass car at Catherine Hill Bay
YMCA camp at Crangan Bay
Peter Dalton, architect
Mrs H Hansen of Merewether
Fallen headstone at Wallsend Cemetery
Overgrown play area at Birmingham Gardens
Hot and sunny weather series - Merewether/Bar beach
Pre-wedding party for Lynette Holley
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley church - Wilson/Mitchell
Golf at Merewether
Wedding at Holy Family Church, Merewether - Leigh/Day

w/e 4.2.61
Broken swing - Merewether play park
Robyn Gatlee winner of handwriting competition
Mrs Scott on world tour to visit grandchildren
Swimming at Newcastle Baths
District cricket at No 1 Sportsground
Wedding at St Therese’s Catholic Church, New Lambton - Gleeson/Spruce
Wedding at St Andrews Presbyterian Church- Mills/Smith
Wedding at St Peters Cof E, Hamilton- Primmer/Osborne
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley Church - Mitchell/Maslen

w/e 11.2.61
Talking book machine for the blind demonstrated by Bill Davis
Mrs Wain Stoneham, artist
French island boat in harbour 5 1/2 hours before customs go aboard
Quentin Strachan, beach girl
Swimming at Newcastle Baths and farewell to Hazel Hallyburton
“Bugs”, the wandering rabbit owned by Noel Roach
Parties at Great Northern Hotel
Town planning lecture and exhibition at Art Gallery
Athletics at National Park
Wet weather golf at Merewether Club
Wedding at St George’s CofE, Hamilton- Wood/McNiven
Wedding at St Paul’s Cof E, Stockton- Brennan/Pugh
Wedding at Carrington Methodist Church - Cole/Blayden
Wedding at Sacred Heart Church - Baldock/Mead
w/e 18.2.61

Aboriginal girl, Dianne Cook, Vice Captain of Raymond Terrace High School
First lady juror to sit at Newcastle court
Mr Macchia locked out of his house at Arcadia
Newcastle Beach lifesavers, Tot Young and Ben Gillett, find false teeth in surf
Mr McIlwaine and Australia’s largest caravan
Social pix - birthday parties at Hotel Hunter
Barbara Woodworth - “Cover Girl of the North”
Ron Wright and daughter with Tot Young’s ‘Learn to Swim’ classes at Newcastle Baths
Athletics at National Park
District Cricket at No 1 Sports Ground - Hamilton v Stockton
Newcastle Show Supplement - new buildings at show, cattle stalls and McLeod, Kelso and Lee
School boys rush onto buses at Broadmeadow
Mr Col Patterson - fight with Council over pavements
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley Church - Gatfield/Mordue
Wedding at Adamstown Methodist Church - Brock/Pickering
Wedding at St Peters CofE, Hamilton - Hull/Wells
Wedding at Mayfield Baptist Church - Bint/Barry
Ron Woodcock, violinist - social story
Deirdre Flynn, beach girl

w/e 25.2.61

Mayfield woman has to get rid of her 2 1/2 -yr-old crocodile
Kids jump from Cockle Creek bridge
Maitland Show supplement - office workers preparing entries etc for Show
Newcastle lottery winner with favorite grandson “The Wrecker”
Calypso dance at Princeton
Miss Joan Eales with £2,000 Louis XIV antique
Bee battle at Teralba
Rechabite’s dinner at Mara Lynne
Merewether Men’s swimming championships at Merewether Baths
Athletic club championship at National Park
Co-eds at YWCA
Maitland Show supplement - Mr O’Connell Maitland Show Ringmaster
Maitland Show supplement - Maitland Show secretary in office
Maitland Show supplement - farm machinery to be exhibited
Wedding at Sacred Heart church, Hamilton - Baker/Grant
Wedding Broadmeadow Catholic Church - Martinelli/Angela

w/e 4.3.61

Wedding at Belmont Catholic Church - Wilson/Perkins
Wedding at St Peters CofE, Hamilton - Jordan/Baker
Club Championship Athletics at National Park
Newcastle Races
Joan Kearns - pianist to play with Sydney Symphony orchestra
Grahame Parr says ‘thank you’ to man who saved his life
Mrs Wright - challenge to beat her handwriting
House at Waratah on land without Council permission
Widow and family long wait for insurance claim at Tarro
Wedding at Methodist Church, Belmont - Harrison/Turnbull
Donald Smith and Betty Chapman - stars of ‘Carmen’ at Roxy Theatre

w/e 11.3.61
Mr Punshon and Mr Ninniss - Newcastle Art Show
Marilyn Jones, ballet dancer, off to England
Wedding at Reorganised Church of Latter Day Saints - McKenzie/Cater
Wedding St Luke’s CofE, Wallsend - Williams/Perrington
Wedding Wallsend Methodist - Solway/Sanders
Women with pegs on noses at dump at North Lambton
Wedding at Adamstown Methodist Church - Young/Mason
Athletics at National Park
Golf at Merewether
Annual swimming championships at Newcastle Baths
“Sue”, cocker spaniel mother to two kittens
Students at Newcastle Boys High to be shown on television at Newcastle-on-Tyne, England
Old “suit” sign found in city store
Mannequin parade in aid of Children’s Medical Research
Young honeymooners - money stolen while on honeymoon
Award to man who saved dog ‘Goldie’ owned by Mr and Mrs Searle
Jan Atcheson, back from world tour
Frank Sherrif visits patients at Newcastle Hospital
Bad road condition at North Lambton

w/e 18/3/61
Wedding at Calvary Baptist Church, New Lambton - McDonald/Cannon
Wedding at Carrington Methodist Church - Ellrington/Jones
Wedding at Belmont Cof E - Rundle/Perkins
District cricket final - New Lambton/Waratah
Newcastle races
St Patrick’s Day dance at City Hall
Wedding at Hamilton Presbyterian Church - Paterson/Lankshear
Mrs Simpson - social personality
Beach pix
Travellers Committee for Cot Fund meeting
House built on ‘road that never was’ at Stockton
Boy who fit mullet with golf ball
Bookies’ umbrellas, stands and boards at Newcastle dog course
Father (Mr Castle) installs pay phone for himself and family

w/e 25.3.61
Ald Roger Bates and Gallipoli pebble
Mr Boyson, YMCA secretary
Wedding at St Peters C of E Hamilton - Bridge/Pearson
Dancing girl off to New Zealand
Mrs Wright and Mr McLukie who beat her in handwriting contest
Social personality - Miss Beverley Evans
Wedding at Cof É Toronto - Cappeletti/ Farley
Wedding at St Andrew Presbyterian Church, Laman St - Grant/ Cairns
Dianne Brough - beach girl pix
Maori girl dancer living in Newcastle
Mrs Wilson and her 9 month-old baby - he will die if he doesn’t live near sea
Mrs Morris - fight over gas bill story
Wedding at St Andrews Laman St Presbyterian Church - Hutton/Partridge
District cricket final - New Lambton/Waratah
New C of E dean for Newcastle

w/e 1.4.61
Man with pet diamond snake at Thornton
Rugby League at Harker Oval - West v Kurri
Wedding at St Phillips C of E Waratah - David/Muncaster
Wedding at Mayfield Baptist Church - Scholfied/Robson
Wedding at St Therese’s Catholic Church, New Lambton - Owens/McDougall
Wedding at Tighes Hill Methodist Church - Freedman/Leadbeater
Miss McLoughlin from Kemp and Liddell - social personality

w/e 8.4.61
Diptheria epidemic at Medowie
Mayor of Cessnock, Mr Blair
Maverick goat who drinks beer and smokes at Tanilba Bay
Wedding at Sacred Heart Church, Hamilton - Higgs/ Fraser
Wedding at St Philips C of E Waratah - Taylor/Mason
Wedding at Junction Congregational Church - Ross/Howlett
Chinese alien in old men’s home, can’t get any social service
Mr and Mrs Oliver at Kitchener
£100,000 Opera lottery win to 6 Newcastle bowlers
Cessnock - new gasworks, Aberdare County Council
Dangerous wharf, half demolished at Stockton
Series at Abernathy ghost town, near Cessnock
House at Lambton where ‘cup of tea’ is always on for accident victims
Social pix - Cocktail party at Mrs Clack’s home
Closed and partly closed mines in Cessnock area
Peter Sparkes - art exhibition

w/e 15.4.61
Mr and Mrs Baker - ‘cuppa on for accident victims’
Mr D’Isle - namesake of Gov. General at 2HD
Mrs Jones, French fashions - social story
Mrs Melva Davies, interior decorator
Noel Thomas, “Mr Charity” of Newcastle
Police Boys bowls at Newcastle South club
Evicted from house at West Wallsend after 65 years
Black and white ball at Winns Shortland Rooms
University Graduation ball at City Hall
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - Kurri v South
Basketball at National Park
Soccer at Adamstown Oval - Cessnock v Adamstown
Wedding at New Lambton Catholic Church - Evans/Aitchison
Wedding at St Columbanus Catholic Church, Mayfield - Pink/Williams
Wedding at St Phillips C of E, Waratah - Langfield/Apitz

w/e 22.4.61
Len Mullard - determined to walk again
Mr Davis, Royal Blind Society
Ex-soldier to marry in order to keep Japanese child
Ex-policeman, Mr Boucher’s, collection of sea shells
Marjory Gilbert and her pupil who won 1961 Australia/Scottish dancing championship
Mr Ron Carter - dress designer for ‘Oklahoma’
Wedding at Laman St Presbyterian Church - Talbot/Thomson
Wedding at Sacred Heart Church, Hamilton - Hill/Drain
Basketball at National Park

w/e 29.4.61
Mr Wright gives £100 cheque to Smith Family
‘The Teaching Harveys’
Badminton practice for NSW v Qld match
New Quota Club president
Mr and Mrs D’Archy of Kotara - back from round Australian trip
Murky drinking water at Raymond Terrace
Farewell to Mr and Mrs Tate at Great Northern Hotel
Queen Juliana’s birthday celebration dance at Greek Orthodox hall
Basketball at Dangar Park - Belmont v White Sox
Golf at Merewether
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - Waratah v South
Wedding at Salvation Army Citadel - McClure/Chue
Wedding at Hamilton Wesley Church - Rule/Gorton
Wedding at Tarro Catholic Church - Davoren/Smith

w/e 6/5/61
Wallaby lost at Brett St, Georgetown
Truck left on road side for 18 months
Lady at Gateshead who claims damages on show from Council
Dogs condemned to die at RSPCA home
Rugby League at No 1 Sportsground Waratah v North
Wedding at Tighes Hill Catholic Ruggeri/Pow
Wedding at Sacred Heart, Hamilton - Gorski/Buchorn
Wedding at St Columban’s Adamstown - Fleming/Butler
Adamstown Methodist Wedding - Mullen/Duniec
Social personality - Mrs Brown
Basketball at National Park
Dogs condemned to die at RSPCA home
Soccer at Adamstown oval - Cardiff v Adamstown
YMCA mothers and sons dinner given by fathers
All Nations ball at City Hall

w/e 13/5/61

Annual Tartan Ball at City Hall
Wallaby returns to owners at Georgetown
Mr Clark with the trophies he has won but never kept
Soccer at Adamstown Oval - Whitebridge v Merewether
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - West v North
Wedding at St Peters C of E Hamilton - Harrison/Moran
Wedding at Maitland Rd Baptist Church - Helyer/Wilson
Wedding at St Andrews C of E Mayfield - Freedman/Andrews
Wedding at St Joseph’s Catholic Church, The Junction - Ryan/Warby
Wallaby returns to owners at Georgetown
100-year-old tree to be pulled down to make way for ambulance station
Race finish at Newcastle races - Juvenile Handicap

w/e 20.5.61

Wedding at St Laurence O’Toole Catholic Church - Monego/Mourglia
Wedding at St Johns Catholic Church, Lambton - Harvey/McGowan
Wedding at St Phillips C of E Waratah - Edwards/Haynes
Rugby League at No 1 Sports Ground - West v Lakes
Rugby Union at No 2 Sports Ground - University v Waratah
Basketball competition at National Park
Athletic training at National Park
Davies and Cannington Social Club cabaret at Winns
YMCA TW Lighters dance
Ivor Vivien, mathematician
Mr and Mrs Way of Melbourne - social
‘Royalty in the police force’ - Sgt. King & Const Earl Wilson
Volley ball club at YMCA
The young stargazers of the Newcastle Junior Astronomical Society
Alec Dobson, organizer of Newcastle Spring Festival
Battered ketch ‘Beatrix’ at Shoal Bay

w/e 27.5.61

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