

# The History Of Nobbys



Captain James Cook was the first European to note Nobbys Island from the ship "Endeavor" in 1770, and was described by Cook as "a small clump of an island lying close to shore".

It was not until the discovery of coal by Europeans in 1797 by Lt. John Shortland, however, that the region was viewed as having any significance.

From its early beginnings as an isolated island, Nobbys has changed significantly over the years

An early problem facing captains of sailing ships entering Newcastle was the loss of wind in the ship's sails as they passed the towering Nobbys outcrop at the Port's entrance.

Nobby's was joined to the mainland and then reduced to half its original height, now 27.5 metres.



With its prominent position at the entrance to the Port, a lighthouse was built and just after midnight on the 1st January 1858, the light came into operation. At that time, the light burnt China Tea Oil, which gave a more brilliant light than kerosene and was less dangerous.

It was later replaced by a fixed, incandescent kerosene vapour lamp. In 1935 the 100,000 candle power light was changed to 580,000 candlepower, visible at a height of 35 metres above sea level.

When Governor Macquarie ordered a pier to be built to join Nobbys to the mainland, convict labour was chosen to do the construction.

The building of the pier was a hazardous job with the convicts having to work under all sea and weather conditions, night and day. Many lives were lost to the sea during the 38 years it took to build.

The rock taken from Nobbys to reduce its height was used in the pier's construction.

### The Weather Station...

Because of Nobbys positioning it has been selected by the Bureau of Meteorology as an ideal weather monitoring station. Nobbys meteorological activity includes automated reporting to the Bureau of temperatures, wind speed and direction and rainfall.

### Nowdays

Various bicentenary projects funded by the Newcastle Port Corporation in 1997 focused on the vivid history surrounding Nobbys and the breakwater, including a series of sculptures displayed along the breakwater and a viewing platform overlooking a set of convict steps.

Full-time staff last worked at Nobbys in 2001 when the Vessel Traffic Information Centre was transferred to the current Pilot Station of the Newcastle Foreshore.

The breakwater is a popular site these days for early morning walkers or joggers as they try to keep fit while trying to take in the stunning views of Newcastle Harbour. The Nobbys Breakwater is approximately 1400m long, measured from the vehicle turning circle.



More information on NSW Lighthouses and the history of Newcastle Harbour can be found at [www.lakescan.com.au](http://www.lakescan.com.au)