

Drive & Christmas Party on Saturday 29th November 2025 at the Nepean Rowing Club from 11.30am to 3.00pm

What a good idea, I thought, when first seeing the event flyer, to have the MCCNSW Christmas Party at lunch time and at a picturesque venue instead of within the staid walls of a golf club! After consulting with my better half, Angela, a booking was immediately made and the \$10 refundable deposit per person paid. I wonder whether the deposit reduced the number of 'no shows', probably did.



As the big day drew close, we realised that the Rowing Club was in Penrith, which has a fearsome reputation of being one of the hottest spots in the Sydney area – and the forecast was indeed for a hot and windy day. It turned out to be both! However we felt comforted by the fact that the Central Coast, where we live, was going to be even hotter!

Mark had devised one of the interesting drives for which he is famous, announcing the rendezvous was to be at the Ampol Foodary, M4 Western Motorway, Eastern Creek. A good idea for most Sydneysiders, but not for us approaching from the north on the M7. This required some work deciphering Mark's route map and setting out waypoints with co-ordinates, as I do, to make our way along the picturesque Mitchell Pass in the foothills of Emu Heights over the Lennox Bridge, the oldest stone arch bridge on mainland Australia, then on to the Nepean Rower's Club.



The Lennox Bridge was built in 1833 by David Lennox using unskilled convict labour. It took one year to complete. The sandstone was quarried nearby and the bridge carried all the traffic to western New South Wales until 1926. Amazing when you think of it in today's context of traffic density!

As we crossed the bridge, we saw the parked Morris Minor of intrepid explorers Rose and Peter who had walked the many steps to the base of the bridge to marvel at Lennox's work and read the plaque describing its construction. We travelled in convoy, Mercedes and Morris, to the Rowing Club. Mark mentioned that some 10 other cars enjoyed the drive too, having met at the Ampol Foodary.

On arrival we made a bee line for the limited shade beneath some blue gums whilst being regaled by a pair of Corellas. On our way to the Rowers restaurant, Andrew advised that he had especially not parked there since several of the relatives of the said blue gums had blown over in the Sydney area and had crushed cars. However, after a quick risk assessment, taking prevailing wind strength into account, I decided to leave the Merc where it was to enjoy respite from the sun.



The Rowers turned out to be as promised – a nice open restaurant, properly air conditioned, with great views over the Nepean River. Great attention to detail was being shown by our President who was observed to be wiping down the tables as we walked in. Thanks Dennis, you did a good job! Turnout was an impressive 52 people. I am sure that the enthusiastic conversation at our table was replicated at all the others.

As befits the spirit of Christmastime, our organisers had arranged surprises for us, some intended, others not. A bottle of wine for each couple compliments from Silver Star Service Centre and a lucky dip draw for 4 happy winners. The unintended surprise was provided by the President who forgot the lucky dip prizes at home!

We were one of the first to leave given our long trip home with the party still in full swing. I am quite sure that a good time was had by all.

Thank you to Mark and Dennis for organising!

Writer of the day: **Arnold Klintworth**