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PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.
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Book launch – "Morpeth's Steam Ships"

The launch of Wayne Patfield's latest book "Morpeth's Steam Ships" will be held on **Sunday 17 September, 2023 in the Largs School of Arts Hall, beginning at 2pm**. It will be launched by Hon John Price AM. Mr Price has had a long association with the maritime industry and was a former Member for Maitland and Deputy Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly. Afternoon tea will follow.

"Morpeth Steam Ships" provides details of the 72 ocean-going steamers that operated to and from Morpeth between 1831 and 1946. Incredibly, Wayne has managed to find a photo for most of the vessels, along with their service history, technical details and other interesting information about their use and ultimate demise.

The book includes a comprehensive index and list of references, along with addendums on Morpeth's sailing vessels, punts, steam tugs and dredges. The book will be on sale at the launch for \$30, or after launch at MacDonald's book store in Maitland, Paterson's Servo, Paterson Country Café and Paterson Court House Museum. It will also join the long list of books available online through the Society's website.

In addition to details on individual vessels, the book explains the evolution of Morpeth and its ships, beginning in 1831 when *Sophia Jane* became the first steamship to ply the waters from Sydney to Morpeth. In 1832 she was joined by the locally-built *William the Fourth* and over the next few decades competing steamship companies formed and constructed steamer facilities at Morpeth. By the early 1840s Morpeth boasted four wharves for steamships.

Wayne explains the progression from wooden to larger iron-hulled paddle steamers, to single and twin propeller vessels. On the Hunter River in the early 1880s a major step in the evolution of steamer technology came with the introduction of steel-hulled vessels. This followed the discovery of the Bessemer process that allowed steel to be made in commercial quantities from about 1855.

The earliest steel-hulled steamship known to have served Morpeth, the PS *Namoi*, was built in 1883. She was also the heaviest of the Morpeth paddle steamers, weighing 1,416 tons gross. The steel-hulled PS *Newcastle* was the longest, measuring 264 feet (80m). Today it is hard to imagine ships of that size berthed at Morpeth.

River siltation combined with road and rail transport eventually killed the river boats. In 1946 TSS *Doepel* became the last ocean-going ship to travel to Morpeth.

Paterson Historical Society invites all interested to attend the launch, chat to Wayne and purchase a copy of his book.

Enquiries

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