You might have heard of the German-born architect, Frederick Menniks, who designed a number of public buildings in Newcastle. Menniks designed this monastery as well, dedicated in 1887. Quite an imposing building, isn’t it? Set on about 5 hectares of land that extended down to Maitland Rd, the Monastery was once the ‘mother house’ of the Redemptorist Order in Australia.

At one time the complex housed more than 20 priests, brothers and novices training for the priesthood, who would rise at 4.55am to begin a day of prayer, meditation and domestic duties. Food, advice and assistance were given to those in need.

Let’s keep walking down Woodstock St. Unlike many other streets in Mayfield this one has street trees. The older streets are narrower and were laid out at a time when street trees were not valued. Turn left into and continue along Crebert Street. Keep a lookout in the first hundred metres for a remnant of the original iron bark forest, which once covered the suburb.

Take a rest under the butcher shop awning.

As you now know, up until the arrival of BHP in 1913, Mayfield was a highly desirable place to live. From 1901 it was connected to the city by street tram, as well as train, and it possessed what estate agents today would call ‘rural charm’.

The Newcastle Morning Herald and Miner’s Advocate in 1898 described the suburb as the ‘Toorak of Newcastle’, and a number of wealthy and prominent business families took up residence.

It was a place for the social elite, some of whom built their villas along the ridge lines where they could admire the views, as well as take symbolic advantage of their elevated positions. Delightful surrounding scenery and easy access to the city by rail’ spruiked an 1853 advertisement. By 1915, however, posters were advertising land for worker’s housing as ‘the heart of the manufacturing district’.

Continue walking along Crebert St.

Crossing Kerr St we come across a row of houses built in 1888 which were home to some of the wealthy families who once lived in Mayfield. 147 Crebert St was built for the Rogers family who once owned a foundry; 145 was built for Nelson Creer from Creer and Berkeley Real Estate agents and was who was Mayor of Waratah three times.

That house was then owned by the Dean family who had a pottery works on the riverbank. The lions that you can see on the front steps were made at the works. 143 Crebert St was owned by Sam Amott, the second son of William; 141 Crebert St was the home of Mr. Clinchen, a surveyor who gave his name to a street in Islington.

Across the road you will see the entrance to Mayfield Park. This land was a gift from the Lysaghts Company to the families of Mayfield and was the venue for many a sporting challenge. The British migrants who lived in ‘Pommy Tow’ formed the Orb United Soccer Club in 1922, later playing in the church soccer competition.

Cricket was popular, too, with the Mayfeld Methodist Church having several teams. Why not take a break here for a few minutes? This park was central to the social life of many of the local residents. Carefully cross Hanbury St and continue along Crebert Street.

Built in 1894 in a classic Victorian Italianate style, this house was originally built for Alfred Ingall, a local tailor and draper. It later became the residence of the first Manager of BHP, David Baker. The country style is reminiscent of the houses in Mayfield during the late nineteenth century and reflects the semi-rural setting in which it was built. BHP seemed to pursue a policy of locating their managers close to the plant and to the worker’s housing and recreational facilities such as the former BHP Steelworks Bowling Club (now the Hippocrates Function Centre) and Recreation Club.

Turn now and face Mayfield East School which, by the way, is where the first school in Mayfield was established in 1858. Imagine instead of houses and streets that now exist you are standing in the middle of a patch of cultivated land.

A vineyard and orchard were established here in 1853 by German immigrant, Peter Scholey. It is said that when Mrs Scholey wanted one of her servants to do something, she would simply clap her hands. She and other members of the ‘Mayfieldocracy’ were sometimes known as the ‘Handclappers’.

In 1859, Industrial emissions, like those from the early copper smelting industry, were advertised. By 1915, however, posters were advertising land for worker’s housing as ‘the heart of the manufacturing district’.

In 1958 the house was purchased by the Baptist Home Trust to be used as a Hostel for Young Men and was renamed Lewis House again after Essington Lewis. The house retains the original chimneys, marble fireplaces and staircase. Looking across the road you can see another large home which is slightly hidden now.

In 1990, the house was then sold to Isaac Winn, who renamed it Winn Court.

Many social functions, including fêtes and Bible classes, were held in the home and grounds. In 1921 the house was acquired by the Church of England and became St Elizabeth's Girls Home and, later, St Albans Boys Home. It is now part of Amnerley Court. This could be a ‘Tim-Tam’ stop!

Turn right into Highfield St and pass the rear of ‘Mayfield House,’ where you can see the Essington Lewis Building.

William Amott built this home for his daughter and her husband, Isaac Winn, who along with his brother founded Winn's drapery store in Hunter Street in 1878 (which closed in the 1980s). The Victorian manor, built in 1890, has six marble fireplaces, four bedrooms, a slate roof, music room, and a formal dining room.

Turning left into Hanbury Street will lead you to Maitland Rd, where we started the walk. On the way down take a look at the mural at the library which was once the site of the blacksmiths shop.

There is still much more of the Mayfield Story to tell, so come back again soon and do the Mayfield: Living the Life walking tour.

Most homes built in this walk were privately owned. Please respect the privacy of the residents by keeping to the paths. Thank you.