

Personality Spotlight

AT ISLINGTON last week, a woman who has lived through a lengthy span of Newcastle history celebrated her 90th birthday with a party.

She is Scottish-born Mrs. Mary Thomson, of Redman-street, who has lived in Newcastle for 65 of her 90 years. Sixty-one years have been spent in the same house in Islington.

When she was a girl of 20 she married Samuel Thomson at Barrow-in-Burness (Scotland) on Boxing Day, 1877.

Two years later she left England for Australia with her husband on the sailing ship Pericles under Captain Largie. The first night out the ship ran aground on the Manacle



Rocks, near Falmouth Bay, and all the male passengers had to assist at the pumps to save the ship.

After repairs the Pericles made a second start from Plymouth in August, 1879, and, after an uneventful three months' voyage, Mrs. Thomson arrived in Australia.

She lived first at Tamworth where her husband worked in a carriage builders' shop. Later she moved to Sydney, then to Brisbane and finally, in 1884, to Newcastle, where her husband went to work at the Government Workshops at Honeysuckle.

At 90 Mrs. Thomson is proud of the fact that she is the oldest living member of Hamilton Presbyterian Church. For over 60 years she has been a regular attendant and still goes when her health permits.

Her birthday party was attended by her three daughters, Mrs. A. H. Morris, of Nelson's Bay, Mrs. J. Payne, of The Entrance, and Mrs. P. Brock, of Mayfield; and two of her three sons, Mr. W. Thomson, of Taree, and Mr. S. Thomson, of Islington. A third son lives in Melbourne.

Mrs. Thomson has 10 grandchildren and one great-grandchildren.