



Australia-Britain Society (NSW Branch) Inc

(Incorporated under the Associations Incorporation Act, 1984(NSW)

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NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY, 2017

2017.01

1. COMING EVENTS

a) COMMONWEALTH DAY LUNCHEON

Wednesday 15 March, noon, NSW Parliament House Strangers' Dining Room, Macquarie Street Sydney
Cost \$95.00. Flyer attached. Guest of Honour H.E. Menna Rawlings CMG, British High Commissioner

This event is organised by the Commonwealth Day Council who extend the invitation to all Commonwealth bodies, and attracts a large gathering. Where practicable we have arranged for our member guests to be seated together. Please note that the flyer is to be returned direct to the Commonwealth Day Council, not to this office.

b) QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY GALA DINNER

This event will be held in late May subject to the Governor's calendar and we are yet to receive this date advice. We have asked His Excellency to join the event at 6.15pm to meet guests before the dinner at 7.00pm.

Guests will include a finalist in the State Plain English Speaking Awards, Ms. Emily Kim of North Sydney Girls High and Ms. Abby Dixon, the 2017 Tall Ships awardee. A musical soiree will be included with artists from the Pacific Opera. Collegiate friends from Australians for Constitutional Monarchy and Friends of St. George's and Descendants of the Knights of the Garter will be invited as well.

c) LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS

Saturday Night 19 August 7.30pm, Sunday matinée 20 August 2.00pm cost \$47.00

We have secured 100 tickets for this annual event, with 90 tickets for the Sunday afternoon event at the Chatswood Concourse and 10 for the Saturday night. Most seats this year are in the stalls with a few seats in an upstairs box for the Sunday afternoon. This programme gets booked out quickly and we have good seats for members and friends. A flyer is attached to send your booking - a stamped addressed envelope for return of tickets will help us control costs. The price is the same as the box office without a booking fee (I understand that the programme will include the traditional Proms repertoire and a major popular orchestral work with a pre-eminent soloist). Get further details as needed from the Secretariat, but book early to get a wider range of seat options.

2. POSTPONED EVENTS

- a) Luncheon with Dr. Brendan Nelson of the Australia War Memorial** planned for early this year had to be re-scheduled to fit in with a crowded work schedule for Dr. Nelson. Hopefully an alternative time slot will be available soon. Dr. Nelson is one of Australia's most poignant speakers and his dedication to the nurture and development of the War Memorial is a marvellous address not to be missed.

- b) **Luncheon with Hilary Kay of the Antiques Road Show** was planned for late February but has now been deferred until early 2018 due to the postponement of the Antiques Road Show tour in Australia until next year. We will keep you advised of timing developments when known.

3. RECENT EVENTS

- a) **Remembrance Day service and luncheon** held at St. James' Church King Street and followed by a luncheon at the Australian Club were both enjoyable events with the luncheon fully booked to hear Brigadier Bill Sowry AM, CSC, speak of his experiences in co-ordinating British/Australian defence liaisons including his role in investigating the downing of airliner MH17. Brigadier Sowry travelled from Canberra with a group of military comrades to be with us. Colonel Sandy Macgregor MC who spoke to us in 2015 on his experiences in Vietnam was also present.
- b) **Christmas luncheon** at the Union, University and Schools Club was a grand event with the club excelling its traditional fare meal with an additional large fruit platter and bon-bons. Lynn and Ken Bock organised a short collection of carols that helped evoke the spirit of the season and the grand raffle of hampers and Longchamp bags added to the grandeur of the day.
- c) **Nine Carols and Lessons at St James' King Street** was a packed event featuring a wonderful traditional programme modelled on Kings College Cambridge. His Excellency the Governor-General attended and joined the congregation for a post-service drink and mince pies in the crypt.
- d) **Australia Day Harbour cruise and buffet Luncheon** was a divided event with 30 of our members and guests joining the Captain Cook cruise organised by the Order of Australia Association whom we have been privileged to join for the past five years. Thirty of the members who booked later were accommodated on the glass boat, the Starship, where the price was \$90 without beverages, versus \$115 on the Captain Cook III cruise which included beverages. From reports, both groups had a great day and we believe we can organise an event on the Starship for our members and friends with a \$5 small administrative charge for arranging the event at around \$95 in 2018. Consider coming along next year as it is a great day on the Harbour, and excellent value.

4. FUTURE EVENT MIX

Most premier clubs are now charging fixed costs for room/PA system hire plus menu printing. Also drinks are costly. This means we need to have around 75 plus attendees to keep the pricing at cost plus a small margin. If attendances are only around 40-50 people, these venue uses result in a loss unless we increase charges, which again discourages attendances. As a result, we will use the premier clubs for major events such as the Queen's Birthday or with special drawcard guests and supplement this with use of some second-tier clubs such as the Royal Exchange Club/Masonic Club, and organise a series of independent offerings such as harbour cruises, concerts and meals where we will do the booking work and make a small margin of \$5 to help us to continue our grants programmes (A tax approved and exempt charity is one that actually makes grants otherwise it is a member benefitted social club. Therefore we need to aim for a surplus annually, even if some events run at a loss otherwise our reserves dissipate and our long-term future is threatened). We do not expect members to attend every event and the option may be to hold fewer but more exclusive offerings to secure member support. An example of this was a move from a low-cost Christmas event at a city restaurant in 2015 that was noisy, to a select club with wonderful facilities and fare, but not fully supported due to the naturally higher cost resulting in a loss largely made up personally by the Committee. Our modified aim therefore is to give a more balanced mix of venues and events that may suit members better. If you have any preferences on this, let any of the Committee know.

On a positive note, we are looking at a **Christmas in July** bargain Harbour cruise and luncheon aboard a quality Captain Cook vessel and details will issue closer to the time.

5. SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS EVENTS AT MITTAGONG AND BOWRAL

The Highlands branch holds four to five events every year, usually at around 5.30pm on Friday evenings in a major hall at Bowral with a fascinating range of guest speakers, and all our members are welcome to come to these. If you are visiting the Southern Highlands for a weekend, check with the Secretariat to see "what's on in this wonderful part of the world".

The next event is a presentation by the distinguished Colonel Charles Weller on Friday 10th March at 5.30-7.30 in Bowral, and a flyer is attached.

6. NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome is extended to our new members and hope you enjoy the coming programme:

. Phillip Black

. Benita Boger

. Jennifer Brookman

. Shirley Carroll

. Frances & Michael Weekes

. Terrence Trainor & Kat McFerran

7. ABSENT FRIENDS

We regret to advise the passing of former NSW committee member Gordon Beale, and we offer our condolences to his family.

8. SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions have not increased for years and we aim to keep them steady in the face of increasing mail, printing and other charges. Also, a large number of members are Life Members. Some of you may have overlooked renewing your membership fees for 2016/2017 which were due in July last year, and if you have not yet renewed, Sue Labordus or Diana Rich of our Committee may contact you to jog your memory and send out a further renewal form. If you cannot attend functions, but like what we are aiming to achieve, please consider sending us a small donation as every \$ helps and you are a small part of a great group that is helping young people solidify their British heritage.

9. BUSINESS PLAN

This has not been reviewed for many years and an update will provide a strategic review of our aims and objectives as well as an execution plan of how we aim to achieve them. Following this will be an update of our Charter and By-Laws to make us a continuing compliant body where legal changes are being made to the Not for Profit sector. These changes derive from a National legislative uniformity change with a fuller transparency on how the business is managed for the benefit of members and to advise those interested in what we do. Copies will be available free of charge upon request and is expected to re-issue later in the year.

10. RAFFLE PRIZES

Thank you for buying raffle tickets as this surplus helps us keep the event costs lower than would be on a stand-alone basis. Most of these prizes are gleaned from scouring markets and retail sales and by generous organisations and people that donate restaurant and club meals, games of golf, and bridge lessons for example. If you have any contacts that can help us expand our reservoir of goods, particularly short airline/travel/sea craft, accommodation prizes, please advise the secretariat. It is great fun winning things you would not normally buy and we thank you again for helping this outcome.

11. NEW BRITISH CONSUL-GENERAL

We welcome the newly appointed Consul-General, Michael Ward, and look forward to his meeting with members at coming events.

12. GENERAL

I thank the hard-working committee and particularly the secretariat for their support that also aims to keep my more troublesome behaviour under control.

With continuing best wishes,

Richard Nott