



# Australia-Britain Society (NSW Branch) Inc

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

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**ABN 75368639375**

**Postal Address: PO Box 647, Gordon NSW 2072**

**Phone: 02-9449-7532 / Email: absociety@idx.com.au / Website: ausbrit.org**

**Patron: Her Excellency The Hon. Margaret Beazley, AO QC, Governor of New South Wales**

**Branch President: Richard Nott, AM**

**Email: richardnott1942@gmail.com**

**Hon. Sec.: David Adams, LL.B**

**Email: ravesmarsh@msn.com.au**

**Administration Secretary: Sue Labordus, OAM**

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**NEWSLETTER – JUNE 2019**

**2019.2**

## **1. COMING EVENTS**

- a) PLAIN ENGLISH SPEAKING AWARDS, NSW FINALS: Friday 28 June 2019 from 9.30am-1.00pm at the NSW Teachers' Federation Hall, 37 Reservoir Street, Surrey Hills NSW. Entrance free, casual dress.**

The major sponsors of this programme include the BBM and English Speaking Union, however the Australia-Britain Society has been supporting this event for decades, with \$100 awards to finalists and a further \$250 award to the State winner. As well, the ABS Foundation provides a larger generous support to the National winner who then goes to London for the finals.

One of the finalists is invited to replicate his/her address at the next Queen's Birthday Dinner so that our members can see the quality of the arguments presented in this competition. The morning is an entertaining one that gives us heart that the mighty English language is alive and well despite a growing preoccupation with texting instead of speaking (one consolation of this is that train seating is now relatively quiet!). Do come along and enjoy a morning tea and arguments that you will find not only reassuring but entertaining (last year's finalists can be watched on Google). No acceptances or pre-booking necessary.

- b) LAST NIGHT OF THE PROMS Saturday 24 August 2019 7.00pm and Sunday 25 August 2019 2.00pm at Chatswood Concourse. Seats \$48.00**

This event is a popular one due to the diverse and well-known programme, based on the Albert Hall Last Night of the Proms festival, with the Willoughby Symphony Orchestra and Choir, selected solo artists and your committee leading the flag-waving. Parking is available under the

Concourse at modest cost and the venue is easily accessed by train and buses. We have been allocated 80 of the best seats in the stalls and boxes at the same price or less as people buying direct from the box office but no booking fee.

Further seats will be available if this number is taken up early (nearly all seats in the Concourse are good hearing/viewing ones). Consider bringing along some friends for a wonderful, happy afternoon of all the favourite items in the programme, led by the entertaining conductor Dr. Nicholas Milton.

Contact Sue Labordus at the secretariat – 9449-7532 - for more details and complete the attached flyer if you are attending. On the Saturday evening we just have 2 seats available, but we still have some good seats left for the Sunday matinée, allocated on seating preference and in order of requests received, but as mentioned we can obtain more tickets, subject to demand.

**c) ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND SILVER SERVICE DINNER Monday 23 September, 2019. AGM from 5.30pm and dinner 7.00pm at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Kirribilli cost \$65.00 for a main course, drinks and coffee.**

Further details and a flyer plus the appropriate AGM nomination forms/proxies will be sent closer to the date. Our thanks to Commander Richard Tighe, OAM RFD RD, and Mr. David Adams of our Committee, who have made this wonderful venue available to us through their hosting of these events.

**d) REMEMBRANCE DAY SERVICE AND LUNCHEON Monday 11 November 2019 at 11.00am service to be held at St. James' Church, King Street, Sydney followed by a 12.30pm luncheon at the Union, University and Schools Club, Bent Street Sydney. Prominent Military guest speaker.**

Further details will be given closer to the date, however those members and guests who have enjoyed the ambience and quality service at this club know that it is an attractive venue and we are aiming to secure a major military speaker to speak about the “current state of the world in military terms and some emerging issues for Australia and its diverse alliances”.

**e) LATER EVENTS**

- i. Christmas luncheon aimed to be held in late November/early December to avoid competing seasonal demands. The new British High Commissioner has been invited (yet to be confirmed).**
- ii. Nine Carols and Lessons at St. James' Church, King Street, usually held on the Sunday before Christmas with various city dignitaries reading lessons and the service followed by drinks and Christmas pies in the crypt.**
- iii. Australia Day 26 January 2020. We will be aiming to secure some seating aboard a prestigious boat sailing for 2-3 hours from the Quay.**
- iv. February/March, 2020 we will be aiming to secure His Excellency Sir Peter Cosgrove, our current Governor-General, to be our guest of honour, subject to his itinerary and**

**to speak on the reflection of his role as Governor-General. More details later as they are known.**

## **2. RECENT EVENTS**

### **Queen's Birthday Dinner 21 May at the Australian Club, Macquarie Street, Sydney.**

This function was attended by around ninety members and friends of collegiate societies and was a black-tie dinner to meet the incoming Governor, our Patron, Her Excellency The Hon. Margaret Beazley and her husband, Mr. Dennis Wilson. As well, we welcomed the current Tall Ships awardee Peter Sofatzis, who sailed recently from Bermuda to England, Sophie Mok from Pymble Ladies College who replicated her Plain English Speaking Awards talk in 2018, and two emerging stars from the Pacific Opera, Michelle Ryan and Andrew Dickson, led by that great pianist and entertainer, Glenn Amer. Notable guests included a number of retired members of the judiciary, Jim Frecklington (former member of the Royal Household and creator of the Australian Queen's coach), Dr. David Sturkey (former Private Secretary to the Governor-General), Rear Admiral Ian Crawford, Colonels Michael Miller, Sandy McGregor and Richard Morgan, and Professor David Flint.

There were some minor disappointments such as Her Excellency's arrival being delayed by thirty minutes due to a series of investitures limiting her ability to meet many people before dinner. Whilst there is a certain formality about the evening, it was also a happy and relaxed one with the Governor meeting people informally and being open to guests approaching her.

This year the numbers were reduced, which made it far easier for the Australian Club to service tables and distribute meals. Ideally we need to cap the attendances at 110 people next year to retain this service level. Unsolicited comments from guests were all positive and the general offerings were run at virtual cost to give guests as good a value as we can. The raffle aimed to provide restaurant meals, theatre and concert tickets. These do not raise a lot of money as we buy most prizes apart from some drinks and lucky seat prizes donated by the committee and members. This year we had too many prizes and we will reduce the offerings next year but hopefully it provides some fun and prizes people like but would not necessarily buy. Please let the Secretariat or any of the committee know how we can continue to improve on these event standards. Thanks for making the night a memorable one and especially those members who could not attend but sent donations to enable us to retain costs at the same price as recent years.

## **3. SUBSCRIPTIONS**

Unless you are a Life Member or a recent joiner, the annual fees are now due. Whilst doing this is a nuisance, it is a nominal figure, much lower than other organisations and geared to cover fixed costs such as administration services, insurances, printing and postages. This fee has not been increased for many years.

Part of the pressure on subscription levels is the very low interest rate environment. When rates were at 10% or higher we earned around \$2,000 a year from life member reserves and annual cash flows. This has now disappeared, putting balancing pressures on event surpluses and donations. If

you are a Life Member, perhaps you could consider making a donation to enable us to offer functions at a small surplus margin and cover costs. For those members who have made donations, we re-affirm our thanks for your tangible support to the life of the Society.

If you are not sure of your membership status a call to Sue Laborus on 94497532 will solve this.

#### **4. NEW MEMBERS**

We are more than pleased to extend a warm welcome to the following new members:

- . **Kenneth Hanstock**
- . **Col. Sandy & Mrs. Sandra MacGregor**
- . **Carole Ingram**
- . **LCDR Robert Valler**

#### **5. PASSINGS**

This Society cement is the loyalty of long-term members who like to attend events and catch up with old friends. Regrettably, the beat of the years takes some of them from us and our sympathy is extended to their families and friends. These include:

- . **Shirley Carroll**
- . **George Stephenson**

#### **6. SOCIETY TIES**

Production runs of ties locally has not been economic, but thanks to the generosity and help of Dale Eaton, who manages our sister Society in London, we have acquired 20 navy silk Society ties, available at our cost of \$55 (including postage to you), which is excellent value for a full silk and impressive tie. If you would like one of these ties please contact the secretariat and we will post one to you at that cost. Regrettably the former maroon and green ties are no longer available. Our thanks again to Dale Eaton for sending them to us.

#### **7. ROYAL EXCHANGE CLUB, 1 GRESHAM STREET, SYDNEY Tel: 9247-4374**

One of the best-kept secrets in Sydney is this club, one of the oldest in Australia, established in 1851, and nestled away in Gresham Street between Bent and Bridge streets, about 5-10 minutes walk from Wynyard and Circular Quay Stations and the first club to allow women as members. It has a main dining room and a casual courtyard dining area for breakfast and luncheons, plus a private dining room for around ten guests at competitive prices. Its membership fees are \$165 a year and it has a great list of reciprocal clubs especially throughout Asia.

Our Society, through my membership, holds committee meetings at the club private dining room without cost. The club manager, Alistair, has offered our members a two-month free membership to try the club offerings and as well a 20% deduction off the luncheon bill. Also if members wish to then join the club the annual fee at \$165 (plus 20% off all meals) is the cheapest of any decent club in the city and so well located. I use the club regularly and as well to gain access to special venues in Hong Kong and Bangkok especially the Hong Kong Bankers' Club and the Bangkok British Club near the river.

If you have an interest in this offer, could I suggest you ring the club (9247-4374) and using my name, ask for Ida (pronounced Eeda), and say that you wish to come for a meal (breakfast or luncheon) and take advantage of the free membership and 20% cost discount. After the free period there is no obligation to join. Dress is smart casual and aesthetics are attractive. As well the club holds periodic low-cost reception and functions for members. Great place to meet friends in town or hold lunch gatherings.

## **8. COMMITTEE**

We are fortunate we have a dedicated body of wonderful members on the committee and as well we have "shadow" members such as Andrea Havers, Carole Osborne and Tom Jackson who help sell raffle tickets. Also previous long-term Committee members such as Meredith Rundle help us with the annual evaluation of Tall Ships candidates as well as support from previous Tall Ships winner Alix Miller.

Under the various legislative controls on registered tax exempt charities such as ourselves, we need to hold at least four meetings a year and supplement this with email contacts. A committee quorum does not require all committee members to attend even this minimum number of meetings so the workload is not onerous but we do need some support in the area of promoting the society and its membership as well as to raise donations and raffle prizes by trawling markets and approaching various clubs, restaurants and theatres to glean free offerings.

Critical mass at events is needed to make them worthwhile so we aim to invite similar groups, with the attraction for them being that they do not have to do any organising apart from issuing event flyers that we prepare and we keep any surplus event margin (apart from the Friends of St. George's where we split the surplus if any). A recent offer has been made to the Savage Club for its members to attend our events and this will be developed.

The Society is fortunate that we have in the core roles people who have been long-term dedicated society supporters, but many of us are approaching our pasture grazing days and we need some fresh and slightly younger faces to supplement our happy little group before nature takes its course. If you can spare a small amount of time, even on a "shadow basis" let any of the committee know. Thanks for being continuing great friends of this Society and all its wonderful members.

*Richard Nott*