



Australia-Britain Society (NSW Branch) Inc

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

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**Patron: His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, AC DSC (Ret'd)
Governor of New South Wales**

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Administration Secretary: Sue Labordus



NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER, 2018

2018.07

1. VICE REGAL APPOINTMENT

It is a great delight to note the appointment of our Patron, His Excellency General The Honourable David Hurley, Governor of New South Wales, as the next Governor-General. General Hurley has added significant innovation to his current role, more than ably assisted in this by Mrs. Linda Hurley. They have both been active and positive supporters of this Society and our collective congratulations and best wishes have been extended to them. I expect that His Excellency and Mrs. Hurley's attendance at one of the planned events set out in this Newsletter will enable us to extend our best wishes and appreciations more formally and fully. Such good news, especially at Christmastide, is indeed wonderful and worthy of celebration. Well done!

2. COMING EVENTS

a) NINE CAROLS AND LESSONS ST. JAMES' CHURCH, KING STREET, SYDNEY SUNDAY 23 DECEMBER 7.30PM

This service is modelled on the famous Kings College Cambridge service and one of the most popular Christmastide events in the city, with St. James' pre-eminent choir and enthusiastic full church congregation with lessons read by city dignitaries including this year Dame Marie Bashir and His Excellency The Governor-General. Two pews have been reserved for this Society and we suggest you should arrive at 7.15pm latest. Entrance is free beyond the normal offertory. Afterwards the congregation is invited to enjoy mince pies and drinks in the covered courtyard. With all the modern tendencies to throw out a lot of our traditions, it is wonderful to not only reflect on the glory of Christmas but in the tradition of our ancestors. Do come along for this wonderful evening of musical celebration and exhortation of the various lessons.

b) AUSTRALIA DAY 26 JANUARY, 2019

In case you missed our last newsletter, you could note that next year there is no allocated event due to a combination of the lower cost event last year being too crowded and the major water carriers charging \$130 and more for a four-hour cruise and buffet plus a requirement we pay in advance for 100 places, was felt too much an ask for our members. By 2020 we hope to have an acceptable event in coverage and price.

- c) MILITARY THEME LUNCHEON 19 FEBRUARY, 2019 AT UNION, UNIVERSITY AND SCHOOLS CLUB, BENT STREET, SYDNEY at noon until 3.30pm with special guests of honour His Excellency the Governor and Mrs. Hurley and pre-eminent guest speaker, Dr. Brendan Nelson, Director of the Australian War Memorial. Dress: Lounge suit, cost \$110.00 includes two-course meal, drinks, entertainment, lucky seat prizes, and world-class entertainment. Flyer attached.**

Dr. Nelson is one of Australia's most accomplished and emphatic speakers who has made an outstanding mark on the War Memorial presentation and facility to highlight current conflicts involving Australian forces, in addition having achieved a major funding allocation from both Government and corporate sources to expand the site. He will be speaking on these changes and the future role of the Memorial in the life of our country. This address will be supported by a military theme to include a poem by a society member, entertainment by Glenn Amer and various singers embracing World War I and II songs, well known to the guests.

A rare framed print of the first Flight of the Spitfire, launched to fund the opening of the Fighter Museum at Hendon in 1979 will be on display. It is signed by the test pilot Jeffrey Quill, Mitchell's Supermarine co-designers and Rolls Royce engineers. It will be presented to Dr. Nelson for inclusion in the War Memorial collection. Subject to technicalities, a short extract from the recent film "Spitfire" will be shown plus an Auld Lang Syne clip to remember lost comrades to finish what will be a wonderful afternoon. This will be a popular event and bookings will be taken in order of receipt so book early. Flyer enclosed.

- d) COMMONWEALTH DAY LUNCHEON 11 MARCH, 2019 NOON AT STRANGERS DINING ROOM, NSW PARLIAMENT HOUSE, MACQUARIE STREET SYDNEY. Cost \$95.00. Dress Lounge Suit. Flyer attached. Enquiries and bookings direct to the Commonwealth Day Council, not to this Society.**
- e) QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY DINNER WEDNESDAY 15 MAY, 2019, AUSTRALIAN CLUB, MACQUARIE STREET SYDNEY from 6.00pm cost \$120.00 black tie/decorations with His Excellency the Governor, General David Hurley and Mrs. Hurley and several special speakers. Cost includes two-course dinner and drinks plus entertainment, free parking after 6.00pm under the Club. Approach from Bent Street. Flyer will issue closer to the date.**

This formal dinner is our only annual evening function at one of Australia's pre-eminent exclusive clubs where we have been given special access. The main dining room will hold up to 130 people and a large area for pre-dinner drinks where His Excellency will be meeting as many guests as possible. One of the finalists in this year's Plain English Speaking Awards, Ms Sophie Mok from Pymble Ladies College, will be replicating her address at the State Speaking finals and the event will be attended as well by the current winner of the Tall Ships awards, Peter Sofatzis, plus members of collegiate organisations. Please note the date in your diaries and further advices will issue around April.

f) FUNCTIONS IN GENERAL

Your Committee aim is not to overload members' calendars, and as well offer a variety of events throughout the year, recognising the competing demands around Easter and the European holiday season. Also, the timing depends often on when special guests are available to be with us.

Some questions have arisen as to the cost of events when some other groups occasionally charge lesser amounts. The basic framework event runs at around \$90.00 and extra costs are due to an amalgam of covering entertainment and special needs of exclusive clubs that many other bodies do not get access to. Also our events include generous drinks packages, so that on balance we believe they are good value. Recognising that some members wish to have occasional “no-frills” luncheons where they can catch up with other member friends, we will be looking at holding some lower cost events with limited drinks and no special entertainment or hard to secure guest speakers to enable this to happen at some of the second tier clubs on a buffet basis. Let any of the Committee know of your preferences.

We do have through our Committee special access to the top-tier clubs in the city and in addition, access to promising opera and cabaret artists plus wonderful pianists. A question was asked as to why we have avoided using the Stranger’s Dining room at NSW Parliament House? The Commonwealth Day luncheon, for example, is held there but is a once-off annual event run by a separate body and we circulate invitations at no charge or add-on cost to our members. This venue has early specific cut-off dates for events and requires a patronage of 100 plus to make it available at reasonable rates with limited drinks and entertainment. Our members are notoriously late in booking and this would not work at this venue. We would expect to use this venue if Royal visitors become available to join us where the venue will hold large supporters. Thank you for your enquiries.

3. RECENT EVENTS

- a) **Christmas Luncheon 21 November at UUSC** was a happy afternoon with wonderful traditional Christmas fare, plus alternative desserts, mince pies, raffles of delightful drinks, lucky seat prizes, carol singing and a variety of light classics and swing songs from various musicals performed by pianists John Martin and versatile singer and musical artist, Meredith O’Reilly. Our guest speaker, Michael Ward, the British Consul-General, spoke of current trends with our British trade and commercial relationships and possible free trade treaties with Australia if the Brexit programme materialises.

Most of our luncheons are held at the Union, University and schools Club (UUSC) as we get exclusive access to its various-sized dining rooms not available during the day at other clubs due to their member needs. Also the UUSC has highly professional service managers and can offer a variety of menus and drinks without breaking our offering costs or under-budgeting. As mentioned earlier, we will be providing in 2019 some lower-cost venues at second-tier clubs. This will be selective and depends upon member take-up numbers as to whether these can be run at a surplus. As things stand it is not realistic to hold events at top venues at second-rate venue charges so the small additional charge for what is offered is believed good value. This can be marginally reduced by removing entertainment; however, due to our special access to emerging talent we can secure singers at modest rates to give them experience and exposure.

- b) **Remembrance Day Choral Matins** at St. James’ Church was a special occasion remembering the 100 years since the cessation of First World War hostilities with moving tributes involving ringing of bells, The Last Post and Reveille, readings of the Ode and significant texts with special hymns. Many members attended and a special donation was made to the Church of \$250 on behalf of the Society. A wonderful service full of reflective tenor and matched by many reflective tears.
- c) **Invictus Games:** Whilst we could not secure special access to the Patron The Duke of Sussex, and The Duchess of Sussex, the British High Commission held a welcome reception for the British athletes at which Richard Nott and Sue Labordus represented the Society. It was a wonderful chance to speak with the participants and learn how they were injured and developed their participative skills. The Commission was supported by various British general staff and even the traditional garb of Chelsea military pensioners.

- d) **The Hon Menna Rawlings CMG, British High Commissioner**, finishes her term of four years next February and Richard Nott attended a farewell reception for her held at the Consul-General's residence. She spoke of her delight at serving Britain in the Australian post and her confidence that Australian and British trading relations will be enhanced with a free trade agreement when Brexit occurs. She will be returning to London and at this stage her successor has not been appointed.

4. NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome **Nick Geddes** and **Marius Barnsley** to our Society and look forward to seeing them at future functions.

5. SPITFIRE AND WORLD WAR I FILM ENHANCEMENTS

A 90-minute documentary to honour the Spitfire and few remaining Battle of Britain pilot survivors had a selective showing in Sydney recently and has been released this week on DVD at major retailers. Whilst some natural hubris and bias was evident, it was a well-received tribute to The Few, and in the cinema I attended there was a well-deserved ovation at the screening conclusion. Copies will be added to the February raffle prize list.

A premiere was held in London recently which The Duke of Cambridge attended, for the rejuvenation of World War One film footage, where not only was the film technically and frame timing modernised, but coloured as well. Amazingly the various regiments were analysed as to location, lip readers engaged and voices with regional accents superimposed on the footage. Short extracts are available on Google, plus interviews with the New Zealand producer as to how this was painstakingly done. When and if it is released commercially, details will be supplied.

1. **The Secretariat will be unmanned from 9 March until 23 March next but mail will be checked by the Committee.**
2. **Seasons Greetings are extended to all our members for their support and camaraderie at the last year's events that we are confident will be enjoyable as well in 2019.**

With best wishes from your Committee,

Richard Nott

