



Australia-Britain Society (NSW Branch) Inc

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

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Patron: Her Excellency the Hon. Margaret Beazley, AC QC, Governor of New South Wales

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NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2020

2020.1

1. COMING EVENTS

- a) **Friday 7 February, CWA Bowral Branch Rooms, 40 Wingecarribee Street, Bowral 5.30-7.30pm with Michael Baume AO presenting “The murder, mayhem and political skulduggery hidden in Britain’s sweet little nursery rhymes “, dress smart casual, cost \$25 per person that includes refreshments and canapés. Bookings via attached flyer or by phone to Sue Hawick tel 0416 053 617.**

This Southern Highlands gathering presents Michael Baume AO, a former senator for NSW and MHR for Macarthur, a previous Consul-General of Australia in New York, and a regular columnist with *The Spectator* Australia. Michael will present a fascinating background to the world of British nursery rhymes. Why not visit the Highlands for the weekend or a relaxed Friday drive to a wonderful part of the world? Trains of course also run regularly.

- b) **Monday 9 March, Commonwealth Day Luncheon noon for 12.30pm Strangers’ Dining Room, NSW Parliament House. Macquarie Street, Sydney NSW. Guest speaker Kate McClymont Investigative Journalist, Sydney Morning Herald and in the company of our Patron Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley AC, QC, Governor of New South Wales. Dress business attire, decorations, cost \$99.50 per person or \$1,100 corporate tables of ten. Flyer attached.**

This annual event includes this Society and all kindred groups, arranged and managed by the Commonwealth Day Council, with invitations sent to our members via the attached flyer. Interested members should complete and return to the parties directed in the flyer and request that they be seated with the ABS members and friends.

- c) **Tuesday 31 March, Luncheon with Guests of Honour Sir Peter Cosgrove, AK CVO MC, recently retired Governor-General of Australia, and Lady Cosgrove, who will be reflecting on his term as Governor-General and current evolving issues. To be held at the Union, University and Schools Club (UUSC), 25 Bent Street Sydney NSW from noon until 2.45pm. Dress: business attire and decorations, cost \$95 per member, \$105 per non-member includes drinks and two-course luncheon at one of our favourite clubs. A small raffle will be held and free tickets will be issued to guests. Flyer attached.**

Sir Peter and Lady Cosgrove are long- time friends of the ABS and over the past twenty years have been our guests on two previous occasions and he is happy to answer some questions on his subject or of a military nature. This event is

some distance away but to engage such distinguished guests necessitated scheduling it into a busy series of commitments and overseas travel, hence the early advice. This will be an interesting afternoon and an early booking is suggested via the attached flyer. Ken Bock OAM our capable Treasurer, MC and raconteur will be sailing the high seas so you will be left with Richard Nott as MC on this occasion and hope Ken's absence does not distract from a wonderful day otherwise.

- d) Late May, Queen's Birthday Dinner with our patron Her Excellency the Honourable Margaret Beazley, AC QC, Governor of NSW and Mr. Dennis Wilson. There will also be a finalist in the NSW Plain English Speaking Awards who will replicate her speech in the competition, also the current awardee of the Tall Ships sailing grant, plus entertainment from the Pacific Opera stars, and a raffle. Dress: black tie with decorations, cost approximately \$125 including free parking to be held at the Australian Club, Cnr Macquarie and Bent Streets Sydney NSW from 6.00pm until 10.30pm.**

A date has not been received from Her Excellency beyond embracing the late May timetable to avoid conflicting events throughout April due to Anzac Day and Easter holidays when many members are absent from Sydney. This annual event at the members' dining room is a special treat for non-club members to gain access to such a venue, fine fare and drinks plus quality entertainment and reflection from our Patron. Further date and other details will be sent when received.

- e) Last Night of the Proms Saturday night 22 August 7.00pm and Sunday matinée 23 August 2.00pm at Chatswood Concourse. Cost \$48 per person. Two-hour event replicating the Albert Hall occasion. Dress casual or "British Emphasis" with red, white and blue colours. Parking under the Concourse or a short walk from the bus and train stations. We have been allocated 110 tickets for the best seats as this year the Sunday concert will be filmed and the Willoughby Symphony is hoping the ABS members and friends can wave the various flags as well as our Committee being on stage with the orchestra supporting the audience involvement. Seats and tickets are now available via Sue Labordus at the Secretariat.**

We have around thirty tickets for the evening concert and the remainder for the afternoon event that is a little more riotous than the evening concert but both a lot of fun. The flag wavers will be dressed in Union Jack and colourful garb to entice you to join in the fun. Consider getting a cohort of family and friends together and join us for such a great day and be immortalised on the DVD that we presume will be available for sale shortly afterwards. Please note that the price of \$48 is less than the Concession price, the standard entry price being \$53.

- f) Early August, luncheon with Peter Rainey of King's School at the Macleay Room Australian Club luncheon from noon cost approx. \$90.00, business dress, to hear Peter reflect on the wonderful British cinema and hopefully show some clips from classic films.**

Thanks to Janatha and David Adams of our Committee who have secured this relaxed occasion where I am certainly hoping there will be some reflection on those wonderful British cinema classics, especially the comedies, popular actors, and the J. Arthur Rank famous war films. This luncheon will be held in one of the club's more intimate rooms to hold around 50 people, recognising that this subject may have special appeal to we older brigade and bring back some wonderful memories of our youth. Hopefully there will be a short question/answer section for guests to participate in. Further details will issue closer to the date.

- g) Tuesday 8 September, luncheon at UUSC from noon with the recently appointed British High Commissioner, the Honourable Vicki Treadell, CMG MVO, who will speak on British and Australian current relationships post Brexit and outlooks. Dress: business wear, cost approx. \$110.00 two-course luncheon with drinks.**

The Honourable Vicki Treadell will not be available to meet with us until later this year due to the changes emanating out of the Brexit programme and increases in the numbers of visiting dignitaries and parliamentarians. We now have a firm date for this luncheon and will provide more details closer to the time set.

- h) Monday 28 September, Annual General Meeting, Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, Kirribilli from 5.30pm to 6.30pm followed by a silver service oncourse and coffee/drinks dinner at 7.00pm to finish by 9.00pm for a limit of 35 members and guests. Cost approx. \$65.00.**

More details and AGM format to be provided in August.

Later events in the year will include a Remembrance Day service and military focussed luncheon on 11 November at the UUSC from 12.15 pm until 2.30pm, and Nine Carols and Lessons at St. James' Church King Street. A Christmas luncheon will be held in early December along similar lines to last year with cabaret entertainers and carols due to popular demand from the 2019 event.

2. RECENT EVENTS

a) Remembrance Day service and Luncheon

This service was constructed especially for our Society and its members are invited to read the lessons, and Ode spoken annually by Ken Bock OAM. A lunch followed the service at the UUSC with guest of honour Major-General Jim Molan AO DSC, who was re-elected to the Senate that day and had to depart at 2.00pm as a result to reach Canberra for his election process. Despite his early departure, it was a great gathering of interested members and military figures. Hopefully we can get a longer speaking event with questions into early 2021 with Jim reflecting on the political and military uncertainties of the world with particular emphasis on our region.

b) Christmas Luncheon at UUSC with entertainers and carols.

A guest speaker was not included in this event as members have mentioned that they would like more time at a casual event to speak with member friends and guests, which on this occasion proved a relaxing and enjoyable interlude appropriate at Christmas time. John Martin, pianist, and Simon Ward, cabaret entertainer, gave a wonderful cabaret performance covering songs by Noel Coward and Flanders and Swann, which were featured in a one-man show held by Simon Ward recently in the West End of London. Added to this was our MC Ken Bock delivering a Coward classic "Don't Put Your Daughter on the Stage Mrs. Worthington" to great applause.

The meal was traditional Christmas turkey and trimmings plus pudding and the club's speciality home-made mince pies, beautifully decorated tables and seasonal drinks. The only criticism of the day that went until 3.00pm, was that the price at \$120 was too high, but considering it included \$10 worth of free raffle tickets, payment for entertainers to drive from out of Sydney plus appreciative gifts to them and the UUSC club, the surplus was only beyond a modest one due to the subsidisation by the ABS committee with the cost of raffle prizes, payments to entertainers, some drinks and decorations plus Christmas meal. These can of course be reduced and a more temperate occasion at a lower cost provided, however it was such an enjoyable event that many guests asked for it to be replicated again next year. Also, most events show only small surpluses and we need at least one grand event to fund some of our grants without eating into our diminishing reserves, partly due to virtually no current interest earnings that traditionally have earned us over \$10K a year. We will of course continue to provide the best we can with some unique qualities about them at a good a price as we can without putting too many restraints on the drinks component and entertainers, that we engage but twice a year and only at a higher cost once a year at this event.

3. AUSTRALIA DAY

Value is determined by members and we have looked further into the Australia Day harbour offerings and those at other times of the year. The Order of Australia Association cruise at \$140 a head was fairly priced considering the costs of other vessels available that were at higher rates. The buffet cruise on this special day has really out-priced itself in terms of our member pricing tolerances when there are close water-based clubs that do have cheaper events and where special rooms can be allocated. A test was made at one of the harbour-based sailing clubs with a small party and for a large main meal and drinks, averaged around \$50 a head. It should be possible to get venues at around the \$100 or less cost and for a longer time frame similar to what was taken at the Kirribilli Club through our Committee gold military membership preferential offering. We will aim to secure something we consider a value day for next year.

4. AUSTRALIA-BRITAIN SOCIETY 50th ANNIVERSARY

This Society was established in 1971 by Sir Robert Menzies, former Prime Minister (British to his brace straps) and a sister Society in England by Sir Alec Douglas-Home, to expand the corporate and business focus of the Cook Society started in 1969 to embrace social ventures that support cultural links especially with young people; hence our grants disbursement for English-orientated activities such as the Tall Ships British sailing ship crew opportunities and the Plain English Speaking Awards. As well, over the years we have given moneys to a wide range of cultural skill development in the arts, law and ceramic development. The status of organisations such as ours, with limited new memberships and small reserves, means we cannot expand beyond what we are doing easily unless we expose our remaining assets to more speculative investments or take open-ended risks in promoting larger raffle prizes such as airline tickets, holidays etc. We do have enough funds to maintain the organisation for many decades to come provided we can attract replacement members and a new committee with some fresh ideas. Hopefully this will be achieved and next year we can proudly celebrate our fifty years of wonderful camaraderie with like-minded people and support our heritage undertakings.

5. CONGRATULATIONS

Our Patron, Her Excellency the Governor was awarded a Companionship in the Australia Day Honours list and we extend our congratulations and continuing best wishes to her.

Dr. Brendan Nelson, Director of the Australian War Memorial, was the most popular guest we have had in recent years due to the commendable work he has done in revitalising the operations and structure of the memorial. He now proposes to move to a senior role in the aircraft industry with our congratulations and good wishes for work well done. We are hopeful Dr. Nelson can join us again in 2021 to add to his electrifying and emphatic address to us last year.

6. KINDRED GROUPS

We have approached most well-known bodies that have similar profiles as ourselves with a view to either merging our interests and memberships or at least sharing our activity profiles. We invite various groups to our functions to give us attendances that enable costs to be contained and also get reciprocal access to their activities. This has had limited success but we are continuing to discuss this programme-sharing with other groups to provide divergent activities.

Thank you for supporting this wonderful Society and for those not only on the committee but also those who have helped us by joining special sub-committees or helping to sell raffle tickets. Importantly, and the background of our success is you, our members who are such loyal supporters of this Society in your attendance at functions, continuing membership and donations.

With continuing best wishes,

Richard Nott