

## A H Bray

Production of these essays about the caricatures of L. Herbert Beecroft always entails 2 discoveries – the personality of the subject of the painting and the personality of Beecroft himself. So many of the subjects are men of eminence, it is not hard to find a wealth of material about their lives, but Beecroft is more elusive and accordingly intriguing. In the following article, I found a personal anecdote about Beecroft. He had a companion in his studio.

**Saturday, 11th August, 1917 - The World's News**

*A VETERAN RING-DOVE.*

*Instances of longevity of parrots and cockatoos are frequent, but it is not often that the age of an English ring-dove can be proved. Mr. Herbert Beecroft, portrait painter, of Woollahra, has had one in his possession for more than 24 years. This may constitute a record, the average age being, under good conditions, about 10.*

*"Cooley" is a valued pet, in fact is Mr. Beecroft's studio mate. He was picked up as a fledgling in their garden in Berkshire, England, by Mrs. Beecroft, and has lived a happy single life ever since in a cage. He was brought to Australia 12 years ago and evidently found the climate congenial. On the voyage he had his moments of sea sickness, like the humans, much to his surprise, but kept up his cooing in the new environment. Old age has not marred his appearance; he is still in good feather, and ever ready to recognise his friends, but he is too stiff to fly, as he used to do, around the room and settle on their heads.*



A year or so before the above article appeared, Beecroft was called to the Club to paint Arthur Henry Bray, the subject of this essay. This is one of my favourites of all of Beecroft's caricatures. It is a really beautiful water colour and in good nick too after 102 years.

Mr. Bray was not a yacht owner as far as I can tell. Cricket was his game and Beecroft has painted him relaxing on the verandah of "Carabella", most likely with a whiskey with water or soda (note the soda fountain). He is smoking his pipe and a box of matches stands on an ashtray on the table to his left.

In the background, looking south sou' east from the verandah, one can be seen Pinchgut and a ship is at anchor in the mouth of Rushcutter's Bay. Note too the detail at the bottom of the ledge of the verandah – a scupper, clearly to drain the water in a sou' east rain squall.

All of Beecroft's caricatures provoke queries about some mysterious detail of the painting and the caption at the bottom "The Vicar" did just that. I speculated whether Mr. Bray had some religious connection to no avail then by sheer luck I stumbled upon the answer. I have copied below an article which explains:

**Thursday, 15th June, 1922 - Freeman's Journal**

**THE VICAR OF BRAY.**

*A Famous Old Poem.*

*A correspondent is curious regarding that famous old poem, 'The Vicar of Bray,' so much quoted when politicians place their personal fortunes before their principles. The town of Bray, mentioned in the poem, is not the County Wicklow town, as he supposes. The following is taken from 'The History and Antiquities of the Hundred of Bray, in the County of Berks,' by Charles Kerry, master of the Bray and Holyport School, 1861: 'The village or town of Bray is of great antiquity, and has given its name to one of the largest parishes and hundreds in Berks. It is situated on the banks of the Thames, about a mile to the south of Maidenhead, and about five miles northwest of Windsor. Bray is proverbially known throughout England on account of the versatile principles of one of the old vicars. The story so quaintly related by Fuller in his book, 'Worthies,' is as follows: 'Proverb, The Vicar of Bray, will be Vicar of Bray still.'*

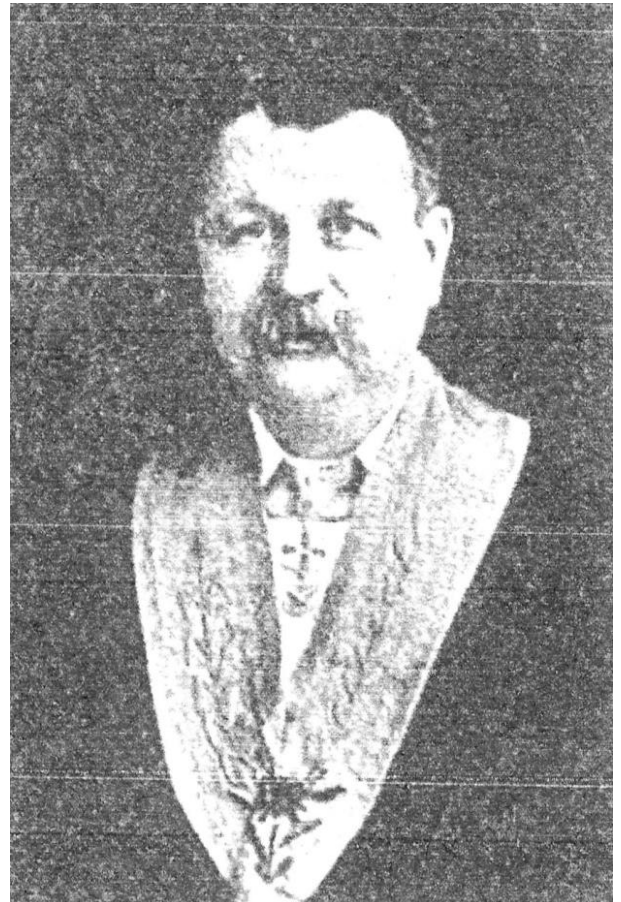
*The vivacious Vicar hereof, living under King Henry the Eighth, King Edward the Sixth, Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth, was first a Papist, then a Protestant, then a Papist, then a Protestant again. He had seen some martyrs burned (two miles off) at Windsor, and found this fire too hot for his tender temper. This vicar, being taxed by one for being a turncoat and an inconsistent changeling, 'Not so,' said he, 'for I always kept my principle, which is this — to live and die the Vicar of Bray.' Such many nowadays who, though they can not turn the wind, will turn their mills and set them so that wheresoever it bloweth, their grist shall certainly be grinded.'— Fullers 'Worthies'*

*The author of the 'Vicar of Bray' is said to have been an officer in Colonel Fuller's regiment in the time of George I. There exist various versions of this poem, all slightly different.'*

I will leave it to the reader who may be interested to look up the poem for it is readily available on the Internet. Suffice to say I concluded that Mr. Bray's nickname was "The Vicar" and this was subsequently confirmed by current Squadron member, Peter Bray, a descendant of Arthur Bray.

Mr. Bray was also heavily involved with the Freemasons and I have included 2 examples of his seniority below. The second is particularly evocative; a time when Sydney was a much smaller place and a letter to the Governor's wife and her reply could be placed on public record.

**Thursday, 27th September, 1888 - Illustrated Sydney News**  
**GRAND SECRETARY V.W. BRO. ARTHUR HENRY BRAY**  
*was born in Sydney in 1852. He is the son of a Mason and grandson of Thomas Boulton (who belonged to the Lodge formed in Sydney by the 48th Regiment - the second regular Lodge formed in New South Wales), one of the founders of Freemasonry in the colony. Brother Bray was initiated in the "Unity Lodge" of Sydney (late 1169, E.C.) in 1878, of which Lodge he became W.M. in 1882. On July 1, 1884, he was appointed D.G. Secretary of the D.G. Lodge, E.C. and D.G. Secretary of the D.G. Chapter of Royal Arch Masonry. In 1887 he received the Jubilee appointment of Past Grand Standard Bearer in the Grand Lodge of England, and Grand Chapter of England; and in the same year he became First Principal of "Zetland Royal Arch Chapter." He has very recently been appointed Provincial Grand Secretary of the Provincial Grand Mark Lodge; and was unanimously elected by the English,*



*Scotch, and New South Wales Constitutions Grand Secretary of the United Grand Lodge of New South Wales.*

**Tuesday, 26th March, 1895 - Evening News**

*Masonic.*

*LETTER FROM LADY DUFF.*

*Mr. Arthur H. Bray, Grand Secretary of the Masonic body in New South Wales, has received the following letter from Lady Duff: 'Government House, Sydney, 23rd March, 1895.*

*Sir, — Will you be so kind as to convey for me to the Grand Lodges of South Australia, Victoria, and New Zealand my heartfelt thanks for the messages of sympathy they have sent me through you in this time of, to me, exquisite suffering? My husband's last public action was to attend a meeting of the Grand Lodge in Hobart on Tuesday, the 12th of last month; the fatal illness seized him that same afternoon. I also wish to thank you and the members of the Grand Lodge of New South Wales, over which my husband presided with so much pride and pleasure, for your expressions of sorrow for me in my bereavement. The feelings that prompted them are deeply appreciated by me. — I remain, yours faithfully, L. Duff.'*

**Sunday, 19th August, 1928 - Truth**

*SOME WORKER.*

*ONE of the sponsors for Wor. Bro. Lord Stonehaven at his installation as Grand Master-elect of the U.G.L. of New South Wales was that venerable juvenile, M.B. Bro. Arthur Bray, whose association with the G.L. runs back to the genesis of things. He was Grand Secretary of the U.G.L. during the whole period of its existence, until a recent retirement. That Lodge was established in 1888, under a special dispensation brought from England by the Earl of Carnarvon, as Provincial Grand Master of England, and in carrying out the amalgamation he was assisted by the late Lord Carrington, then Governor of New South Wales, who was appointed Grand Master of the U.G.L. of New South Wales. The lodges forming the Grand Lodge of this State had previously worked under the English, Scottish and Australian constitution. Arthur H. Bray has been a zealous worker during forty years for the Craft.*

The following article was worthy of inclusion if only because it records the foundation of the Sydney Cricket Ground.

**Tuesday, 20th September, 1932 - Sydney Morning Herald**

*SYDNEY CRICKET GROUND.*

*TO THE EDITOR OF THE HERALD.*

*Sir, - As this famous ground will be very much in the public eye during the coming cricket season, your readers may be interested to hear some of its earliest history. In the seventies, half-a-dozen of the leading cricketers of the day were given permission to form an oval on which to hold cricket matches. Their names were: A. R. Docker, H. M. Faithfull, J. M. Gibson, W. C. Goddard, Philip Sheridan, and Richard Teece. These gentlemen, who have all been dead for some time, formed a committee, acting in an honorary capacity, to administer what was first known as the "Association Cricket Ground." The secretary to the committee was Mr. S. H. Fairland, and the hon. treasurer Mr. Arthur H. Bray, and both these gentlemen's names appear on the old life-members' tickets enclosed in the neat folder, which have now been replaced by the silver oval badge, which is so justly prized by its fortunate owners. The money which was spent to enclose the ground with a fence so that a charge for admission could be made was borrowed by a member of the committee from an old gentleman in England, who was very dubious about lending on an Australian enterprise; but when on due date the principal, with interest, was promptly repaid, he was so pleased that he wanted to lend the committee some more. At a later date, when funds were required, the committee decided to issue life-member tickets at £10 each, limiting the number to 100. These were quickly taken up, and one could not be obtained unless one of the life members died. Issuing life members' tickets has been discontinued for some time, and the number of them is naturally diminishing as time goes on, but most of those remaining are very regular spectators at all important matches.*

*Most of the present buildings surrounding the oval were erected during the regime of the committee, and after they had administered the ground for many years the Government of the day appointed a trust to control the*

*ground, which was now called the "Sydney Cricket Ground," and Mr. Sheridan was appointed manager.*

*No mention of the Sydney Cricket Ground would be complete without reference to "Jim" Fogarty, so well known on the members' gate for his unfailing courtesy and strict attention to duty. It is hoped that he will be at his usual post when the English team is here.*

*I am, etc.,*

*Sept. 19. LIFE MEMBER.*

Mr. Bray died on the 20th of May, 1942.

**Friday, 22nd May, 1942 - Sydney Morning Herald**

**WELL KNOWN MASON DEAD**

*One of the most outstanding Masons in New South Wales, Most Worshipful Brother **Arthur Henry Bray**, died suddenly at his home at Manly on Wednesday. Eighty-nine years old he was a Mason for 63 years and was the first Grand Secretary of the United Lodge of New South Wales which was formed in 1888. In 1911 he was made Past Grand Warden and nine years later became Past Grand Master. Since his retirement in 1924 he has always taken an interest in Masonic activities. He has left a widow three sons and two daughters.*

**April, 2015**