

## C P Bartholomew

Beecroft's caricature for Charles Percy Bartholomew is one that is very special to me. C. P. Bartholomew was a close friend of my grandfather Charles Dansie Maclurcan. Both men were founding members of the Wireless Institute formed in 1912, a group of pioneering amateur wireless nuts, many of whom led the world in the development of radio over the next 20 years. Charles Bartholomew, in fact, was issued with Amateur Licence #1 with Callsign XBM. My grandfather was #12 with Callsign XDM. My grandfather transmitted from the roof of the Wentworth Hotel, then in the possession of his mother Hannah.

Charles Bartholomew was an Englishman who first visited Australia in the 1880s, representing his father's firm "in the colonies."

### **Monday, 14th May, 1888 - Sydney Morning Herald**

*ENGLISH ART FURNITURE,  
By GEORGE BARTHOLOMEW and CO.,  
FINSBURY, LONDON.  
SYDNEY AGENCY - 31A, YORK STREET.  
H. MARSH, Representative.*

*Mr. C. P. Bartholomew is now on a short visit to the colony with some of the firm's latest designs and samples, and will be pleased to submit same and personally superintend the execution of any instructions entrusted to him.*

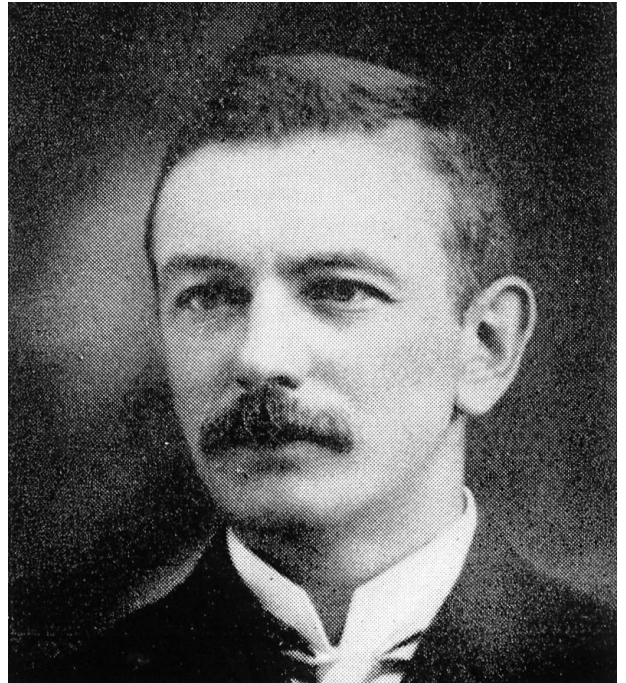
The following article indicates that Mr. Bartholomew immigrated to Australia about 1897. The new firm specialized in quality furniture.

### **Saturday, 18th December, 1897 - Sydney Morning Herald**

*W. WALKER, SONS, AND BARTHOLOMEW, LIMITED, BUNHILL HOUSE.*

*What in a general way may be called the aesthetic in art has more or less influenced all design in furniture and fabrics during the last two decades, and it is scarcely too much to say that what Adams, Sheraton, and others did for design at the latter part of last century, eminent English firms are doing for it to-day. Not least among these stands the old, established firm of W. Walker and Sons, of Bunhill Row, London, better known perhaps to our readers through their branch business carried on at Bunhill House, George-Street, and now under review. The chief feature, perhaps, of the last few years in the furniture trade, is the remarkably low price at which good furniture reaches the public. No firm has done more than Messrs Walker, Sons, and **Bartholomew** to bring about this desirable state of things. The "Cottage" dining, drawing, and bed room suites of Walker and Bartholomew's are well known, they are marvels of cheapness, chaste and simple and true in design and honest in construction. They seem to have hit the true feeling of the old school, and adapted what is most worthy, reproducing little bits here and there that indicate that taste, experience, and the true love of art have been their tutor. We can safely recommend our readers, and especially ladies and gentlemen down from the country, to pay a visit to this establishment (the showrooms are next door to David Jones and Co's, in George Street, nearly opposite the GPO), and they will see some of the prettiest and most beautiful articles of furniture, bijouterie, bric-a-brac, &c, to be seen in this city. This firm also make a specialty of bedsteads and pure bedding.*

Mr. Bartholomew was elected to the Squadron in 1899. In 1901, W. Walker, Sons and Bartholomew merged with Beard Watsons and Charles Bartholomew worked as a director there for the rest of his life. He designed and erected his first experimental wireless station in Mosman in 1906, 3 years before Beecroft's painting, dated 1909. At the time, wireless transmission was Morse Code. Beecroft has depicted Bartholomew using Flag



Semaphore to communicate. This is the telegraphy system conveying information at a distance by means of visual signals with hand-held flags, rods, disks, paddles, or occasionally bare or gloved hands. Information is encoded by the position of the flags; it is read when the flag is in a fixed position. Semaphores were adopted and widely used, with hand-held flags replacing the mechanical arms of [shutter semaphores](#), in the maritime world in the 19th century. It is still used today during [underway replenishment](#) at sea and is acceptable for emergency communication in daylight or, using lighted wands instead of flags, at night.

Mr. Bartholomew is displaying the letter J. Since Beecroft can hardly depict a set of signals in his painting, we look to the meaning of the flag J in the International Maritime Signals. In 1909, it meant "I am going to send a message by semaphore." On the flagstaff in the middle of the painting, there are more flags – P over J meaning in the international code "I cannot maintain my present course." Have you noticed that the flagstaff is in fact an inverted oar? Also, there are wires hanging from the top which makes me think that the whole apparatus is some sort of aerial.

On the water, there are a group of natives in a canoe heading towards Bartholomew. One is standing at the bow and gesticulating or maybe even replying in semaphore. What does it mean? Does anyone have any ideas?

I have found no evidence that Mr. Bartholomew owned a yacht which might explain why Beecroft has placed him ashore in his painting; however, he frequently acted as a Race Official or Officer of the Day, to use a more traditional description. More relevant though is the following quote from "[Sydney Sails](#)."

*"Early in 1912 at the instance of C. P. Bartholomew a wireless telegraph transmitting and receiving set was installed in the Squadron's premises, this being one of the few wireless installations then in Australia, and the only one in a yacht Club outside Britain."*

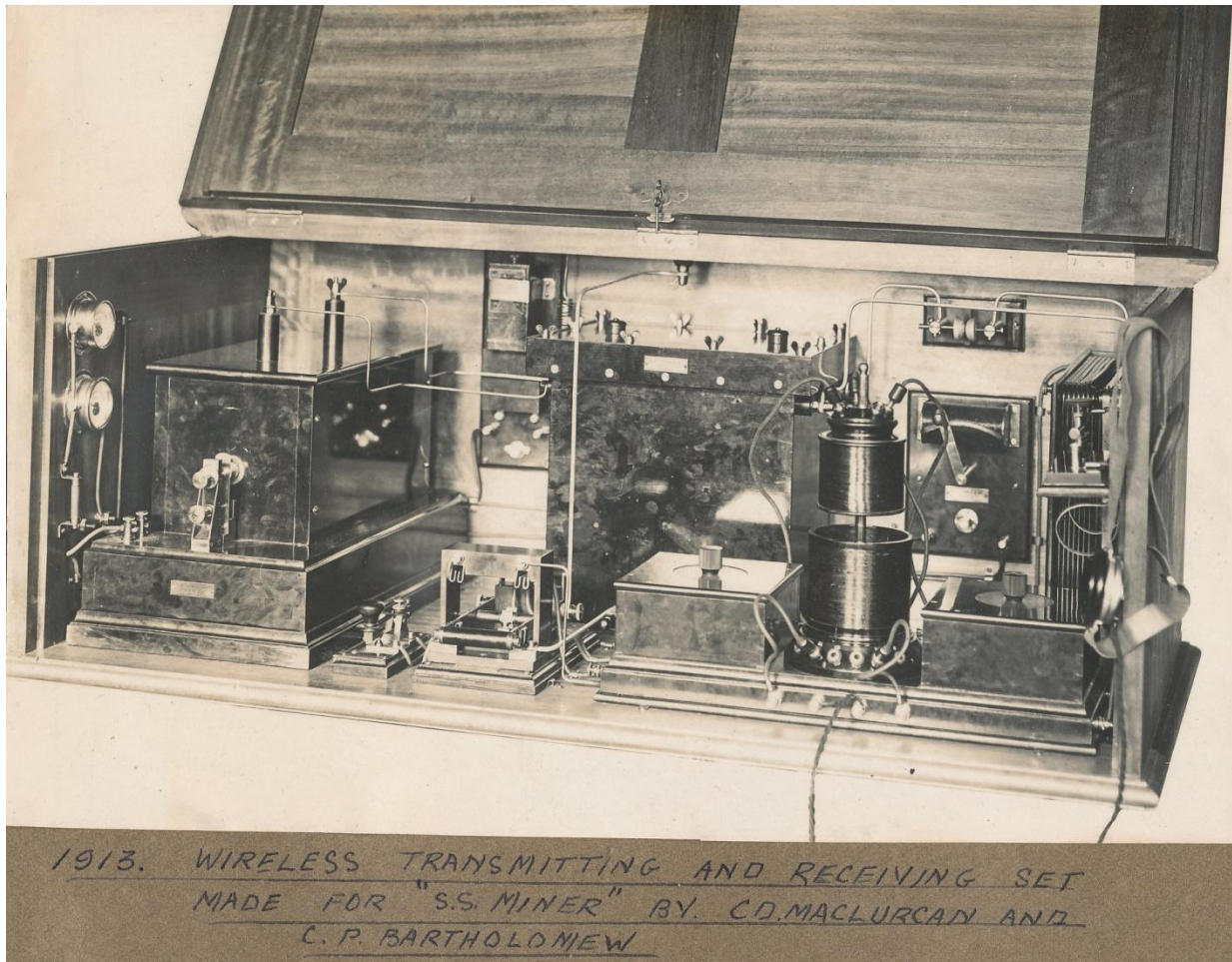
My grandfather at the time was transmitting from the roof of the Wentworth Hotel and I would put my money on the likelihood that the Wentworth Hotel and the RSYS were in regular communication. I delved into the Maclurcan archives and found the following photo in one of my grandfather's albums. It seems that Mr. Bartholomew and my grandfather received a special commission in 1913.

NSW acquired a specialised minelayer called "S S Miner" in 1883. She was based at Chowder Bay (see photo). She was also taken over by the Commonwealth and saw service during World War I. She went to Melbourne to



THE CLUBHOUSE IN 1912  
showing the wireless mast

replace a similar vessel (Vulcan, built at Williamstown in 1889) in 1918. She was sold in 1923. Laying of minefields and defence of forts was then generally an army rather than navy responsibility; hence none of the ships became HMA ships.



In 1915, Mr. Bartholomew was a founding member of Amalgamated Wireless (Australasia) Limited which older members will recall as A.W.A. Often at the AGMs of AWA, he would act as Chairman. Mr. Bartholomew was a bachelor and he was a resident of the Club for many years.

**Friday, 29th January, 1915 - Sydney Morning Herald**

**THE YACHTSMANS CLOTHES.**

**THEFTS AT ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON.**

*At the North Sydney Police Court, Robert Chambers, 18, was charged with stealing in the dwelling house of Norman Murray, Peel-street, North Sydney, six silk shirts, four oxford shirts, twelve pairs of socks, a hat, six handkerchiefs, a pair of flannel trousers, a blazer, seven singlets, and a pair of pajamas, valued at £14, the property of Norman Murray, also with stealing a diamond tie pin, valued at £15, the property of **Charles Percy Bartholomew**; and with stealing a quantity of groceries, soap, etc, the property of Sydney Daniel McLaren. Evidence was given by Sydney Daniel McLaren, secretary of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, that accused had been employed by him as a bedroom boy for about four months. The groceries were found in his box. Norman Hector Murray, a solicitor, said that he resided at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron and saw the clothing in accused's bedroom, where they had been found by Mr. McLaren, in a bundle of laundry. Regarding Mr. Bartholomew's pin, it was stated by Mr. Rosenthal, a pawnbroker, of George-street, Sydney, that accused pledged the pin with him for a pound. Accused explained that some friends from the country had presented him with it. Mr. Bartholomew, a director of Beard, Watson's, Limited, residing at the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron, said he missed the pin about two months ago. He spoke to the accused, who replied that he did not consider the pin was in a safe place, and he had hid it at the back of a handkerchief drawer. After that, Mr. Bartholomew put the pin in its old box. Accused reserved his defence on each charge, and was committed for trial. Bail was allowed.*

As a resident of the Club, Mr. Bartholomew would certainly be interested in improving the accommodation as noted in the next article. I bet any furnishings required came from Beard Watsons!

**Thursday, 30th August, 1928 - Sydney Morning Herald**

**ROYAL SYDNEY YACHT SQUADRON.**

*Largely owing to the activities of **Mr. C. P. Bartholomew**, plans for alterations and additions to the premises of the Royal Sydney Yacht Squadron are well in hand. The main feature of the extended building will be additional accommodation for resident members, 12 new bedrooms being provided. There will also be a new library, and a new Clubroom for members only, while the existing Club room will be available both to members and associate members. A new dining-room for associate members is provided for, as well as a drawing-room for ladies. The drawing room will command a splendid view of the harbour. The work is expected to cost about £7,000. Mr. Rutledge Louat is the architect.*

Mr. Bartholomew served as Honorary Treasurer to the Club for 4 years from 1932. He retired from AWA in 1942, probably due to ill health because he died on the 25th of December, 1942, noted as a resident of Kirribilli.

**July, 2015**