



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF N.S.W.

PAPER NO.: 2

PREPARED & DELIVERED BY:- G. H. Cumming.

DATE:- Monday, 25th November, 1991.

---

LAWRENCE HARGRAVE 1850 - 1915

For many centuries man was captivated by the flight of birds and had dreamt that he too would, one day, join them in the sky. The development of hot air balloons only served to whet the appetite, and the real goal became powered flight.

This was achieved by the Wright brothers of the United States of America on the 17th December, 1903.

Wilbur Wright wrote: "six very remarkable men in the last decade of the nineteenth century raised studies relating to flying to a point never before attained.

Lilienthal, Chanute, Maxim, Ader and Hargrave formed by far the strongest group of workers in the field that the world has seen".

The American Octave Chanute said: "If any man deserves to fly, that man is Lawrence Hargrave of Sydney, New South Wales".

Working alone, Lawrence Hargrave developed fuselage construction, curved wing surfaces, propellers and engines. Only Australia's comparative isolation prevented him from beating his contemporaries.

He was born on the 29th January, 1850 at Greenwich, England and was educated at Queen Elizabeth Free Grammar School, Kirkby Lonsdale, Westmorland.

He arrived in Sydney in 1866 to join his father who was a prominent Judge and who wanted him to follow in his footsteps and become a lawyer. Lawrence, however, was more interested in Engineering and took a job with the Australasian Steam Navigation Company.

It was during this period that he developed his enthusiasm for exploration. He made several trips to North Queensland and, in 1872, set out to do some gold prospecting in New Guinea. Having survived a shipwreck, he sailed again in 1875 for the Gulf of Papua where he joined another expedition to explore the land beyond Port Moresby. In 1876 he met the Italian naturalist Luigi d'Albertis and together they sailed some 800 kilometres along the Fly River.

On his return to Sydney, he was elected a member of the Royal Society of New South Wales in June, 1877 after which he returned again to the Torres Strait.

He took an active interest in The Engineering Association of New South Wales which he joined in 1875. He became a member of the Council and was elected Librarian in 1888. It was recorded at the time that he exhibited models of his

