



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Paper No. 59.

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Date: 27th March 2000.

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In 1956, in the early days of television in Australia, a new station, ATN7, employed a former journalist and war correspondent as a political commentator. His habit of leaping from his studio chair and bumping into the sound boom with a very distinctive "This I Believe" earned him the name of Eric Boom.

Eric Baume was born on 29th May 1900 in Auckland, New Zealand, the eldest of four sons of a Dunedin barrister who was also a member of Parliament, and an American born mother. His parents were both unorthodox Jews and he seems to have been raised with no particular religious affiliation, in fact he was to marry a Methodist lady in a Methodist Church in 1921 in Whangarei, they later having three children. Eric's mother at the age of 55 embraced Roman Catholicism.

His early schooling was at King's College, Auckland Grammar School and Waitaki Boys' High School before going to Auckland University College to study law whilst working as an articled clerk at the firm of Endean and Holloway who had bought his father's business on his death a few years earlier. He described law as "hell" and just wanted to get out of it.

Eric's first employment was in 1917-18 with the New Zealand Herald as a proof reader and cub reporter under the Editorship of William Lane who together with Dame Mary Gilmore had taken the failed experimental socialist expedition to Paraguay in the late 1890s. He was also having poems and cartoons published in the New Zealand Observer. These poems were strongly influenced by war, glory, gallantry and patriotism, after the style of Kipling or Rupert Brooke. Eric then moved on to be sub editor of the Waipa Post in 1919-1920, where he really learnt journalism. The journalistic staff consisted of two and Eric did all the reporting, subbing and most of the editorial writing, also taking responsibility for the material published.

At this time, in Auckland, he met a lady, Mary Jack, daughter of the Mayor of Whangarei and very quickly told her that he was going to marry her. She replied that she was engaged to be married and anyway she was shortly off to England. Eric was very persistent and in Mary's words he did not court her so much as lay siege to her. Mary then broke her engagement and agreed to marry Eric on her return from England in a year's time. During her time she had almost forgotten what Eric looked like until he met her ship by coming out on the pilot boat. They were married eleven weeks later on 17th December 1921 as mentioned above.

