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PREPARED AND PRESENTED BY: G.H. Cumming

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THE PROUD JEWELLERS

In 1903, William James Proud, watchmaker by trade, purchased the Modern Art Jewellery Company located at 187 Pitt Street, Sydney and began trading as W.J. Proud, Gem Merchant, Jeweller and Watchmaker.

William James and his brother Thomas then opened a shop in the Strand Arcade in September 1903.

In 1919 they moved to a store on the corner of Pitt and King Streets. The site became known as 'Proud's Corner.' Prouds moved to their present location in King Street in 1970.

Tragedy struck when William J. Proud's 28 Years old secretary, Zieta Steadman, was taken by a shark in shallow water in the upper part of Middle Harbour on 4 January 1942.

In Prouds centenary year, they have stores in 17 Sydney suburbs and a total of 122 stores throughout Australia.

In collecting stories for the birthday in September, Grace Yee told the Weekend Edition of the *Sydney Morning Herald*, published July 26-27, 2003 of a gallant type of 40 years ago.

"He knelt and proposed in the diamond department of the King Street store, presumably so they didn't have far to go for a ring. Two years ago, the bride came back and asked for - and got - a square of the department's carpet as a keepsake."

Other memories included the golden retrievers who sat outside collecting for the Dalwood Homes and radio personality, John Laws remembered sitting on the steps of the shop in his school uniform waiting for his sister to finish work in the 4th floor office.

Laws said:

"I bought my first expensive watch from Prouds. The 18 carat gold Omega is a replica of the watch worn on the moon. There were only 1000 of them made. Mine is number 632 and I still have it today."

The retail jeweller and giftware store of Edments, located in King Street next to McDowells, merged with Prouds in 1951.

As the firm celebrates its centenary, it is still a family business - but not the Proud family. It is owned by Pascoe's, a New Zealand family company of jewellers, very similar to Prouds with a dedicated staff and high brand recognition.

