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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.

Pascoe's was taken over by Anne and David Norman in 1980 and, in turn, Pascoe's acquired Prouds in 1996 and yet another Aussie icon bit the dust.

The founders of the store were Freemasons. William James Proud, aged 32, was made a mason on 11 February 1904 in Lodge Austral No. 194, United Grand Lodge of New South Wales. He was passed Fellowcraft on 10 March and raised a Master Mason on 14 April 1904.

He called off Lodge Austral on 30 June 1907. He was the foundation Junior Warden of Lodge Jethro No. 448 at Manly at the Consecration of the Lodge on 16 November 1922.

The following year, on 16 November 1923, he was installed as Worshipful Master. He later served as Chaplain of the Lodge.

He was also a foundation member of Lodge Sydney High School No. 631 at its Consecration on 2 August 1929.

He remained a member of Lodges Jethro and Sydney High School until his death in March 1931 aged 59 years.

Thomas J. Proud was made a mason on 27 September 1904 in Lodge Tarboltan No. 12 United Grand Lodge of New South Wales. He was passed Fellowcraft on 22 November 1904 and raised a Master Mason on 16 March 1905. He was installed as Worshipful Master on 27 June 1910.

Other members of the family who were Freemasons were Ernest I. Proud who was a member of The Millions Lodge No. 476 United Grand Lodge of New South Wales where he served as Worshipful Master in 1932 and Sir George O.D. Proud, also a member of The Millions Lodge who became Managing Director of Prouds Ltd., in 1934.

After the Second World War, Sir George gave jobs to many ex-service men and women. He was described as a very paternal man who established many of the values that still exist in the company in its centenary year.

References:

* *The New South Wales Freemason*. Sydney, December 1927.

* *Reflections*. September 2003, Prouds the Jewellers.

* Grace Yee, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, July 26-27, 2003.

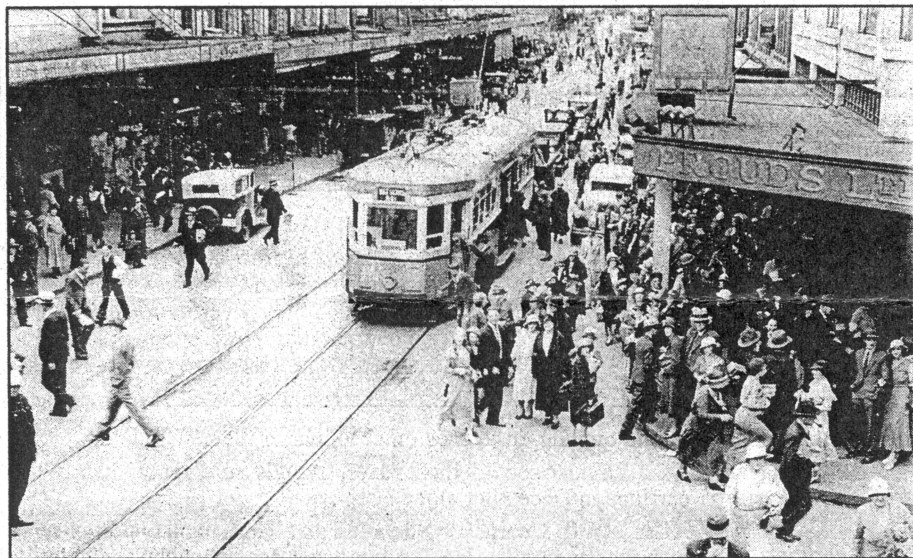
* The United Grand Lodge of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory, Membership Records.

* *The Keystone*, Sydney, 30 December 1910.

* *The New South Wales Masonic Herald*, Sydney, October 1906.

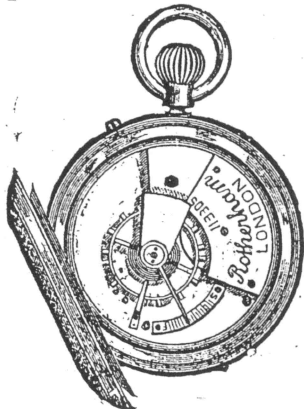


Sir George Proud



Sydney bustles around Prouds corner, 1934

Presentation English Lever Watches.



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