



THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

PAPER No. 129

PREPARED & PRESENTED BY: K.R. Newman

DATE: 27 March 2006

**Wor. Bro. JAMES MITCHELL, OBE, CBE.
INSPECTOR GENERAL/COMMISSIONER OF NSW POLICE**

James Mitchell was born at Cruden, a small fishing village in Aberdeenshire, Scotland on the 20th March 1865. He was a sturdily built Scot 6 feet 2 inches tall, weighing 12 stone 8 lbs, and of fair complexion.

On leaving school he commenced the trade as a coachbuilder.

On his arrival in Australia in 1884, at the age of 19, he immediately joined the Foot Police in Sydney. Police Applications Records show that he was married to Martha Anne on his arrival in Sydney.

James Mitchell displayed a higher than average education and a good ability to learn and perform well in many phases of police work.

In February 1888, after four years service, he was promoted to the rank of sergeant.

In 1891 he was temporarily transferred to Bourke to put down the volatile mines riots. In 1892 he was sent to Broken Hill to put down the mine rioters there.

He returned to Sydney serving in administrative positions in several inner city Police Stations.

In 1904 as an Inspector of Police, he was sent to England on six months study leave to investigate new methods of crime detection, general administration and traffic control.

On his return to Sydney, he made a comprehensive report to the New South Wales Government on his observations. On 1 January 1908, Mitchell was appointed as a Superintendent. In 1914, he was promoted to Metropolitan Superintendent and Acting Inspector General and when the Inspector General, E.C. Day, retired in February 1915, James Mitchell was appointed Inspector General.

James Mitchell was responsible for many early reforms within the Police Service.

In 1925, James Mitchell journeyed to America and England in search of new modern Police methods. On 8 January 1926 the government altered his official title from Inspector General to Commissioner of Police. He retired from office at the mandatory age of 65 years on 26 March 1930.

He died on 27 October 1941 aged 76 years. He was privately cremated.

In 1919, James Mitchell was appointed an Officer of the British Empire and in 1927, a Commander of the Order of the British Empire.

He had resided for over thirty years in the family home, aptly named "Cruden" in New South Head Road, Rose Bay.

James Mitchell was a very private person who would not give public interviews and made a written request that only his close family and friends were to attend his funeral service and his family was not to publish his obituary.

Wor. Bro. James Mitchell was made a Mason in Lodge Zetland of Australia No. 655, English Constitution, meeting in Sydney, on 8 March 1887 at the age of 22 years. He was passed Fellowcraft on 12 April 1887 and Raised a Master Mason on 30 May 1887. He served as Worshipful Master for the term 1899-1900.

James and Martha had two children, Margaret and James.

His son, James Allardyce Mitchell, born on 29 September 1909 was a Group Captain and served with the R.A.A.F. in the Second World War. He was killed in action on 17 May 1945. He had joined Freemasonry in Lodge Condobolin No. 185 on 13 September 1935 and affiliated with Lodge Vaucluse No. 266 on 15 April 1937. He also affiliated with Lodge Royal Empire No. 613 on 26 October 1939.

REFERENCES:

Membership Records - United Grand Lodge of NSW & ACT.

Records - Mitchell Library.

Book entitled, *N.S.W. Police Force 1862 - 1962*.

Book entitled, *Inspector Generals 1851 - 1930*
Commissioners of Police 1930 - 2003.

Archives - N.S.W. Police.
