



## THE MASONIC HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF NEW SOUTH WALES

Paper No 186

Prepared and presented by Jim Ruxton, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011

### Lionel George Logue (1880-1938)-Speech Therapist to a King

Lionel Logue was born on 26<sup>th</sup> February 1880 at College Town, Adelaide, the eldest of three children of South Australian born parents George Edward Logue, a clerk and his wife, Lavinia, nee Rankin. Educated (1889-1896), at Prince Alfred College, Lionel studied elocution with Edward Reeves who purged his voice of much of its Australian accent. In 1902 he became Reeves's secretary and assistant teacher and studied at the Elder Conservatorium of Music. He later worked on a gold mine at Kalgoorlie, Western Australia. At St George's Cathedral, on 20<sup>th</sup> March 1907, he married Myrtle Gruenert, a 21 year old clerk.

Settling in Perth Logue, taught elocution, public speaking and acting. He staged plays, recited Shakespeare and Dickens at concerts and founded a public speaking club. He also taught part time at the Young Men's Christian Association, Scotch College, Methodist Ladies' College, Loreto Convent, Perth Technical School and Claremont Teachers' College.. In 1911 Logue set out on a world tour to study methods of public speaking. A Christian Scientist, Logue was dedicated to healing. In World War 1 he treated returned soldiers afflicted with speech impediments caused by "shell-shock". Using humour, patience and super human sympathy, he taught them exercises for the lungs and diaphragm and to breathe sufficiently deeply to complete a sentence fluently. In 1924 Logue took his wife and three sons to England, initially for a holiday. Instead he took jobs teaching elocution at schools around London. In 1926 Logue opened premises at 146 Harley Street, London, the fees paid by his wealthy clients enabling him to accept poorer patients without charge.

Before he ascended to the throne, Albert, Duke of York, dreaded public speaking because he suffered from a severe stammer. His closing speech at the British Empire Exhibition on 31<sup>st</sup> October 1925 proved an ordeal for both speaker and listeners alike. In 1926 the Duke of York consulted Logue about his stammer. The therapist diagnosed poor co-ordination between larynx and diaphragm and asked him to spend an hour each day practising rigorous exercises. The duke came to his rooms, stood by an open window and loudly intoned each vowel for fifteen seconds. Logue restored his confidence by relaxing the tension which caused muscle spasms. The duke's stammer diminished to occasional hesitations. Resonantly and without stuttering he opened the Australian Parliament in Canberra in 1927.

Logue's work with the duke continued through the 1930s and 1940s. Using tongue-twisters Logue helped the duke to rehearse for his major speeches, his coronation and his radio broadcasts to the British Empire throughout World War 2. The two men remained friends until the King's death. In 1937 at Westminster Abbey on 12 May, wearing the Member of the Victorian Order decoration given to him by King George 6<sup>th</sup> on the previous night, Logue sat in the apse to encourage him during the ceremony. Before the King's radio speech that evening, Logue whispered to him, "Now take it quietly sir." Logue was a founder (1935) of the British Society of



Speech Therapists and a founding fellow (1944) of the College of Speech Therapists. He was also speech therapist to the Royal Masonic School at Bushey in Hertfordshire. He retained his love of music and the theatre and enjoyed walking and gardening. In World War 2 his practice shrank and he acted as an air raid warden three nights a week. The "slow measured pace" which he had afforded the King's diction proved affective in His Majesty's wartime broadcasts and speeches. Elevated to Commander of the Victorian Order in 1944, Logue was with the King for the VE Day broadcast on 8t May 1945. Their friendship was "the greatest pleasure of Logue's life". After his wife's death that year Logue took up spiritualism. Survived by his three sons, he died on 12<sup>th</sup> April 1953 in London and was cremated.

Lionel George Logue was initiated, passed and raised in the three degrees of Freemasonry on 18<sup>th</sup> September 16<sup>th</sup> October and 20<sup>th</sup> December 1908 in Lodge St. George No 6, Western Australian Constitution. He served in the various progressive offices of the lodge, being installed as Wor Master in 1919. He remained a member until his death in 1953.

Ref: Aust. Dict. Biography, Vol 15, 1944-1980  
Records GL of Western Australia  
Wikipedia



Logue with Myrtle Gruenert at the time of their engagement in Perth in 1906

**Lionel Logue**  
**CVO**



Lionel Logue in 1937