

## Lanark House

By John Mancy

Six 'Men of Lanark' recently marked the 50th anniversary of the demise of their former chambers.

In 1956, when Wentworth Chambers was completed, as former District Court judge Harry Bell recalled recently, most members of the Bar had been located in Chalfont Chambers (142 Phillip St), Forbes Chambers (150 Phillip St, 'known as 'Diggers' Inn' because the owner, Sydney City Council, leased rooms only to ex-servicemen'), Selborne Chambers (174 Phillip St), Denman Chambers (182 Phillip Street) and University Chambers, in the old Law School building.

Bell said that at Lanark House, 148 Phillip St, 'a somewhat dilapidated building which took its name from the place of origin of its structural steel: Lanarkshire, in the Scottish Lowlands', Meares QC, later Justice Charles Leycester Devenish-Meares, led a floor of 23 barristers clerked by Norman Calver.

Meares' predecessor, as floor leader, was R Cecil Cook, later Cook J of the NSW Industrial Commission., while John Brennan DCJ and Aaron Levine DCJ (father of David) had recently left us— as had David Hunter, Chief Justice of Tonga, and Stephen Smyth-King, who had joined what used to be called 'the Lower Branch.'

**Meares' men - 'The Men of Lanark' – were, in order of seniority:**

- TP (Tom) Flattery, a much-loved lecturer in Roman law,
- Edgar Martin,
- Henry W (Harry) May, father of the scientist, Lord May.
- JKW (Keith) Cowie,
- PM (Phil) Woodward, later Woodward J of the NSW Supreme Court,
- KA (Ken) Cohen, later Cohen J of the NSW Industrial Commission,
- KFE (Ken) Torrington, later Torrington DCJ,
- RJA (Bob) Franki, later Franki J of the Federal Industrial Court,
- P Ayton (Peter) Leslie, later Leslie DCJ,
- JB (John) Kearney, later Kearney J of the NSW Supreme Court,
- HH (Harold) Glass, later Glass JA of the NSW Court of Appeal,
- EF (Ernest) Byron, later Byron QC, public defender,
- TW (Tom) Waddell, later chief judge in Equity, NSW Supreme Court,
- RA (Bob) Howell, later Howell QC,
- AL (Adrian) Bellemore, who became a solicitor
- HH (Harry) Bell, later Bell DCJ,
- BKW (Brian) Cowie,
- Kevin O'Malley-Jones,
- HL (Harvey) Cooper, later Cooper DCJ.
- AE (Allan) Hogan, later master of the ACT Supreme Court and ADCJ (NSW)

Most of the above moved to 9 Wentworth Chambers in June 1956. The new floor, including a few men from other chambers, retained its old identity –the floor members still pay their clerk's fees into the Lanark House account.

When a floor member was elevated to the Bench, or took silk, a piano was hired for the floor dinner – always, of course, at the University Club. As well as the usual Gilbert & Sullivan fare, from 1953 onwards, all joined in the floor song, accompanied on the piano by either Meares or Woodward, to the tune of 'Men of Harlech'!

**The first stanza ran:**

Law's a wine that's strong and heady,  
 Lanark men are stout and steady,  
 Ever robed and ever ready  
 Are the Lanark Men!  
 Those who live in Selborne  
 Might as well be stillborn;  
 Chalfont gents pay fancy rents,  
 Denman by both wind and rain is well-worn;  
 Forbes is full of weary diggers,  
 'Varsity of student figures;  
 Lanark men all work like (under privileged folk) –  
 Drink to Lanark Men!

Harry Bell said all but one (Smyth King) of the seven surviving Men of Lanark (Kearney, Waddell, Bellemore, Bell, Cooper and Hogan) met for lunch in March – 'and to complete the cycle, invited the present leader of the 9th floor, G Barry Hall QC, to join them in marking the passage of 50 years from the death of the old floor and the birth of the new'.



L to R: Kearney, Bell, Hogan, Hall, Waddell, Bellemore, Cooper.