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### **W. Haughton Bell**

(courtesy xx)

**William Haughton Bell** (1863-1936) was born 19 March 1863 at Fernside House in Kew, Melbourne. W. Haughton Bell, the name he used professionally, was the son of Francis and Jane Bell. Francis Bell (c1813-1879) was a British railway engineer, who worked extensively in Australia. He had commenced his engineering career in 1837, involved with the construction of railways in England, Scotland, and Ireland. By 1853 he had migrated to Australia, and was married in 1858 at Newcastle, NSW to Jane Eliza Livingstone. Bell's expertise was sought for a number of Melbourne civic works projects in the late 1850s and early 1860s. After working at East Maitland, NSW in the later 1860s, Bell was City Engineer at Sydney from 1871 to 1879, improving the city's water supply and sewerage. Francis Bell died in 1879 at the family residence in Petersham, when Haughton was just 16 years old.

Further research is required to determine details of Haughton Bell's early education, but it is known that he was fortunate in gaining experience within the Sydney office of E.T. Blackett (1817-1883), specialists in ecclesiastical architecture. Confident in his abilities, W. Haughton Bell commenced practice on his own account at Pitt Street, Sydney in September 1885. He entered into partnership with William Gratus Coward (1858-1894) when Coward & Bell was formed at Tattersall's Chambers in Hunter Street, Sydney during August 1886. The partnership was dissolved in 1891, and tragically, Coward was killed in a railway accident at Redfern in 1894. Bell became a Fellow of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales around this time.

With economic recession impacting on the east coast in the early 1890s, Bell moved to gold boom Western Australia in search of work, and in September of 1895 married Clare Adams at St John's Church in West Perth. He obtained a position as a draftsman within the rapidly expanding Public Works Department

(PWD), and was working on the proposed Warden's Court at Coolgardie in 1896. In June 1896 it was announced that Bell had won a competition for the design of a new and very grand Swan River Mechanics Institute on the south-west corner of Pier and Howick (later Hay) Streets in Perth.

With work secured, in July 1896 Bell entered into partnership with Duncan Henry Inverarity (1863-1941), an Associate of the IANSW, who had also previously been engaged in Blacket's office in NSW. A public notice in *The West Australian* of August 1896 informed the public that the firm had been expanded to include Harry Whitfield Mills, 'Licensed Surveyor and Civil Engineer (late of the PWD)', as 'Mills, Bell and Inverarity'. The services of the trio were described: '*They undertake all descriptions of Building, Civil Engineering and Surveying Work*'. Prospects must have been bright, as in October 1896 the firm was advertising to secure an articled pupil. However, the partnership was dissolved in March 1897, with Bell leaving. Mills and Inverarity then seem to have focussed on engineering works.

Around this time Bell moved to the Kalgoorlie goldfields, and took on other business roles, whilst occasionally also undertaking architectural commissions. In 1898 he is listed as a director in the prospectus of the 'Kanowna Deep Alluvial Puddling and Crushing Syndicate Limited'. During 1899 he is listed as an architect at Kanowna, but soon moved to Kalgoorlie, where in November 1899 he called tenders for a cottage residence, surgery, and stabling at King Street, Boulder for Dr Bridgeford. Whilst working as an architect at the engineering firm of Bellingham & Co in Kalgoorlie, he called tenders during February 1901 for a grandstand at the Kanowna Recreation Reserve. Later in 1901 he designed an arch for the Timber Merchants and Mill-owners Association at the intersection of William Street and St George's Terrace in Perth, one of a sequence of arches erected as decorations for a Royal visit.

Bell's time in WA was relatively short, and by 1905 he had returned to Maitland in NSW, where he won another competition, this time for a Church of England rectory at the nearby town of Paterson. Further research is required to determine Bell's activity in NSW during the early twentieth century. At some stage he returned to Sydney. He died 6 November 1936 at a private hospital in Darlinghurst. Clare died at Randwick in July 1937.

## References:

- 'Births', *Argus*, 21 March 1863, p.4 (birth at Fernside House, Kew).
- 'Government Gazette', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 March 1884, p.8 (in volunteer forces).
- 'Mr Haughton Bell', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 23 September 1885, p.2 (commences practice).
- 'Tenders', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 March 1886, p.2 (repairs etc to The Grange, Wilson Street Newtown).
- 'Business Announcements', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 30 August 1886, p.3 (Coward & Bell formed).
- 'Business Announcements', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 July 1891, p.7 (Coward & Bell dissolve).
- 'Tenders', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 January 1893, p.1 (two residences Strathfield).
- 'Marriage', *The West Australian*, 5 October 1895, p.4 (marriage to Clare at St John's Church).
- 'Business Announcements', *The West Australian*, 25 July 1896, pp.3,6 (Bell & Inverarity).
- 'Public Notices', *The West Australian*, 10 August 1896, p.8 (Mills, Bell & Inverarity form).
- 'Situations Vacant', *The West Australian*, 15 October 1896, p.8 (Mills, Bell and Inverarity seeking articulated pupil in architecture and land surveying).
- 'Business', *The West Australian*, 3 November 1896, p.1 (Mills, Bell & Inverarity move to Austral Chambers, Barrack Street, Perth).
- 'Tenders', *The West Australian*, 23 February 1897, p.6 (2 shops & dwellings Marquis Street, West Perth for Miss Spratt).
- 'Partnerships', *The West Australian*, 8 March 1897, p.6 (Mills, Bell & Inverarity dissolve).
- 'Prospectus of the Kanowna Deep Alluvial Puddling and Crushing Syndicate, Limited', *West Australian Sunday Times*, 5 June 1898, p.13 (WHB director of Kanowna Syndicate).
- 'Tenders', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 7 November 1899, p.6 (cottage residence, surgery, and stabling King Street Boulder for Dr Bridgeford).
- 'Tenders', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 13 February 1901, p.7 (Kanowna Recreation Reserve grandstand).
- 'Tenders for Grandstand', *Kalgoorlie Miner*, 4 March 1901, p.7 (Kanowna Council tenders).
- 'The Invitation Cards', *The West Australian*, 22 May 1901, p.5 (WHB design for Royal visit).
- 'The Timber Arch', *Western Mail*, 15 June 1901, p.55 (timber arch design).
- 'The Royal Visit', *Western Mail*, 13 July 1901, p.27, (timber arch design).
- 'Competitive Designs', *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 31 July 1905, p.2 (at West Maitland, wins competition for Church of England rectory at Paterson).
- 'Small Debts Court', *Maitland Daily Mercury*, 23 April 1908, p.4 (WHB pays on goods delivered).
- 'Deaths', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 November 1936, p.8 (death at Darlinghurst).

Information supplied 7 April 2014 by Dr Noni Boyd, Heritage Officer, AIA (NSW).  
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Heritage Committee meeting approval date: 10 April 2014 Last updated: 10 April 2014

## **Citation details:**

Taylor, Dr John J., 'William Haughton Bell (1863-1936)', *Western Australian Architect Biographies*, <http://www.architecture.com.au/> accessed DATE.



Offices for Stephen, Jaques and Stephen's, O'Connell Street, Sydney – designed by 'rising' architects Coward & Bell (*Australian Town & Country Journal*, 8 September 1888, p.31).



Swan River Mechanics Institute completed in 1897 on the south-west corner of Pier and Howick (later Hay) Streets in Perth (SLWA 011480d).