



## Colonel E.R. DRURY CMG

[1832 – 1896]



**Colonel Drury was President of the Club in 1894 <sup>1</sup>**

**A Founding Member of the Club in 1892.**

Edward Robert Drury was born in Brussels, Belgium on 16 December 1832.

His father was Reverend William James Joseph Drury MA [1791-1878] who was born in Middlesex and died in Brussels. He was chaplain to the British Embassy in Belgium and had been a master at

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<sup>1</sup> Colonel Drury's term of office as President is explained by the following. Under the Club's original 1892 "Rules" or "Constitution", the Presidency of the Club alternated "as of right" between the senior Army and Naval Commanders in the Colony (and later the State) of Queensland. A separate elected position of "Chairman of Committee" also existed who, as implied by its name, actively managed the Club through its volunteer Committee Members – including Honorary Secretary and Treasurer. In 1910 the Rules were amended to reflect a governance model, which has essentially existed ever since, where the elected President chaired the Club Committee.

*We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. The series will be progressively expanded and developed. They are intended as casual reading for the benefit of Members, who are encouraged to advise of any inaccuracies in the material.*

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Harrow School; then tutor to the (later) Prince Consort Albert<sup>2</sup> and his brother Ernest in Brussels; and to the sons of the King of the Belgians.<sup>3</sup>

Drury's mother was Anne (née Nicholas) [1806-1878] She was born England and died in Brussels. The daughter of an English parliamentarian, she was William's second wife – they married in 1828. His first wife Anna Frances (née Taylor) [1797-1827] had borne him six children. Edward was the third of Anne's four sons and six daughters born between 1830-45, who included:

- Mark Henry [1834-1907] Head of Drury, Jones and Timberlake (East India Merchants of London)
- Albert Victor [1837-1907] Born in Brussels, died in Brisbane. In 1864 in Brisbane he married Mary (née Pring) [1837-1902]. They had two sons and four daughters. Albert entered the Civil Service of Queensland in 1862 and was appointed clerk of the Executive Council in 1867 – a position he held for 37 years.
- Two sisters who remained unmarried in Brussels and conducted a “finishing school” for young ladies. Their niece Lillian May Drury attended and taught at the school for some eight years. Their nieces Evelyn Octavie Drury and Ernestine Roberta Drury also attended the school in 1896 – returning to Brisbane in 1900.

Edward was educated in Brussels.

In Brisbane on 19 August 1869 he married Barbara Jane (née Grahame) [1846-1907] of Sydney; they had four sons and four daughters – all born in Brisbane.

- Edward Herbert Merivale [1870- 1946] In 1891 a student in London; then at Trinity Hall Cambridge. Called to the Bar (Inner Temple) in 1896; Colonial Office until 1900. Held several posts as Secretary to Governors of smaller colonies (e.g., St Helena). Married Eva Murray (née Neilsen) in 1909 in Mafeking, South Africa. They had one son. Awarded an MBE in 1918 for work as Assistant Resident Magistrate, Bechuanaland.
- Arthur Henry Grahame [1871- 1935] solicitor at Flower & Hart. Did not marry. Died in Brisbane. Well known in sporting circles, he was for many years the Judge at the Brisbane races.
- Lilian May [1873-1939] In 1901 married Yorkshire-born Harold Saltmarshe [1866-1931] in Brisbane. An English-born grazier and miner he became Mayor of Southport, where he died. They had two daughters.
- William ‘Willie’ Byron [1875-1917]<sup>4</sup> Joined the Royal Navy in 1888 and graduated at Dartmouth. Served in Middle East 1914-17 and died of blackwater fever. Did not marry.
- Noel Harnage [1877-1923] In 1907 married Nina Temple (née Clerk) [18??- 1907]. In 1909 married Doris Louisa Cardew (née Simpson) [1889-1943] in Brisbane. A solicitor, he took articles at Flower & Hart in Brisbane and lived, practised, and died at Clifton. They had one son and two daughters.
- Evelyn Octavie [1879-1961] Did not marry. Died in Brisbane.

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<sup>2</sup> Albert, Prince Consort, of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, [1819-1861] Married Victoria, Queen of United Kingdom 1840

<sup>3</sup> Leopold I [1790-1865]. First King of the Belgians 1831-65. Son of Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld

<sup>4</sup> Commander W.B. Drury RN.

- Ernestine “Nesta” Roberta Barbara [1881-1964] She died in Brisbane. In 1914 in London married Edward Oswald Marks [1882-1971]<sup>5</sup>. Originally an engineer who became Queensland Assistant Government Geologist, he later trained as a doctor in Dublin. The family returned to Brisbane in 1920. They had one daughter Dr. Elizabeth Nesta Marks AO [1918-2002].
- Audrey Saxham [1885-1973] Married Richard George Perry Clarke [1885-1960], an accountant, in 1909 in Brisbane. Died in Brisbane They had 3 sons and a daughter.

Edward built the family home "Hawstead" in 1876, originally perched on the edge of the Brisbane River in Bowen Terrace, New Farm. They had a holiday home, "Saltwood" on Shorncliffe Parade, Sandgate (where he died).

Edward arrived from Belgium in Melbourne in 1852, became a clerk in the Bank of Australasia<sup>6</sup> in 1853 in Sydney and was appointed manager of the Brisbane branch in 1860. Ten years later he was transferred to Sandhurst (Bendigo) but in May 1872 became general manager of the new Queensland National Bank<sup>7</sup> in Brisbane. The Queensland National Bank dominated the finances of Queensland until almost the end of the century.

Drury followed a vigorous lending policy to assist the rapidly developing primary industries in the state. The bank had a meteoric rise. As early as 1880 it had over thirty branches and held more than forty per cent of the total deposits and advances in Queensland. It had offices in Sydney. In 1881 construction of a new head Office in Brisbane was completed; so magnificent were its stained glass and polished cedar that it became known as "Drury's Temple" (and is still standing at the corner of Queen and Creek Streets).

In 1879 the Premier, McIlwraith<sup>8</sup>, and Drury signed an agreement whereby the Queensland National Bank would for three years transact all government business. Although this monopoly continued until the 1920s it tended to disrupt normal business. Drury maintained his vigorous lending policy; however, the strain began to show on the bank, especially after a quarrel in 1891 between the Queensland government and the Bank of England<sup>9</sup>, and on 15 May 1893 the Queensland National Bank had to suspend payments<sup>10</sup>. Drury still retained control and tried to reconstruct the bank, but it remained shaky. He remained General Manager until his death. In 1894-95 he was president of the Australian Association of Bankers. In banking, a chronicler described him as a "complete autocrat" and "never far from controversy".

Drury had always been interested in military pomp and in 1854, while in Sydney, joined the New South Wales Volunteer Rifles. He retained this interest in Queensland and was commissioned in the Queensland Volunteer Rifle Corps in 1861. He excelled at rifle shooting and was a founder of the Queensland Rifle Association. He strongly supported Governor Sir George Bowen's<sup>11</sup> attempt to establish a colonial defence force. On the disbandment of the Volunteer Rifle Corps in 1866, he transferred to the Queensland Volunteer Artillery, and in 1876 was gazetted as a Major - rising later to Lieutenant-Colonel (commanding the Field Artillery) and then Colonel.

<sup>5</sup> Captain E.O. Marks, RAMC, 1916-18; Western Front

<sup>6</sup> An English Chartered Bank operating in Australasia 1835-1951. Head Offices in London and Melbourne. Merged with Union Bank of Australia to form Australia and New Zealand Bank in 1951.

<sup>7</sup> Queensland National Bank 1872- 1948. Head Office in Brisbane. Taken over by National Bank of Australia in 1948.

<sup>8</sup> Sir Thomas McIlwraith KCMG [1835-1900] Three times Premier of Queensland 1879-1893

<sup>9</sup> A vigorous exchange of letters between the two parties relating to the capacity of the State to repay debentures when due.

<sup>10</sup> The 1893 banking crisis affected banks throughout Australia and followed a speculative property boom in an un-regulated environment.

<sup>11</sup> Sir George Ferguson Bowen GCMG, PC [1821-1899], Colonial Administrator. First Governor of Queensland 1859-68

He was deputed in 1885 to give evidence before the Imperial Royal Commission on Colonial Defence.

His role as Acting Commandant, Queensland Defence Force and President of the Club are inextricably entwined with other Club Presidents. When the Commandant (and the Club's Founder in 1892), Major General Owen <sup>12</sup> left the Colony in June 1894, his replacement, Colonel Howel Gunter <sup>13</sup>, did not arrive until May 1895. Drury thus became Acting Commandant and Club President - before handing over the Military command to Gunter; and the Club Presidency to Commander Walton Drake <sup>14</sup> (the senior Naval officer in the Colony) in June 1895.

He was appointed a Commander in the Order of St. Michael and St. George (CMG) in 1885.

He never forgot his youth in Belgium, and became that nation's Consul in Queensland, for which service he was created a chevalier of the Belgian Order of Leopold.

He was appointed a Justice of the Peace in Queensland.

Colonel Drury died at Sandgate, Brisbane on 3 February 1896. After his death, some sensational journals declared that Drury had not died but was living abroad, and that his coffin contained only stones; no proof was ever brought forward.



Sources included:

- Various web pages
- *United Service Club, Queensland: The First Century, 1892-1992* by Flight Lieutenant Murray Adams and Lieutenant Colonel Peter Charlton
- Club Meeting Minutes, Annual Reports, and sundry documents
- Australian Dictionary of Biography, Volume 4, (MUP), 1972'
- Dictionary of Australasian Biography
- Trove
- NAA archives

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<sup>12</sup> Major General John Owen OM. [1839-1924] Commandant Queensland Defence Force 1891-94

<sup>13</sup> Colonel Howel Gunter [1844-1902] Club President in 1896 and 1898

<sup>14</sup> Captain W. Drake RN [1850-1940] Club President in 1893, 1895, 1897 and 1899