Nicholas, Mayor William (Bill) Robert, MBE (1914-1987)



MAN02061 Mayor Nicholas, 1976

Bill Nicholas had a long and distinguished career in Local Government, extending over 24 years. He served on Manly Council from 1953 to 1977 and was Mayor in 1964 and 1965. He was appointed a delegate to Mackellar County Council in 1954 and, apart from a seven-year break from 1956-63, played an increasingly active part in County Council affairs as chairman in 1967, 1968 and 1976

He was a member of the executive of the Local Government Electricity Association from 1967 to 1976 and held office as treasurer, deputy chairman and chairman.

He retired from Council due to ill health, in September 1977. Shortly thereafter, he and his wife, Ida, moved to Wynnum in Queensland, where he died in 1987, aged 73.

The Manly Daily, Wednesday November 25, 1987, printed the following obituary:

"Former Mayor of Manly and long-standing Alderman William "Bill" Nicholas MBE has died in Brisbane. Survived by his wife Ida, seven sons, one daughter, and 16 grandchildren, Bill Nicholas has been described as a wonderful caring man who was a "champion of the battler".

Following education at Christian Brothers School, Manly, he left school at 16, and from humble beginnings rose to be the public relations director of Ampol. He then moved to a business of his own, operating the service station in Darley Road, Manly, for many years. However it was for his service to the community that Bill Nicholas won the greatest respect and admiration...

Mr Nicholas is recognised as being one of the major forces responsible for saving Manly from commercial disaster in the 1960s when the opening of the Warringah Mall complex at Brookvale threatened the livelihood of the Corso's retailing future. As the leader of the council he worked for increased parking and cleaning up slum areas...

Mr Nicholas was an active member of the community, well known in the Queenscliff Surf Club and the Seaforth Bowling Club and a former president of the Lions Club."

Nobbs, Captain H. Gilbert (1880-1970)



Captain Nobbs was number 4 in the *Manly Daily* series, 'Moulders of Manly', 1 May 1946:

"...our old and esteemed resident, Captain H. Gilbert Nobbs. When asked by a Manly Daily representative how he came to select "the Village" as his headquarters, "the skipper", as he has long been popularly known, replied: "I came on a short visit early in 1914 from [London], England and stayed a few weeks at the Pacific Hotel. That is why I decided to make Manly my home, when I came to live in Australia after the first world war, having a pretty good idea what "the Village" looked like...

For the past 24 years Captain Nobbs has played an outstanding role, not only as a guide, philosopher and friend to the younger generation in their sporting activities, but also in the public life of the community. Though handicapped by the loss of his sight, his business acumen, clear thinking, and broad views have been of inestimable value in connection with the institutions, associations and organisations in whose welfare he has so actively participated...

A survey of Captain Nobbs' activities shows that they have been spread over a very wide field. His crowning achievement has been the Manly Amateur Swimming Club, the reins of which he has handled with masterly efficiency. Little wonder is it that the club for many years has stood ace high among the State's sporting organisations, and has established a continuity of records and successes without parallel in the world. In these outstanding triumphs, it is particularly noteworthy, the juniors as well as the seniors have worthily participated. The premiership pennants which grace the walls of the old clubroom at the Manly Baths bear eloquent testimony to the masterly hand of the president and his very capable band of officials, including several foundation members who are still actively interested in the club's welfare. Here, as elsewhere in Manly's sporting organisations, "the old guard" has proved a magnificent asset.

Captain Nobbs held the office of vice-president from 1922 to 1924, and has been president from 1924 to date. This is stated by Mr Charlie Bell, one of the foundation members, to be an Australian record. Closely associated with the Swimming Club is the Manly Life-Saving Club, of which "the Skipper" has been a vice-president, and latterly vice-patron, for 25 years.

There has been and still is no greater friend of the diggers than Captain Nobbs, and he has laboured for several decades for the betterment of their conditions. Of World

War I and its aftermath he could tell much, but the memories of that first grim conflict, which deprived him of his sight [on the Somme in 1916], did not deter him shouldering home responsibilities in 1939. He has been vice-president and latterly patron, of the Manly Sub-branch RSSAILA since 1921, and a patron of the Manly Diggers' Club since its formation. He has also been the president of the Manly Miniature Rifle Club since its formation, and a member of the Manly Patriotic & War Fund and the Manly Branch of the British Centre. A Rugby Unionite, he has been a keen fan of the Blues, and has been a vice-president of the Manly District Rugby Union Football Club for many years.

In the wider field of Captain Nobbs' activities must be mentioned the Sydney Legacy Club, of which he is a foundation member, vice-president, and latterly patron; chairman of the NSW War Blinded Welfare Committee for the training and rehabilitation of the blinded servicemen of the 1939-45 war, under the Repatriation Commission; honorary member of the NSW Blinded Soldiers' Association; vice-president, Limbless Soldiers' Swimming Club; organiser and first president of the AIF Swimming Association. For the past 26 years (1920-1946) Captain Nobbs has been chairman and managing director of Holbrooks (Asia) Pty Ltd."

Nolan, Mayor Percy Leonard (?-1954)



MAN02363 Mayor Nolan, 1938

A solicitor with Turner, Nolan and Company, Percy Nolan was Mayor during the 60th Anniversary of Manly in 1937.

He was educated at Fort Street Boys' School and later at Newington College. He was born in Queensland, and was the thirteenth child in the family of the late Rev J A Nolan, a Methodist minister and past president of the NSW Conference. His mother was a worker for women's suffrage and was president for a number of years of the Women's Christian Temperance Union.

After studying law, Mr Nolan was articled to Mr Reg Cowlishaw, of Robson and Cowlishaw; then became partner in 1922 in the firm of Turner, Nolan & Company He lived in Manly from 1918 and was said to have an intimate knowledge of the municipality's many requirements.

In 1954, Mr Nolan received a certificate of merit from the Local Government Association of NSW for 25 years' service to Local Government.

He died on 3rd June 1954.

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Owen, Lilian (fl 1920s)



Lilian Owen

The northern beaches have always been famous for their bathing beauties. In 1924, Smith's Newspapers decided to offer £1000 for the most beautiful surf or swimming girl in New South Wales. There were more than 1000 entrants, including the Venetian Carnival queen and Miss Manly, 18-year old Lilian Owen, whose boyfriend submitted her photograph unknown to her. Lilian was the unanimous choice of the judges, who included Norman Lindsay, and won £500 in prize money. The surf girl competition directly inspired the Miss Australia contests. Miss Owen later married Sydney musician Percy Baker. She died aged 89.