



## Mr JOHN WILLIAM ASH

[1950 – 2008]



**Mr Ash is distinguished by being the first civilian member, elected to the Club in 1974**

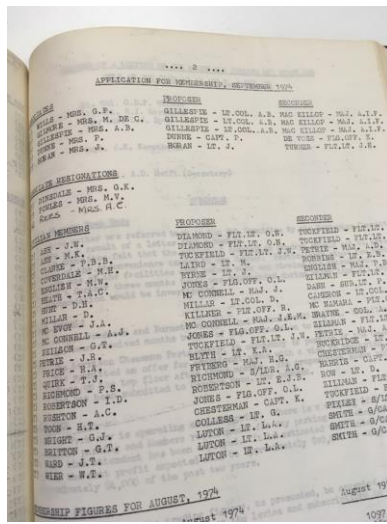
*This extract from the Club's Annual Report of November 1974, records the creation of a new category of "Civilian Member".*

Following two Special General Meetings, and the largest postal vote on record, an amendment to the Rules to admit Civilian Members was approved, by the large majority of 84% to 16%, demonstrating that most Members recognised the necessity of some such step. Prominent Business Executives, Professional Men, and Respected Citizens of the Community are now eligible for Civilian Membership. They can be proposed and seconded only by full Members of the Club, and they have no voting rights nor are they eligible to stand for the positions of President, Vice-President, or member of committee. This category will permit Members to propose their Sons for membership, and already a number of such applications have been received.

*The Minutes of the Membership Committee in September 1974, below, record the admission of the first Civilian Members. The name heading the alphabetic list of 22 nominees is Mr John William Ash.*

*We thank the History Interest Group and other volunteers who have researched and prepared these Notes. These 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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John William ASH was the second son of Lieutenant John Powell Ash and Mrs Joan Marie Ash. He was born in Brisbane on 11 November 1950 and attended Nudgee Junior College, Indooroopilly, and Nudgee College, Boondall (as did his brothers). He studied science at the University of Queensland and became a microbiologist and cytogeneticist. He lived at the family home at Brookfield and worked at Queensland Medical Laboratories. He was a keen fisherman and never married. He died from cancer in August 2008, aged 58.

His father was born in Neutral Bay, Sydney in 1920. He was a Bank Clerk when he enlisted in the AIF in October 1940. He was posted to Darwin and Sydney, before completing his Officer training in Newcastle in late 1943. In January 1944 and was promoted Lieutenant in RAA and posted to Brisbane. He served in Light Anti-Aircraft units in Brisbane and Thursday Island. In April 1945 he was seconded to the RAAF for Flak Intelligence duties, and served in Madang, PNG. He was discharged in May 1946.

While serving in Brisbane he met his future wife, Joan Marie Varendorff. They married at St Stephen's Cathedral on 23 June 1947. After the war he worked at the Bank of New South Wales in Brisbane. The family lived in Hawken Drive, St Lucia, and in 1966 moved to Gold Creek Road, Brookfield. John (senior) died from cancer in 1980, aged 60. His wife was a physiotherapist who practiced on Wickham Terrace from the war years until 1979. She died in 2004, aged 82. The couple had five children, a daughter Robyn tragically did not survive infancy.

The family had a strong connection with the Club. Lieutenant John Ash joined the Club in July 1974 and his wife Joan as an Associate Member in November 1975. Their elder sons John and Malcolm were the first two civilian members elected to the Club on 7 October 1974. Although Malcolm was the elder by a year, the Club's military traditions arranged the brothers by alphabetical forename, and so the younger brother became the first civilian member! Their younger brother Damian joined the Club in October 1975, and their younger sister, Shaneen, joined in July 1976.

For the record, Dr Malcolm Ash (born 1949) graduated in Medicine from the University of Queensland and is in General Practice in Brisbane. Damian (born 1954) also became a cytogeneticist and worked at the University of Queensland, Queensland Medical Laboratories, and Commonwealth Serum Laboratories. He is retired in Brisbane. Shaneen Ash attended All Hallows School and Stuartholme School in Brisbane. She studied photography at Art College; and then spent many years tending members of her family. She married in 1994 and has a daughter.



Six Club Members - The Ash family - LT John Ash, Dr Malcolm Ash, Damian Ash, Mrs Joan Ash, Ms Shaneen Ash, John Ash (c1972)

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
- Interview with Ms Shaneen Powell Ash, 1 March 2018.