



Captain E.J.T. MANCHESTER

[1870 – 1949]



Captain Manchester was elected to Life Membership of the Club - after 1914 and before 1928.

Ernest James Theodore Manchester was born on 16 May 1870 in Fitzroy, Victoria.

His father was Francis George Manchester [1845-1924], a doctor from Lincolnshire, and his mother Margaret (née Sheehan) [1848-1924] from Waterford, Ireland. They divorced in 1892 after producing 12 children. Ernest was the eldest; his younger siblings were:

- Ethel [1871-1962]
- Percival Frank [1873-1938]
- Lesbia [1876-1899]
- Leslie [b.1876]
- Oscar Henry [1878-1958]
- Zeta [1879-1960]
- James [b.1879]
- Annetta [1881-1897]
- William George [1883-1947]
- Gordon Edward [1885-1957]
- Lewis Lilburn [1887-1968]

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Ernest was educated at Coburg State School and South Melbourne College. He matriculated to the University of Melbourne where he attained a Masters of Civil Engineering. In later years he was also awarded a Masters of Engineering by the University of Queensland.

Ernest married Alice Lavinia Elizabeth (née Aunger) [1871-1962] on 16 September 1896 at Bowden, South Australia. They had three daughters:

- Dorothy Annetta [1897-1972] born in Coburg, Victoria, married Lancelot Bagster [d.1940] in Brisbane in 1919, and died in Brisbane
- Leila Marion [1901-1960] born in Coburg, Victoria, married John Laing Ewing [1893-1960] in Brisbane in 1926 and died in Brisbane.
- Melba Annie [1905-1953] born in Coburg, Victoria and died unmarried in Brisbane.

and one son:

- Kelvin Ernest [1914-1938] an engineer who was born and died in Brisbane. Married Barbara Delphine (née Roger) [b.1912] in 1933.

The family lived at "Werribel", Jordan Terrace, Bowen Hills.

Ernest Manchester was a civil engineer by profession. His career started in 1891 with the Melbourne Metropolitan Board of Works - as a draughtsman, computer, engineering assistant and assistant engineer. He was the Executive Engineer of the Victorian Water Supply Department and State Rivers Commission from 1907 to 1910.

In 1911 he was appointed as the first President of the Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board in Brisbane – a position he held until 1928. During his term, many major sewage and water supply works were completed in Brisbane. Lake Manchester and its dam (30 km west of Brisbane) are named after him – constructed 1912-1916 as a concrete cavity dam over Cabbage Tree Creek to augment Brisbane's water supply. He was also an advisory engineer for the Maryborough water supply scheme.

He travelled widely for his profession and was a Member of the American Society of Civil Engineers; the Institution of Civil Engineers (London); Fellow of the Royal Sanitary Institute (London); past president of the Queensland Institute of Engineers; member of the Royal Geographical Society, and member of the Council of the Local Government Engineers Institute of Australia.

Ernest appears to have been appointed a Lieutenant in the Intelligence Corps in May 1911 in Brisbane. He was promoted Honorary Captain in September 1912 and was on the strength of HQ 1 Military District in 1914 before transferring to the Reserve of Officers 1 October 1914. His formal retirement was in December 1922. It is not obvious why this very senior civil engineer held such an appointment for a short time.

He joined the Club in 1914 and did not hold any Committee positions. It is not recorded why he was elected to Life membership.

He was a Free Mason and a member of the Australian Natives Association, and a keen motorist and gardener.

Captain Manchester died on 8 April 1949 in Brisbane.

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
- Who's Who in Australia 1921-1950
- Trove
- Urban Utilities archives