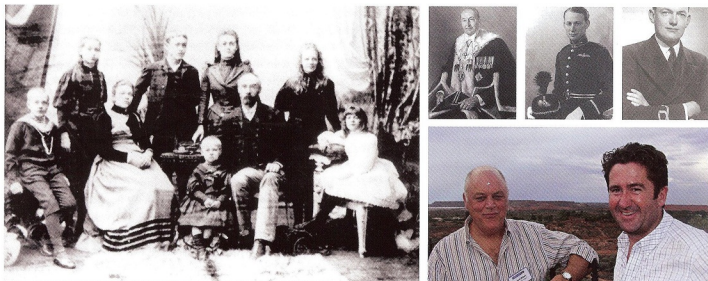


BILL EDGAR &  
HARRY WESTON

# ARCHIVES/MUSEUM CORNER



Images clockwise from left to right: The O'Connor family in Wellington c. 1891, just prior to departure for Western Australia; Ernest Lee-Steere, Lord Mayor of Perth, 1972 - 1978; Charles Lee-Steere, RAF Reserve, 1939; Roderick Lee-Steere, RANVR, 1940; Robert Drewe and Stephen Van Mil at Mt Charlotte Reservoir, Kalgoorlie, where O'Connor's pipeline ends.

## HALE CONNECTIONS

The tendrils of Haleian connections reach into many corners of the state's and the country's social and cultural infrastructures. One current enterprise has resonances back to the early days of Western Australian history.

Dr Stephen Van Mil (Hale, 1974-79) has swapped his veterinary stethoscope for another forensic preoccupation in recent years. Through his Impian Films company, he is currently in preproduction mode for the making of a feature film based on the book, 'The Drowner', written by another Haleian, Robert Drewe, Captain of School in 1960. The story is interwoven within the building of the Kalgoorlie pipeline in the latter years of the 1890s and into the early 1900s.

High (Hale) School student, Alex Sanderson (1891-93) was an assistant engineer to C.Y. O'Connor on the mammoth project and after O'Connor's unfortunate death, was one of those who carried on the work to see the project through to fruition. John Irvine,

grandfather of Haleians, Dr John and Bill Irvine, was also an engineer with C.Y. O'Connor. He lost his life in an explosion during the excavation of Fremantle Harbour.

On the outbreak of the Great War, Alex Sanderson joined the forces and won a Distinguished Service Order and two Military Crosses for his work as commanding officer of the 3rd Australian Tunnelling Company, one of the most dangerous of occupations on the precarious Western Front. Such activity was portrayed in the recent Australian film, 'Beneath Hill 60'. Alex's brother, William Lauchlan, also a High School boy, was awarded an OBE, a Military Cross and the French Croix de Guerre for his services as an artilleryman during the conflict.

Both Sandersons survived the war, Alex to go back to engineering and surveying work, William to become the Chairman of Elders in Adelaide and a founder of the Flying Doctor Service.

Roderick, the second son of C.Y. O'Connor, was killed at Bullecourt. The youngest, Murtagh, attended High School between 1901 and 1906 and Bridget, the youngest daughter, married Sir Ernest Lee-Steere of 'Hawthornden' in Toodyay. Their sons, Charles, Roderick and Ernest all attended High School, although Charles (Royal Air Force) and Rod (Royal Australian Navy) lost their lives in World War II.

Youngest son, (Sir) Ernest Lee-Steere (Junior), High School 1922-29, prominent pastoralist, Chairman of the Western Australian Turf Club and Mayor of Perth, sent his sons Robert (Renney) and Digby to Hale School in the 1950s. More recently, Selby, son of Digby graduated in 2006.

With these connections in mind, we look forward to the release of Stephen Van Mil's and Robert Drewe's collaborative work, 'The Drowner' in the near future.

**Mr Bill Edgar**  
Archivist/Curator