## **McCALL, David Robert**

David Robert McCall was born on 25th October 1861, son of David and Agnes McCall, at Hunter-street, Sydney.

On 26th July 1880 David, the father of David Robert McCall, died at his residence, 14 Hunter-street, Sydney, aged 61 years.**1**

David Robert McCall joined the Police Department in 1876 as a constable.**2**

On 5th January 1886, David Robert, eldest surviving son of the late David McCall, was married to Catherine (Katie) Porter, third daughter of Thomas (and Julia) Webster, at the residence of the bride's parents.**3**

Children of the marriage were:

David, born 1886, district of Leichhardt

Colina C., born 1889, district of Petersham

Flora M., born 1891, district of Granville

Agnes J., born 28th June 1895, at “Bronte”, Albert-road, Strathfield**4**

In June 1897, David, then living in Beecroft, was the purchaser of a block of Crown land in Beecroft.**5**

In 1898 he was secretary of the Beecroft Progress Association. At the following January meeting he was praised for the energy and ability which was attributed almost wholly the success achieved by the Association. Thereafter he became a committee member and remained a participating member of the Association for several more years.**6**

In April 1900 it was reported that David McCall, chief clerk in the Department of the Inspector-General of Police, who has been a resident of Beecroft for four years or more, was about to leave the district.**7**

However for whatever reason this did not happen.

In August 1900 he was elected a vice-president of the Kennedya Lawn Tennis Club.**8**

In 1901 a large bungalow was built for David McCall at 148 Copeland Road, which showed many Federation features. The property was a one-acre plot.

‘Almost next door to Mr. Skellett's property is the fine residence recently erected by Mr. D. R. McCall. This, also, is in brick, with an ornate exterior, and admirably finished throughout. Here the rooms have been provided with steel ceilings, of tasteful and ornamental design. Mr. McCall has added a lawn tennis court to the attractions of his home, and the house has been connected with the water supply, and provision has been made to lay on the gas when the company extends its operations to Beecroft. Here, too, there is proximity to the station, and privacy, and natural drainage, if it be availed of. Residences of this description add to the prestige of the district.’

In late 1903 Mr. McMein bought a piece of land adjoining Mr. McCall's property and it was also his intention to build.**9**

In November 1902 he was elected an auditor for the ensuing half-year for the Debating Society.**10**

Regular services of the Presbyterian Church commenced in April 1903 following a meeting at David McCall’s residence in Copeland Road. This meeting, held on 7th March 1903, was called “to consider what steps should be taken for the foundation of a Presbyterian Church in Beecroft”. David McCall would play a very important part in establishing the church.

On 28th April 1903 David was inducted as an elder of the church. Initially the congregational meetings were held at the McCall’s residence but from October 1903 were held at the Ravenhurst School Hall.**11**

A long association with the School of Arts began when in 1904 David Robert McCall was appointed one of the trustees of the reserve at Beecroft for the School of Arts site.**12**

In 1905 he was on the committee of the Beecroft Public School. His business address, that year, was 111 Phillip-street, Sydney.**13**

In 1906 his occupation is given as a civil servant in the Department of Public Instruction, first appointed 7th August 1876.**14**

In May 1907 it was announced that Mr. McCall had returned to Beecroft and taken up his abode in Copeland-road again, after an absence of between two and three years.**15**

In 1908 he was gazetted as a trustee for the Mechanics’ Institute site in Beecroft.**16**

In 1911 he was secretary to the Inspector-General of Police, and accountant.**17**

In 1913 the proposal to make David McCall a superintendent of police was not met with approval in police circles due to his lack of policing experience, so this proposal was rejected.**18**

In 1913, at the Scotch Collie Club’s Show, he and his daughter won numerous prizes. The following year he presided at a meeting of the Australian Scotch Collie Club.**19**

In 1913 he was also involved in presenting sailing prizes won during the 1912-13 season of the Snail’s Bay Amateurs. In 1914 he was a vice-president, along with two others, of the Snails Bay Amateurs Club.**20**

In June 1915 his appointment as trustee of the Beecroft School of Arts was declared vacant, and Henry John Little was appointed as a new trustee.**21**

In 1916, having left Beecroft several years earlier, he returned to Beecroft, taking up his abode at his new home in Copeland-road, Beecroft. This new home was called “Lindisfarne.”**22**

In 1918 his daughter Flora was married at the Beecroft Presbyterian Church. In 1919 his daughter Colina was also married there.

In 1919 his daughter Flora (Rogers) was delivered of a son at Lorne House Private Hospital, Beecroft. In 1920 his daughter Agnes (Kirby) was delivered of a son at “Lindisfarne,” Beecroft.**23**

In December 1920, after 44 years in the Police Department, Mr. McCall retired on 15th December. He joined the service in 1876 as a constable, being transferred to the clerical staff of the public service in 1878, and for the past 19 years he held the post of secretary of the department, having served under four inspector-generals. In early 1921, at his retirement presentation, he was presented with an illuminated address, and a wallet containing over £100 in notes from the officers and men connected with the force, and civil servants. All spoke of Mr. McCall in terms of eulogy. “If ever any difficulty arose it was always left to Mr. McCall to find out the safest and surest way out,” said one. “My first impression of Mr. McCall,” remarked another, “was that of an officer who worked 8 hours during the day and 16 hours at night.” “He always showed singular common sense, with a rapid and correct perception of the right thing to do,” summed up a third. Mr. McCall suitably replied.**24**

In April 1922 he won several rose awards at the Beecroft Flower Show.**25**

David Robert McCall died at his residence in Beecroft [“Lindisfarne,” Copeland Road] on 28th December 1933, aged 74 years. The following remarks referring to Mr. McCall’s public service were placed under record by the Chief Secretary’s Department: “the moment is appropriate to place upon record recognition of the fact that, in a department where the activities are always important and often concerned with matters of delicate and extremely confidential character, his long service has always been characterised by capacity, zealous care, and pronounced loyalty to the government authorities.”

He left behind a widow, Kathleen, and children David, Colina (Mrs. W. Milne), Flora (Mrs. W. Rogers), and Agnes (Mrs. A. Kirby).**26**

On 20th April 1936 Mrs. Kathleen/Catherine McCall, aged 73 years, the widow of David Robert McCall, of [25] Copeland-street, Beecroft, died after suffered a fracture of the skull and a fractured thigh when a wardrobe fell on her. She was taken by the ambulance to Ryde Hospital, where she died. She left behind four children: David, Colina, Flora and Agnes.

The funeral left the Presbyterian Church, Beecroft, for the Presbyterian Cemetery, Northern Suburbs.

Probate was granted on 26th June 1936.**27**

**Bibliography**

1 Sydney Morning Herald, Thu 21 Nov 1861; Sydney Morning Herald, Tue 27 Jul 1880; NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages

2 Sunday Times, Sun 28 Oct 1906

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4 NSW Registry of Births Deaths & Marriages; The Daily Telegraph, Mon 22 Jul 1895

5 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 19 Jun 1897

6 The Daily Telegraph, Thu 17 Mar 1898

7 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 14 Apr 1900

8 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 11 Aug 1900

9 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 26 Apr 1902; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 28 Nov 1903; Hornsby Council Ratepayers List 1907; Beecroft and Cheltenham The Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914 page 137

10 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 1 Nov 1902

11 Beecroft and Cheltenham The Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914, page 228

12 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 19 Mar 1904; Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 31 Dec 1904

13 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 15 Apr 1905; Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Wed 25 Oct 1905

14 Sunday Times, Sun 28 Oct 1906

15 Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 18 May 1907

16 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 4 Apr 1908

17 Sunday Times, Sun 1 Jan 1911

18 The Leader (Orange, N.S.W.), Sat 26 Jul 1913

19 Sunday Times, Sun 7 Sep 1913; Sunday Times, Sun 28 Jun 1914

20 Saturday Referee and the Arrow, Sat 11 Oct 1913; Saturday Referee and the Arrow, Sat 22 Aug 1914

21 Government Gazette of the State of New South Wales, Wed 23 Jun 1915; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Wed 30 Jun 1915

22 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 1 Apr 1916; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 10 Aug 1918

23 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 10 Aug 1918; The Sydney Morning Herald, Sat 17 May 1919; The Daily Telegraph, Sat 24 May 1919; The Sydney Morning Herald, Sat 10 Jul 1920

24 The Sun, Tue 7 Dec 1920; National Advocate, Wed 8 Dec 1920; The Sun, Fri 4 Feb 1921

25 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 8 Apr 1922

26The Sydney Morning Herald, Sat 30 Dec 1933; The Labor Daily, Tue 6 Feb 1934

27 Sydney Morning Herald, Tue 21 Apr 1936; The Maitland Daily Mercury, Tue 21 Apr 1936; National Advocate, Tue 21 Apr 1936; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Thu 23 Apr 1936; Sydney Morning Herald, Fri 29 May 1936; Sydney Morning Herald, Fri 3 Jul 1936

**NOTE**: Additional information contained within Beecroft Cheltenham History Group book ‘Beecroft and Cheltenham, the Shaping of a Sydney Community to 1914’.