## **PERDRIAU, Walter Simpson**

Walter Perdriau was born in 1860, in Balmain, the son of Henry and Anne Eliza, in the district of Balmain.**1**

Like his brother Stephen, he was probably educated at the Sydney Grammar School. In 1881 Walter had passed his Sydney University matriculation examinations.**2**

As a young man, he was a well-known tennis player, cyclist and amateur actor. In 1882, along with W. H. Lewis, they won the double tricycle race. The spectators were amused by other competitors who came to grief during the race. At the time he was living at “Claremont,” Balmain.**3**

Between 1882 and 1885 he was Honorary Secretary of the Balmain School of Arts. He was into theatrical pursuits with the Lytton Dramatic Club and the Balmain Amateur Dramatic Club, either at Balmain, Petersham or Surry Hills. His performances in plays were well received. His singing was also considered worthy.**4**

On 9th December 1886 Walter Simpson Perdriau married Agnes May Paul, daughter of the late John Paul of Melbourne, at the Presbyterian Church, Burwood.**5**

He purchased land in Beecroft in 1891 and had moved into his home there in 1893.

In February 1892 he sailed overseas, calling in first at Brindisi, Italy, later returning in July via San Francisco and Auckland.**6**

He attended the annual meeting of the Beecroft Progress Association in 1894, along with his brothers, E. C. and H. Perdriau. In 1895 Walter was elected vice-president of the Beecroft Progress Association. In January 1896 he was elected president of that association, replacing C. C. Tucker, a year in which many improvements were carried out.**7**

In 1896 his tennis court at Beecroft was becoming popular. He was one of the promoters of the tennis club (30 to 40 strong), and captain since its inception, holding the Captain’s Challenge Cup.**8**

In January 1897 Walter Perdriau was replaced by Mr. H. O. Holcombe as President of the Beecroft Progress Association, taking a position on the committee. He became a Justice of the Peace. He was said to have ‘always evinced the greatest interest in matters appertaining to the advancement of the district.’**9**

In January 1898 he was appointed a trustee of the Beecroft Public Recreation Reserve (known as the Village Green), comprising 4 acres and 34 perches. Later that year he suffered severe sunstroke whilst playing tennis and could only get about with the aid of a stick. In May he returned to his Beecroft home after a convalescent period in Leura, Blue Mountains, much improved. In August there was a vacancy in the committee of the Beecroft Progress Association, and he was re-admitted.**10**

In 1899 there was a dissolution of partnership, in the business of india-rubber merchants, between brothers Henry, Walter and Ernest Perdriau, dissolved by mutual consent, as from 31st March. Henry would take over the Sydney business, and Walter and Ernest would take over the Melbourne business.**11**

In January 1899 he had been re-elected as a committee member on the Beecroft Progress Association, however in April he resigned from the association due to his departure to Melbourne for business reasons. His trusteeship with the Village Green was dissolved and filled by Albert Ernest de Berri Wachsmann, in 1900.**12**

In November 1900 he visited Beecroft, on the occasion of the memorial service to the late Dave Willis, looking remarkably well and warmly welcomed by his district friends. In July 1901 it was reported that he was returning to his handsome village residence at Beecroft, shortly to be vacated by Mr. Colquhoun, who had occupied it since Mr. Perdriau’s departure for Melbourne.**13**

In December 1906, his wife appeared in a one-act comedy given in the Town Hall, Ryde, in aid of St. Charles’, Ryde. In February 1910, Mrs. Perdriau and two daughters went on a voyage to England, for about six month’s stay. Walter Perdriau had retired around this time.**14**

In October 1917, the engagement was announced of Miss Elma Perdriau, third daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Perdriau, “Woodbridge”, Beecroft, to Gunner Alan A. Whipple, of the Field Battery, and of Sheffield, England. In June 1918, a wedding was celebrated at “Woodbridge,” Copeland-road, the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Walter Perdriau, when their daughter, Hazel, was married to Lieut. William Syme, of the Royal Air Force, who is on furlough from active service.**15**

In December 1930 at her residence, “Kelwyn”, Bertha-road, Cremorne, Agnes May, wife of Walter Simpson Perdriau, died.**16**

On 18th December 1931, Walter Simpson Perdriau, aged 74 years, collapsed and died in the Roxy Theatre, Castlereagh-street, Sydney. He was attending the theatre with an old friend, Mr. Thomas W. Lunn, of Belgrave-street, Cremorne, and his son-in-law, Mr. Arthur Tait. He was laughing heartily when he collapsed. “It’s my heart” he gasped. He was 74 years of age. His address was given as 19 Murdoch-street, Cremorne He had lately retired, after many years having control of the Perdriau Rubber Company.

‘He was one of a family of seven sons, of whom Mr. Henry Perdriau, now in his 87th year, was the eldest, and is the only surviving male member of the family. There were also two surviving sisters, Mrs. John Kirkland of Burwood, and Mrs. E. T. Messiter of Bowral.

He was survived by four daughters, Mrs. Adele Tate, Mrs. Hazel Syme, Miss Gwynne Perdriau and Miss Alma Perdriau.’

The funeral took place at the Chatswood Cemetery.**17**

**Bibliography**

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2 Evening News, Sat 2 Jul 1881

3 The Sydney Morning Herald, Thu 24 Aug 1882; The Sydney Morning Herald, Mon 21 Dec 1931

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5 The Sydney Morning Herald, Mon 27 Dec 1886

6 The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser, Sat 13 Feb 1892; The Maitland Mail and Hunter River General Advertiser; Sat 16 Jul 1892

7 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 3 Feb 1894; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 9 Feb 1895; The Daily Telegraph, Sat 9 Feb 1895; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 14 Aug 1897

8 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 21 Mar 1896; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 14 Aug 1897

9 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 14 Aug 1897

10 New South Wales Government Gazette, Wed 12 Jan 1898; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 21 May 1898; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 20 Aug 1898

11 The Sydney Morning Herald, Mon 12 Jun 1899

12 The Daily Telegraph, Tue 31 Jan 1899; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 18 Mar 1899; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 1 Apr 1899; New South Wales Government Gazette, Wed 14 Feb 1900

13 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 3 Nov 1900; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 27 Jul 1901

14 The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 22 Dec 1906; The Cumberland Argus and Fruitgrowers Advocate, Sat 26 Feb 1910; The Sydney Morning Herald, Mon 21 Dec 1931

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17 The Sun, Fri 18 Dec 1931; The Labor Daily, Sat 19 Dec 1931; Daily Examiner (Grafton), Sat 19 Dec 1931; Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate, Sat 19 Dec 1931; The Sydney Morning Herald, Mon 21 Dec 1931; The Muswellbrook Chronicle, Tue 5 Jan 1932

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