



### Prouds Master Clock at Kingaroy: Final Report.

In the November 2009 issue of Mainspring, Norm Heckenberg and Tony Roberts reported on the restoration of the School of Arts tower clock at Kingaroy, Queensland. The clock was erected in 1918 in memory of the late Archibald Blue, a local businessman and Editor of the local newspaper. Part of the intrigue of this restoration project was the circumstances surrounding the death of Archibald Blue. Blue had used his paper to accuse local Barber Adolf Hoffman, who was of German origin, of distributing leaflets calling for an anti-conscription vote in a forthcoming referendum. Blue died after a fight with Hoffman. Norm continued his research earlier this year and reports:

The trial of Adolf Hoffman: In the last few months, the National Library of Australia has made available online digitised versions of several newspapers of the time, and it has been possible to find Brisbane Courier reports of the trial of Adolf Hoffman.

On October 9 he was charged in the Kingaroy Court with assault and having done grievous bodily harm to Archibald Blue, thereby causing his death. Court business was then suspended as a mark of respect for Blue's funeral. The cortege was a mile in length and was headed by the

Masons and the Town Band. A few days later Hoffman was committed for trial to the Criminal Sittings of the District Court in Brisbane, but granted bail.

On 3 November there was a long report in the Brisbane Courier, outlining how Hoffman had confronted Blue in the School of Arts, claiming that the statements published in the Kingaroy Herald were absolutely untrue, and demanded a retraction. Threats were exchanged. Later that day, Blue had gone to Hoffman's shop and 'without any warning, struck the accused in the face'. A fight ensued, with Hoffman falling on Blue with his knee on Blue's stomach. 'A post-mortem examination disclosed the fact that death was due to a rupture of one of the small bowels, haemorrhage, and peritonitis. If the accused intentionally placed his knee on the stomach of the deceased with a view to causing him injury he would be guilty of murder'.

In an unexpected development the presiding judge, Chief Justice Sir Pope Cooper, after some argument persuaded the Crown Prosecutor, Mr J.J. Kingsbury, to withdraw the charge of manslaughter, and instead present an indictment for murder. The jury was discharged and then re-pannelled to try the murder charge. The next day, a witness claimed that Hoffman had told him months ago

about how he had had a row with a man in Germany, and had 'got my knee into him' and that 'he was dead two days later', or 'he died two days later', witness was not sure which. There was a lot of medical evidence given about what sort of internal injuries a knee could produce, but at the end of the day, the jury retired and half an hour later returned a verdict of not guilty and Hoffman was discharged.

The third visit: Tony and Norm, along with local horologist Jim Blyth, visited Kingaroy for the third time on October 19, made a number of small adjustments to the clock, fitted a drive chain to the sprockets attached to the worm drive 'crows nest', designed by Thomas Murday and the motion work was then set going.

Jim Blyth accepted the task of monitoring the clock's performance. All went well initially except that the chain drive seemed to slip. Jim has now installed heavier duty sprockets and chain. The clock is now running within a minute a week.

This is a great credit to the original engineering by Thomas Murday and the clockmakers at Prouds, Sydney over 90 years ago.

Compiled by Norman Heckenberg and Tony Roberts.

Above: Norm Heckenberg, Tony Roberts, Maria Thoumine, Jim Blyth in front of the finished clock  
Below: Tony Roberts and the clock movement.

