

'Clary' Ross (*The Architect*, June 1949, p.21)

Clarence Rose Ross (1874-1949) was born 10 March 1874 at 69 Constitution Road Dundee, Scotland, son of chemist-druggist William Rose Ross (1846-1895) and Georgina (nee Philp) Ross (1846-1892). 'Clary' Ross had four siblings, William born in 1868, George in 1869, Ronald 1876-78, and Margaret in 1881. In the 1881 and 1891 UK census listings the Ross family was at Hawick in Scotland, where Clary commenced his architectural training under James Pearson Alison (1862-1932). Seeking change, Clary travelled to India in late 1894 and managed a tea company for two years, but he suffered badly from malaria and was welcomed back in Hawick to complete his articles within Alison's busy practice.

Clary practiced from around 1900 at Long Eaton, near Stapleford, Nottingham, England for eight years. In the 1901 census 27-year-old Clary Ross was noted as an employer in his work as an architect and surveyor, boarding in Victoria Street, Stapleford. With him is 19-year-old Margaret Ross who, like him, is single. Their mother and father had died at Hawick in 1892 and 1895 respectively.

Clary had met Jean Riddell Adam following his return from India, they married at her father's home in Blantyre Scotland during September 1901, and in November 1902 their son William Adam Ross was born at Sandiacre, alongside Stapleford. Second son Clarence 'Norman' Ross was born in March 1906 at Long Eaton.

In 1906 architects Child, Gorman and Ross produced the Long Eaton Library, a Carnegie public library, the project having been won in a competition. The partnership appears to have had offices in Long Eaton, Nottingham and London. In addition to the library, around this time Clary designed a large theatre, several lace factories, blocks of shops and offices.



York Chambers, Long Eaton.

Gorman & Ross, Architects & Surveyors' offices at York Chambers in Long Eaton (Don Ross)



Long Eaton Library of 1906, a Carnegie public library. Mosaic and gilding work includes the words PAX (peace) and LUX (light) and the figure of Learning in the central tympanum, an example of Art Nouveau detailing. (<https://www.geograph.org.uk/photo/5648388>)

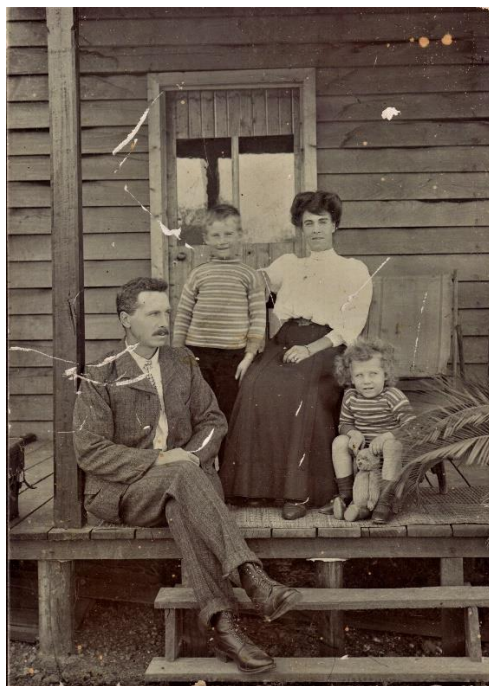
Clary Ross migrated to Australia on the *SS Dorset* in April 1908. Norman Ross recalled that his father had wished to be a farmer, and Clary embarked from Liverpool ahead of his family, to seek a home for them. A few months later Will and Norman accompanied their mother to Australia. They departed Liverpool on the *SS Runic* in July 1908 bound for Albany, Western Australia. After their arrival they resided for a period on Glenholm Farm in Moora, where Clary was working as a farmhand for Joshua A. Waldeck. Perhaps needing income to sustain his passion for agricultural pursuits, Clary joined the Public Works Department (PWD) at Perth in 1909. The earliest drawing of Clary's in the PWD archives that his descendants have located is of the 'Clock Tower' of Perth Secondary School, corner of Roberts Road and Thomas Street Subiaco, dated 22 June 1909.



1910 Post Office at Whatley Crescent Maylands in 1981 (F.A. Sharr, HCWA 02422)

Another of Clary Ross' early projects at the PWD was the design of a new post office at suburban Maylands. The Federation Free Classical design style of the Maylands Post Office is probably based upon standard plans previously developed by the PWD, adapted by Ross to the particular requirements at Maylands. In late April of 1910, the modest Maylands Post Office, constructed of brick with cement dressings, was completed at a cost of just under £750.

By 1910 the Ross family had a property 'Blantyre' at Parkerville in the Perth hills, near the corner of Seaborn Street and Parker Road, where Clary was tending an orchard. *Wises Directory* lists Clary Ross at Turton Street in Guildford during 1912-1913, and in 1916 as an orchardist at Parkerville. Further children were born, Kenneth Craig in 1910 and Mary Elizabeth in 1919.



Clary, Jeanie, Norman and Kenneth Ross on the verandah at 'Blantyre' c.1912 (Don Ross).



Ross family in March 1922: Jeanie, Norman 16, Ken 12, Betty 2, Will 19, Clary 48 (Don Ross)

In 1922 the Ross family moved to 15 Barnfield Road in Claremont, and Clarence Ross (a Fellow of the Royal Institute of Architects of Western Australia) registered (no. 36) with the Architects Board of Western Australia in July 1922. In 1922 Clary Ross' and fellow Claremont architect (also PWD) William Wilkinson's design for a war memorial on Monument Hill was selected by a committee at Fremantle, with a proposal by Samuel Rosenthal awarded second place. A sub-committee was immediately formed to raise the necessary funds for the work; but with the passing of time (and perhaps some local manoeuvring) a new design by Fremantle architects Allen & Nicholas had been adopted by 1927 – described by Mayor Frank Gibson as 'less costly than that originally selected'.



Design for Fremantle War Memorial.
It is proposed to erect the memorial on Monument Hill, Fremantle, to perpetuate the memory of the sailors and soldiers of the State who lost their lives in the Great War. The design is that of Messrs. Wilkinson and Ross, of Claremont, and the estimated cost £7,000. To gather the amount, a public appeal was launched at Fremantle last Tuesday night.

War memorial design for Monument Hill at Fremantle, by architects William Wilkinson and Clarence Ross of Claremont (*Western Mail*, 27 April 1922, p.7).

At the PWD, 'Scotty' Ross, as he was also known to his architectural peers, became the chief designer (under the Principal Architect) of a long list of works. In March 1910, he drew plans for the WA Government Stores at 70-74 Murray Street Perth, which was 'to provide accommodation for all Government stores'. The drawings, in the Federation Free Classical style, were initialled C.R.R. and signed by Principal Architect Hillson Beasley. Opened in 1912, the Public Health Department building nearby in Murray Street is another fine example of Ross' British-informed design work in the Federation Free Classical style, also incorporating Arts and Crafts details favoured by Beasley. With Beasley, Ross also played a significant role in the prolonged design of Perth GPO (1912-1923), under the direction of Commonwealth architect John Smith Murdoch.



1911 Government Stores at 70-74 Murray Street Perth; 1912 Public Health Department at 57 Murray Street Perth; 1914 Telephone Exchange at 410 Murray Street (F.A. Sharr 1986, HCWA 02056, HCWA 02053, SLWA b2130891 2).



1911 Perth Modern School in 1980 (F.A. Sharr, HCWA 02450) and 1914 Wooroloo Sanatorium (SLWA 000609D).

Also with Hillson Beasley, Clary Ross worked on the design of the first portion of Perth Modern School (opened in 1911), Perth Telephone Exchange (1914) and Wooroloo Sanatorium (1914). In the early 1920s, regional secondary schools at Northam (1921), Bunbury (1922), and Albany (1924) were designed by Clary under W.B. Hardwick, the PWD Principal Architect from 1917.

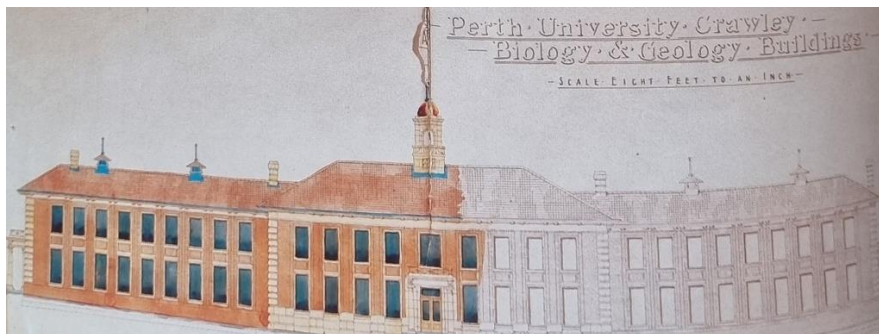


1921 Northam Senior High School shown in 1982 (F.A. Sharr, HCWA 01883).



1922 Bunbury Senior High School shown in 2008; 1924 Albany High School shown in 2010 (HCWA 002183; Wikipedia)

Under Hardwick's direction, in 1923 Clary Ross designed the Biology and Zoology block at the University of Western Australia, the first purpose built building at the new Crawley campus. It was completed in 1925.



1923 Biology and Zoology block at the UWA Crawley campus (Ferguson, p.12).

In 1925, when the Commonwealth Works Department established a branch in Western Australia, Ross was appointed Supervising Architect, and he supervised all Commonwealth buildings in WA through to his retirement in 1938, including the Commonwealth Bank at Perth designed under the direction of John Smith Murdoch and completed in 1933.

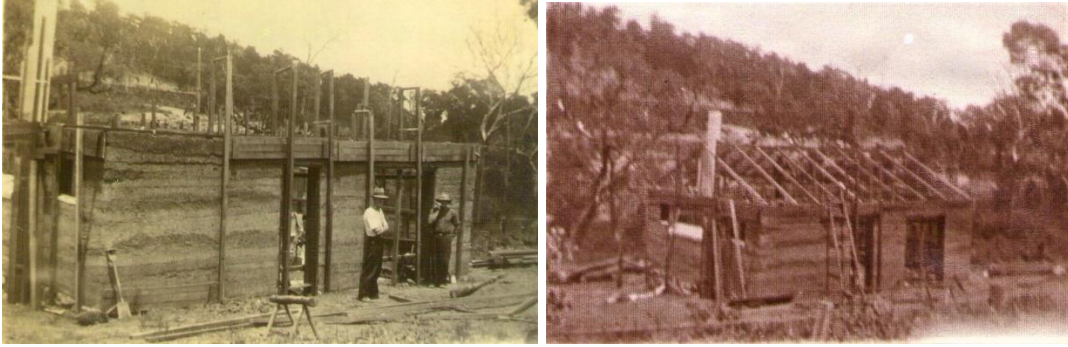


1912-1923 General Post Office (shown in 2011) and 1933 Commonwealth Bank (shown in 1986), both at Forrest Place, Perth (HCWA 01979, HCWA 02064).



Photo of Tambellup Post Office (1935) found in family albums, suggesting this may have been one of the many that Clary Ross supervised in the period 1925-1938 (Don Ross)

Jeanie Ross passed away while on a holiday in Scotland in 1930, and a death notice in *The West Australian* notes: *ROSS: On August 15, at High Blantyre, Scotland, Jean Adam, dearly beloved wife of C.R. Ross, 15 Barnfield Road, Claremont, and mother of Will, Norman, Kenneth and Betty.* Listings in the *Wises Directory* confirm that Clary Ross moved from Claremont following the loss of his wife, and with the assistance of his sons, built a rammed earth house on Falls Road in the Perth hills suburb of Parkerville, utilizing clay dug out of Jane Brook. The Second World War (1939-1945) was a particularly worrying period for Clary, as his three sons Will, Norman, and Kenneth all enlisted to serve in the Australian Army for various periods during this time. Clary and Norman (who did not marry) continued work with their orchard on the Falls Road property, where they both lived for significant periods - Norman resided at the property on until he passed away in 1976.



With the assistance of his sons, in the 1930s Clary Ross built a rammed earth house on Falls Road Parkerville, utilizing clay dug out of Jane Brook (Don Ross).



'The humpy' - as the house was affectionately known by family - and orchard, photo taken from the bridge over Jane Brook leading to the tennis court (Don Ross).

A Fellow of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, and described in the periodical *The Architect* as 'one of its most gracious and well respected members', Clary died in unusual circumstances on 23 March 1949, as described in *The West Australian*:

Clarence Rose Ross (75), a widower, of Great Eastern-highway. Greenmount, was killed instantly when he was hit by a diesel train on the Bellevue level crossing about 8.20 o'clock last night. It is believed that Ross, who was very deaf, had been visiting on the Midland Junction side of the line and that he thought he had sufficient time to clear the crossing before the diesel reached him. He was hit by the corner of the train and hurled at an angle to it against a wire fence leading to the cattle pits. He was dead before a St. John ambulance arrived. The diesel, which was driven by Walter Harold White, of Narrogin, was Perth-bound on the Great Southern run.

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- 'Perth Government Stores (fmr)', HCWA assessment documentation, 20 January 2006.
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- 'General Post Office, Perth', HCWA register entry, 1992.
- 'Wooroloo Sanatorium (fmr)', HCWA assessment documentation, 30 August 2002.
- 'Park Avenue Building' (UWA), HCWA assessment documentation, 28 June 1996.
- 'Bunbury Senior High School', HCWA assessment documentation, 13 July 2012.
- 'State War Memorial', *The West Australian*, 24 April 1922, p.8 (Fremantle War Memorial by Wilkinson and Ross).
- 'Fremantle War Memorial - New Design Adopted', *The West Australian*, 2 July 1927, p.9 (design by architects Allen & Nicholas).
- 'Deaths', *Western Mail*, 28 August 1930, p.4 (of Jeanie in Scotland).
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