



Ray Leunig, Wendy Lynch and John Duncan on the way to Brighton c.1953 (Beth Duncan)

**Patrick Ray Leunig** (1922-1992) was born 6 October 1922 at Bunbury, son of Harry and Stella Catherine (nee Samers) Leunig – the couple had been married in November 1912 at St Patrick’s Church in Fremantle, and then lived at *Fermoy* 14 Goldsworthy Road Claremont. Born at Melbourne in 1888, Harry enlisted for First World War service in 1916, at that time he was a railway clerk. He travelled to England in 1917, and served in France before returning to WA in 1919.

Harry and Stella’s fifth child was known as ‘Ray’ Leunig; his siblings were Karl Leslie Francis (Bob) b.1913, Geoffrey b.1915, Stella Mary b.1917, Harry Bernard (Jim) b.1920, Leo St Clair b.1926, and Donald Ian b.1930. Ray’s schooling included attendance at the Christian Brothers College in St George’s Terrace Perth, and Aquinas College in 1938-1939. At his enlistment for Second World War (1939-1945) service in 1941, nineteen year old Ray’s occupation was listed as ‘clerk’. At the end of 1943 he travelled to study for four months at the Royal Australian Air Force training school 1 WAGS Ballarat. The school was purpose-built to train wireless operators, air gunners, and navigators as part of the Empire Training Scheme. This scheme supplied Royal Air Force Bomber Command with aircrew to support their fight against Germany. Over 6000 personnel were trained at Ballarat during the war, and tragically approximately 20% of the trainees were killed in action or on active service. Fortunately, records include Ray’s discharge from 22 Squadron in early 1946 as a Warrant Officer.

During the war it could be foreseen that great demands would be placed on the building industry when peace eventuated, and in 1946 William (Bill) Robertson (with Arnold Camerer) inaugurated the first academic architectural course at Perth Technical College (PTC). Ray Leunig attended PTC 1946-1952 as a Commonwealth Reconstruction Trainee, undertaking vacation employment in Perth architectural practices. Ray graduated with an Associateship in Architecture in a class that included future architects of influence in Western Australia such as Gres Cohen, Alex Doepel, John Duncan, Morris Fairbrother, Jack Finney, John Lidbury, Eddie McMillan, Leslie Moon (died 1959 at just 34yo), Colin Nicholas, Dennis Silver, Bill Waters, and John White. Ray was duly registered with the Architects Board of Western Australia (reg no 248) on 16 December 1952.



Mr. Ray Leunig, Miss Josephine Sheehan, Mr. Ivan Clairs and Miss Florence Hughes.

Ray Leunig at the 1950 T-Square Ball with Josephine Sheehan, Ivan Clairs and Florence Hughes – Clairs and Hughes were married six months later (*Western Mail*, 18 May 1950, p.27)

In early 1953, three of the recent graduates from PTC prepared to board a ship bound for London, following what was then a familiar pattern among West Australian architects. Colloquially known as the sixth year of their course, heading to London for a few years after receiving their diploma for a working holiday was part of the lived geography for Perth architects in the post-war period.

Architectural historian Andrew Murray noted that 'after having worked for a few months to save money for the journey, Ray Leunig, John White, and John Duncan

sailed from Fremantle to Naples. After disembarking, they bought an old Mercedes and slowly made their way across the continent to London. There, they met up with Edwin Whitaker, a close friend that had graduated from PTC the year prior and had already spent a year working in South Africa before arriving in London just before White, Duncan, and Leunig. The four of them decided to rent a flat together, and moved into a terrace house at 48 Hogarth Road, Earls Court. This house was to become a key address for visiting West Australian architects; it would go on to host several architects and friends in the following years, as more graduates made the trip across.

John White and Ray Leunig were soon sent to Maltby in South Yorkshire, where they spent five weeks making a measured drawing of Sandbeck Park, a 1760s James Paine designed country house for the Earl of Scarborough. After this project they both went to Middlesex County Council for further work.

In March 1954, fellow PTC graduates Ross Chisholm and John Lidbury arrived in London and spent their first Friday evening at Hogarth Road for a slide night. Shortly afterwards, Chisholm and Lidbury moved in together around the corner. By the middle of 1954, there were at least ten former PTC students living and working together in London. This made for an active social group; together, they explored the city, gathering at the new coffee houses, galleries, and restaurants, travelling the continent and immersing themselves in the architectural culture of London in the mid-1950s. The kind of social density that existed is demonstrated in a letter home that was published in *The Architect* which reported:

*Whilst not motoring, Jack [John White] shares a flat with Dunk [John Duncan], Leunig and Whittaker [sic] in an exclusive part of Kensington. The housewarming they put on attracted no less than thirty blow-ins, mostly Westralians. That was the night that Toscanini refused to wave his baton in the Albert Hall until the Australian party next door cut out singing 'I'm Jolly Jack the Ripper.'*

Ray Leunig stayed in London to work and married, having two children - Tim and Catherine. Unfortunately, this union was followed by a long and acrimonious divorce, and he had little contact with his family – thus details of his architectural career in the United Kingdom have not been readily found. He returned to WA in 1967-1968, and in 1968 was listed as a 'Temporary Relief' Architect Grade 2 in the architectural division of the State's Public Works Department.

Ray's career was cut short by unfortunate circumstances, in 1985 he suffered a stroke, losing speech and a large amount of movement, and moved into the Royal Star and Garter nursing home on Richmond Hill at London. Ray returned to Australia again in November 1988. His final days were spent in the Chrystal Halliday aged care facility at Prisk Street in Karrinyup. Ray Leunig died 18 February 1992 at Karrinyup, aged 69 years.

It is important to recognise that prior to the First World War, the overwhelming majority of architects in WA had been born and trained elsewhere. This gradually changed during the Inter-War years (1919-1939), as more locally born individuals studied whilst under articulated arrangements with senior practitioners. Leunig was amongst the new breed of architects in WA in the highly-charged post Second World War development period. Although a few still chose to develop their skills through an article system (with Architect Board examinations), and immigration brought a small number of European refugee architects, the majority of WA architects at this time were locally born and graduates of PTC. The close association of PTC graduates of the 1950s and 1960s gave this group a strong sense of familiarity and cohesion, and like Ray Leunig, many soon travelled overseas to absorb further international developments in architecture. Their influence is now gaining further study and recognition.

References:

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