

FAREWELL TO KING BRUCE

A CELEBRATION

Thursday, 16th July 2015, Scene, Rookwood crematorium.
11.30am. Heavy rain, wind and a solitary loud thunder clap.
(Wonder who sent that!)

A crowd scene, many familiar faces and lots of people. The rooms and upstairs occupied to overflowing. Bruce's Elsie was in attendance with company, also their son Anthony and from the bush a niece Sue with her husband Norm, who shouldered the task of organising the bulk of the funeral arrangements.

Loyal Echidna, the **Reverend Ross Hutchison**, in long white cassock smiled and welcomed all to his ministry.

IN BRIEF:

A rollicking rendition of "There's no business like show business" set the scene to great applause.

Ross welcomed all and delivered details of Bruce and his family and attendees of note. Bruce's son Anthony and Ross lit the symbolic red flame to dress the coffin, settled between the tabs.

After a thoughtful and sensitive briefing of Bruce's life and relatives, Ross introduced the first speaker as requested by The King Emeritus, **Sandy Scott**, who paid tribute and delivered a touching, humorous outline of his life and times with Bruce. Brought enthusiastic response.



Paul Martell, the other requested speaker, took to the task with enthusiasm, Martell style. After a thoughtful rendition of his association and several anecdotes eyes were overflowing. Paul had us in stitches with tales of the many antics and touching items in history, no one doubted that the world according to Bruce was a madcap place where his quirky actions and tales amused and startled all of those in reach.

Bruce's close mates and associates, brothers **Peter** and **John Hardgrove**, individually graced us with a history of Bruce in action and at play. His colossal involvement, (including his directorship) with his beloved Wests Leagues, general sporting, golfing, trips and camaraderie. Laughs galore!

A movie made of many short clips, carefully selected from a lengthy montage of Bruce's life and time, had us all wet eyed again. Alan is investigating ways of copying the full video and making it available to Echidnas and friends.

After a roundup of events Rev Ross had us stand for an enthusiastic final ovation as the tabs closed and we started to file out as Gracie Fields belted out "Wish me luck as you wave me goodbye". Elsie was applauded as she sang along with Gracie.



The original King, **Brian Doyle**, with his wife Judy, had an observation on his way out. It went something like this: I don't know if there is such a thing as a great funeral service, but if there was, that was it.

Mention must be made of Roscoe's part in this. He set the scene and the tone for a most memorable funeral, a perfect balance between the serious, personal, thoughtful and humorous. Well done Ross!

After a decent exchange and meet and greet outside a good crowd assembled at the Wests Sports Club a few kilometres down the road. There was a pleasant supply of nibbles and finger food as well as drinks on the house. After some time spent in catch-up yakking, several people took advantage of the supplied microphone for an entertaining and memorable string of speeches. **Alan Dale** gave a touching and thoughtful delivery. Some directors and others also obliged. A vivid red suit of Bruce's was the centre of an interlude and transfer to **Dennis Burgess** a Wests dignitary.



Wests went out of their way to ensure that Bruce will not be forgotten. **Peter and John Hardgrove** and other directors are to be applauded for their generosity of spirit.

How lucky were we to have Roscoe at the helm? His presentation set the scene for a farewell in celebration mood. Any other moderator would, in my experience, ensure that a solemn mood would overpower a free spirited mood.

All in all a most memorable and rewarding day in spite of the solemn occasion.

DOUG

Bruce's wishes that his red suit be passed on to **Dennis Burgess** was carried out as can be seen below.

