

Media release
19th March 2012



A special celebration for the 80th birthday of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

BridgeClimb Sydney and the Sydney Symphony
celebrate this milestone with the playing of 'Fanfare for the
Common Man' atop this iconic structure for some of the
Bridge's heroes.

This morning BridgeClimb Sydney, along with the rest of Australia, celebrated the 80th anniversary of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. To mark this very special occasion, BridgeClimb Sydney in conjunction with the Sydney Symphony - who also turn 80 this year - performed for an intimate audience of the Bridge's heroes at the summit, 134 metres above Sydney Harbour.

The Bridge's heroes all have fascinating stories connected with the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Seven heroes climbed to the summit of the Bridge to witness a piece, in their honour, called 'Fanfare for the Common Man'. This well known work by Aaron Copland is about the common man being a hero, and was performed by the Sydney Symphony in homage to the Bridge itself and to the people who helped create our much-loved 'Coathanger' all those years ago.

Amongst the heroes that climbed today were Jim, Phillip and Michael Bradfield, grandsons and great-grandson of the late civil engineer Dr J.J.C. Bradfield. For over 30 years their ancestor was the most active and influential person in promoting and overseeing the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Dr J.J.C. Bradfield's influence was such that, on the opening of the Bridge in 1932, the then Governor, Sir Philip Game, acknowledged the role he played in the realisation of this world famous structure and named the road linking the north and south, The Bradfield Highway.

Laurence Agius, whose uncle Mr Charles Ferguson (born Farrugia), not only attended the opening of the Bridge, but was also among the men who took part in building it. He claimed to have placed the very first rivet in the Bridge. Laurence's grandfather, Mr John Farrugia, was a frogman who surveyed the footings for the Bridge during its construction.

Ralph Bradfield Bonner shares the same birth date as the Bridge - 19th March 1932 - and to celebrate his birthday, he also joined in the celebrations this morning. Mr Bradfield Bonner was named by his parents after the leading figures who led the construction of the Bridge, namely Ralph Freeman and Dr J.J.C. Bradfield.

Joan McDonald, nee Crawford, was born in an ambulance on the Sydney Harbour Bridge. Joan's birth certificate states, "Place of Birth: in ambulance on Sydney Harbour Bridge, Sydney". Joan travelled from Taree today for the birthday celebrations and to revisit her special birthplace.

BridgeClimb Sydney also welcomed back their most frequent climber this morning, Lloyd Poulton, for his 46th climb to the summit of the Harbour Bridge. Lloyd's unwavering passion for climbing the Bridge is testament to how this iconic structure connects and defines Sydney and its Harbour, and how it has become an enduring symbol of the spirit and character of the city, the nation and its people.

Edward Owens, General Manager of Sales and Marketing at BridgeClimb, said, "Today we celebrate this engineering masterwork we're so privileged to share with the whole world. The Bridge opened on 19 March 1932 and this annual celebration is a timely reminder of what this icon, affectionately known as the 'Coathanger', means to our state and our nation. We look forward to sharing many more birthdays with the Sydney Harbour Bridge".

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