

## **Taylor, Florence Mary 1879 - 1969**



Florence Mary Taylor was born Florence Mary Parsons in Bedminster, Somerset, England on 29 December 1879. She emigrated with her family to Australia in 1884 and settled in Sydney, New South Wales. In 1899 she began working as a clerk in the office of the architect and engineer Francis Ernest Stowe (1867-1936) in the Sydney suburb of Parramatta. Soon after, she enrolled on an evening class course in architecture at Sydney Technical College. During the course she was articled to Edmund Skelton Garton. In 1904 she became the first woman to complete final year studies in architecture, by which time she had been promoted to chief draughtsperson in Garton's office.

On the completion of her articles she moved to the office of John Burcham Clamp (1869-1931) in Sydney as chief draughtsperson. In 1907 he nominated for associate membership of the Institute of Architects of New South Wales. The application was rejected and she was not accepted an associate until 1920, when she became the first woman member of what is now the NSW chapter of the Australian Institute of Architects. She was elected a full member in 1923. Despite the initial rejection by the Institute of Architects, she built up a thriving practice designing homes in Sydney.

In April 1907 she married George Augustine Taylor (1872-1928), a craftsman and journalist. He shared her interest in architecture and engineering and together they founded the Building Publishing Publishing Co. Ltd. Among the many titles they published were *Building* (1907-1972), *Construction* (1908-1974) and *Australian Engineer* (1915-1973), which she edited. The Taylors were also founding members in 1913 of the Town Planning Association of New South Wales.

Following the sudden death of George Taylor in 1928, she took over the running of their publishing business, maintaining it until her retirement at the age of 81 in 1961. Many of her architectural designs and town planning schemes appeared in the journals she published, several of which, including a tunnel crossing for Sydney Harbour, have subsequently come to fruition.

Florence Taylor has been described as an "indefatigable founder and joiner". Among the many organisations and societies of which she was a member were the Arts Club, Society of Women Writers, and the Aero Club of New South Wales. She is believed to have been the first woman in Australia to fly in a heavier-than-air craft when, in 1909, she flew a glider built by her husband.

She was elected a Member of the Society of Architects (MSA) in the UK and was admitted a Licentiate of the Royal Institute of British Architects (LRIBA) in 1925. She was also an honorary member of the Australian Institute of Builders and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, London. She died at her home in the Sydney suburb of Potts Point on 13 February 1969. In 2001 she was inducted into the Victorian Honour Roll of Women.

Worked in

Australia

UK

Bibliography

Directory of British Architects 1834-1914. Compiled by Antonia Brodie, et al. Volume 2: L-Z. London; New York: British Architectural Library, Royal Institute of British Architects/Continuum, 2001

Giles, J. M. 50 years of town planning, with Florence M. Taylor. Sydney: Australasian Engineer, 1959

Murray, Rosemary. Pirouette and pose : a biography of Florence Mary Taylor. B. Arch. thesis, University of New South Wales, 1976

Aitken, Richard. 'Return to Lutyens': Florence Taylor and the folly of architecture'. Australian Garden History vol.19, no.3, 2007-08 pp.15-17

Freestone, Robert and Bronwyn Hanna. Florence Taylor's hats: designing, building and editing Sydney. Sydney, NSW: Halstead Press, 2007

Taylor, Florence M.; Clark, A. Lanyon; and Hann, George R. Fifty modern homes, designed by A. Lanyon Clark, architect, Geo. R. Hann, associate: with other

drawings and photographs, to show the trend here and abroad and to demonstrate that modern buildings can be interesting and even beautiful. Sydney, NSW: Building Publishing Co., 1940.

Taylor, Florence M. A pot-pourri of Eastern Asia, with comparisons and reflections. Sydney, NSW: Building Publishing Co., 1935

Orchard, E. R. and Taylor, Florence M. The book of 36 distinctive homes: with contrasting contemporary and traditional types from abroad. Sydney, NSW: Building Publishing Co., 1945

Roe, Michael. Nine Australian progressives: vitalism in bourgeois social thought, 1890-1960. St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1964

Taylor, Florence M. 'University buildings : our heritage in the balance'. Building vol.36, n.216, 12 August 1925 pp.49-61

#### Links

- Wikipedia [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence\\_Mary\\_Taylor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Florence_Mary_Taylor)
- Christa Ludlow. Florence Mary Taylor (1879-1869). Australian Dictionary of Biography <https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/taylor-florence-mary-8754>
- The Dictionary of Sydney [https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/taylor\\_florence](https://dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/taylor_florence)
- The Australian Women's Register  
<http://www.womenaustralia.info/biogs/IMP0064b.htm>
- Sarah Buckley. Florence Mary Taylor: "The most remarkable woman in the Empire" Architecture & Design  
<https://www.architectureanddesign.com.au/people/florence-mary-taylor>
- Women's Museum of Australia and Old Gaol Alice Springs  
<https://wmoa.com.au/herstory-archive/taylor-florence-mary-parsons>
- 'A gracious and elegant lady doing a man's job': Australia's first woman architect. ARCHITECTUREAU <https://architectureau.com/articles/a-gracious-and-elegant-lady-doing-a-mans-job-australias-first-woman-architect/>
- National Library of Australia Catalogue  
<https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/Record/202309>
- Trove <https://trove.nla.gov.au/search?keyword=florence%20taylor>