



# Ingrams Australia

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Ingrams Clocks in Australia 1890 to  
1960's.

Still operating in 2023

By Brian Scott

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# 1890 – The Beginning

- The Company Ingram Bros was founded by two Twin Brothers, William Henry Ingram and John Ingram in 1890. The brothers were born in 1871 and their Father was John Ingram. Their father probably died in 1885 when they were aged 16. Interestingly John the Father came to Australia in 1852 as a Watchmaker initially working, along with his Brother Andrew Ingram and Thomas Gaunt for a Jeweller/Watchmaker Mr Henry Newman in Melbourne.





## 1890 – 1910 The Depression and recovery years

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- 1890 saw a major depression in Victoria – arguably worse than the 1920 Crash
- This was a hard time to start a business but they managed to weather the hard times and built a thriving business
- They also established a good reputation as Jewelry designers and makers and had a shop/workshop in a desirable address in Swanston street.
- They also catered to the mid market by rebadging and selling items such as Ansonia clocks.
- They sought business in country Victoria by having a Travelling Representative

# 1890 – 1910 Jewellers and Clock Makers

- Shop was in Swanston Street and they made and sold Jewelry and sold and repaired clocks and watches ranging from Rolex to Rotherhams and Goliath, Ships Chronometers, and servicing the Melbourne Observatory timekeepers.



# C1910 Ingram Brothers agents ITR London

- “A very rare early example of an ITR recorder imported into the UK from the USA, distinguished by its ornate cast iron waterfall front and very detailed dial. It has virtually every feature possible to incorporate in such an early machine; spring winding indicators, AM/PM window, lockable in/out lever, etc



# C1912 Agents for Silentia Clocks

The silentia clocks are quite rare and are believed to have been only built for a short time around 1910. However two, retailed by Ingram Brothers, have been found in Australia by Keith Potter and Graham Mitchell



Silentia (mit elektr. Spulen im Kreis)



SA des Horloges Electric  
Silentia

Elektrische Uhren; Besançon, Frankreich; um  
1909-1911

INGHAM BROTHERS  
MELBOURNE  
B S G D G.

Bte S.G.D.G.  
means patented without  
warranty of the French  
Government

# 1911 Ingram Brothers agents for Magneta

- “Mr. W. H. Ingram, of Ingram Bros., Melbourne, sole agents in Australia for the Magneta Time Company after ascertaining from the S.A. Government Astronomer the methods adopted in this State for the distribution of time signals from the Observatory.....(Nov 1911)
- Vic Government Gazette 6<sup>th</sup> March 1912 - payment to Ingram brothers, Melbourne, for the supply and installation of electrically-controlled clocks, required for use in connexion with the Telephone Exchange, Lonsdale-street, Melbourne.
- 1913 William Ingram promotes System
- William Ingram presented a talk on the Victorian Institute of Architects on Magneta system and an extensive write up appeared in their Proceedings
- Title "MAGNETA SYSTEM OF SYNCHRONIZED CLOCKS." (28 February 1913)



## “MAGNETA SYSTEM OF SYNCHRONIZED CLOCKS.”

*Remarks at Demonstration (with working models) at the R. V. I. A. Meeting, Feb. 25th, 1913, by John Ingram.*



BY THE kind consideration of the officers of your Institute, I have been accorded this opportunity to direct the attention of your members to the necessity of their co-operation to bring about the general adoption of some reliable system of synchronized timepieces in the City of Melbourne.

I think you will all agree that time is, as far as the business man is concerned, the prime factor upon which is built the order of each day's doings, and is in effect the essence of all his undertakings. We and our actions are absolutely under the control of the clock. A special Committee of the British Science Guild sat in London in 1908 to consider the question of uniform time. The Chairman, Sir John Cockburn, said, "A cheating yard wand is not a greater robber than a false dial." Time is the factor whereby the units of a great community move, and act in concert. "The clock is the co-ordinator of Society."

Under the present system of individual timepieces it is impossible to secure that great desideratum uniformity of time. Uni-  
[ormity

# C1915 Magneta Clock sold by Ingram Brothers



- Magneta, Switzerland, the front plate numbered 1380 signed for the retailer Ingram Bros on left and Tony Roberts Magneta on right

- C1921 Swiss Magneta Company sold to Landis and Gyr and now called Inducta
- Landis and Gyr opens Australian office in the 1920's.

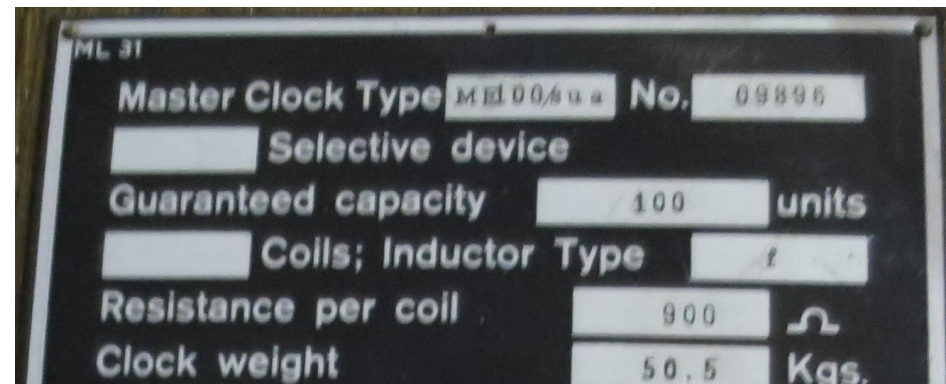


Abb. 17 — Die Produktion von Inducta-Uhren ca. 1922.



# C1930 Myers Inducta System Clock sold by Ingram Brothers

Master no 9896 Used at Myer Emporium, Bourke Street Melbourne, to control the clocks throughout the store. This clock uses an electric motor to wind the main weight. An electric impulse was sent from the main clock by an inductor, to make the slave clocks step forward one minute. (Photos courtesy of Scienceworks Museum).



# **C1924 Ingram Brothers venture into Tower clock manufacture in Australia**

**C.M.L Clock in Albury claimed to be the “Most Modern Timepiece in Australia”**

To the order of the Colonial Mutual Life Assurance Society, Ltd., a large clock has been constructed capable of driving the hands of four illuminated seven-foot dials in the tower of the building.

The escapement is of the double, three-legged gravity type and has electric winding of the clock weights.

The main feature of the new clock to be installed in the Colonial Mutual Building tower at Albury, is the fact that it is wholly of Australian design and workmanship.

William Ingram was assisted by a William Buckley who worked for Dents and whose ancestor was the designer of Big Bens clock.



# **1924 to the 1940's Ingrams Golden years of clock manufacturing in Australia**

## **Ingrams Brothers expand its Management**

In 1926 the firm was further expanded by its translation into a Proprietary Limited Company with 20,000 pounds capital in one pound shares and a name change to Ingram Bros Bright. William and the Bright Brothers are listed as the Directors. Notable additions to the staff being Mr. H. Bright, as Managing Director, and Mr. R. M. Bright as Works Manager. At this stage the Ingram brothers were in their mid fifties.



## **Mr William Henry Ingram**

It appears that William Ingram was the Technical Powerhouse behind Ingrams. The formation of Ingram Brothers Bright allowed William to focus his energies on the development of the Technology.

"Mr Ingram became a member of the Federated Jewelers of Australia when it was instituted in 1914, and was a life member. He was regarded in the trade as one of the finest light mechanics in Melbourne, and was responsible for the installation of electrical clock systems in many city factories and buildings. Lived 1871 to 1945 Just before his death he had practically completed a calendar which he claimed would be capable of operating for 2000 years." – obituary 1945

# **C1931 Ingram Bright build and Install an electric Master Clock System at AMP Bldg**

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- Messrs. Ingram Bros. Pty. Ltd., of 59 Swanston Street, Melbourne, which has installed the synchronised time system throughout the new A.M.P, building, has demonstrated that the 100 per cent. Australian-made product is quite equal to the imported article.
- The complete system as installed. is made in its own factory at 59 Swanston Street, Melbourne.



# C1931 Ingram Bright build and Install five electric Tower Clock Systems

- Clocks were installed at Perth University, Oakleigh Convent, Geelong College, Grimwade house and the Naval Base.
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- The master clock, generally of the grandfather design of case, conveniently placed on the ground floor, or in some office, gives the release electrically to the hipp movement, which is situated in the tower at the rear of the dial. This movement in turn transmits its power to the motion works and hands, and the power is more than sufficient to combat any outside influences or obstructions, such as a gale of wind.
  - Gents waiting train first invented 1907



Convent of the Good Shepherd Clock Tower in 1985 shortly before being demolished to expand the Chadstone Shopping Centre

# C1932 The University of WA Time System

- The new University of Western Australia at Crawley will boast the biggest clock in the southern hemisphere. The great dial, which measures 15 feet in diameter .
- The tower clock is controlled by the master clock through a relay, and is so regulated as to gain two seconds in each minute with the object of counteracting wind-pressure on the great hands. In weather when no such pressure, or in sufficient pressure, is exercised, this great clock mechanically halts itself and is released by the master clock at the completion of the full minute. As the drive is worm and gear (delicately balanced on ball races), no amount of wind pressure can accelerate the movement of the hands; they can only be retarded.
- The only part of the whole system which is not Australian made is the motor of the master clock itself
- No battery or outside power is used in the control of the seven smaller clocks, all of which, of course, synchronize perfectly with the master clock and one another.



Fairly sure it utilises an Inducta Master and seven inducta slaves. Australian made component is Tower clock. Slave numbers limited by the cost.

# 1933 Shell Buildings Melbourne, Perth and Adelaide



See us for Electric Clocks  
for all purposes

*No job too big or too small*

Attention and Service  
Guaranteed in all  
Australian States

## ELECTRIC CLOCKS

The Electric Clock System installed by us in the

### **NEW SHELL BUILDING, MELBOURNE**

is the largest and most up to date in Australia. The complete system of 76 clocks, master clock and automatic control board was manufactured in our own workshop and is therefore 100% Australian made.

The SHELL BUILDINGS in Adelaide and Perth have also installed Ingram Bros.' Electric Clock Systems—150 clocks for the three buildings. This is the largest order for clocks ever placed in Australia.

The two large National Time Recorders in the Melbourne Shell Building were also supplied and installed by Ingram Bros.

*Australia's Leading Clock Manufacturers and Instrument Makers*

## **INGRAM BROS. PTY. LTD.**

Champion House, 1st and 3rd Floors, 59-61 Swanston Street, Melbourne

Cent. 4082

*Victorian Agents for National Time Keepers*

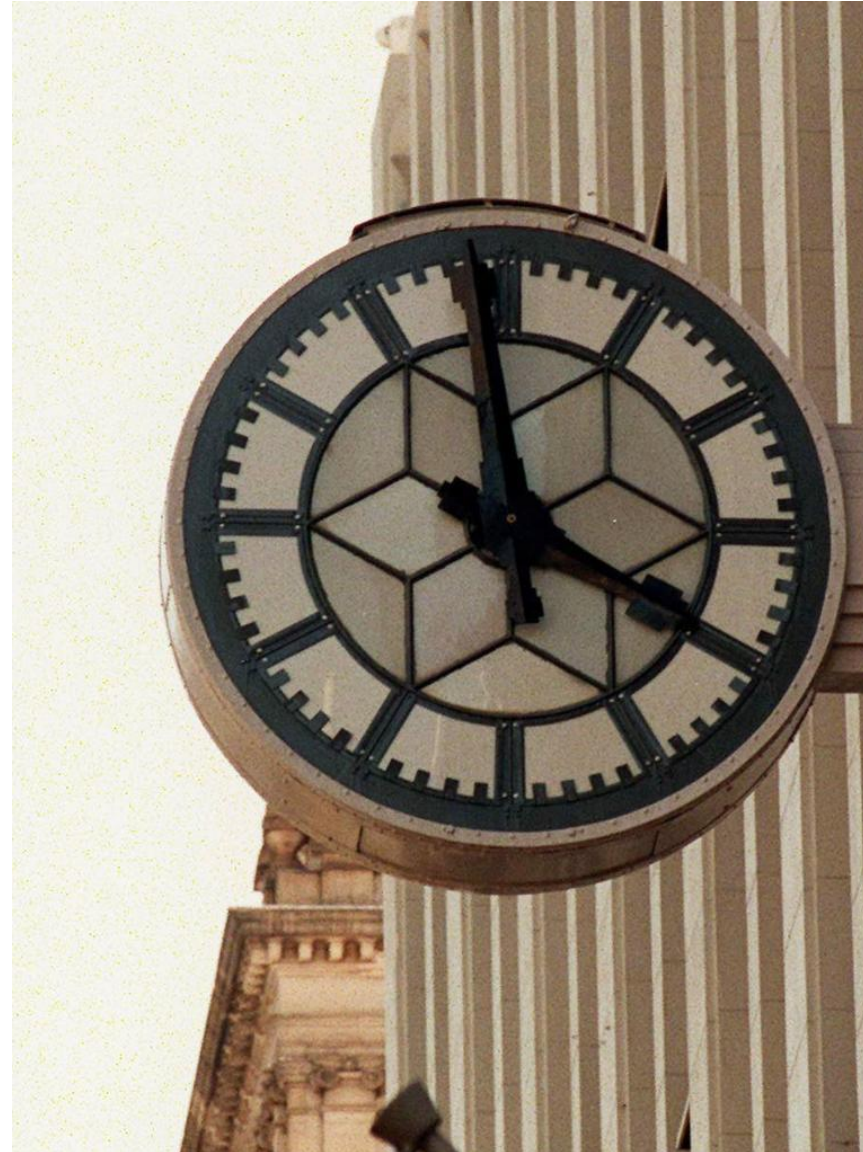
(1933-06-30). Advertisement  
In Journal of the Royal  
Victorian Institute of  
Architects.

Australian Master Slave  
clock systems also  
installed in new AMP  
building (1931)



# 1934 Large Drum Clock on Myers Emporium

- What is believed to be the largest drum clock in the world has been erected on the wall of the Myer Emporium in Bourke Street, 72 feet above the pavement
- 7.5 feet in diameter and a double dial, 1 tonne weight
- 52 electric lights behind dial, 36 pieces of opal glass
- Case made and erected by William Bedford Ltd. bronze founders and art metal workers.
- The driving mechanism of the clock is immediately inside the wall. Power is transmitted from it to the motion works behind the dials by connecting shafts
- The new clock is controlled by the master clock, of an electric system, which controls 75 clocks (soon to be more than 90) - throughout the emporium



# 1934 Dandenong Town Hall Installation

- The “Hipp” Electric Waiting Train Movement. This movement derives its name from its habit of waiting for an electric impulse from the Master Clock to allow it to move forward slowly one minute. It is rather hard to give a clear description of this movement to enable same to be understood by the layman, but briefly the Hipp movement is a slave that does the hard work of pulling the hands round the dials.
- Only one Hipp movement is necessary. It is located in the centre of the tower, and to which the motion works are connected by connecting bars, through a bevel nest to a worm and gear drive. This worm and gear drive is actuated by an electric pendulum, driven by a rectifier or batteries. The “Hipp” movement mechanically locks itself every minute and waits for the master clock to give it the impulse to go forward another minute. This impulse unlocks the mechanical lock at the end of each full minute, and sets it into position again ready for the same operation at each successive minute. Eight ball races are mounted in this clock, which should last, with ordinary care and attention, for a life-time of service.
- The Master Clock and Batteries—The master clock is the piece of mechanism that controls all the rest of the equipment. This master clock has an “Invar” steel pendulum rod, and when finally regulated in its working position needs very little attention. Impulses are transmitted to the various parts of the equipment for their operation from the master clock.
- The electric equipment consists of a transformer, rectifier and automatic changeover switch to a battery reserve to guard against electric power failures.
- Messrs. Ingram Bros, inform us that the Tower Clock to be installed will be the most complete in the matter of accessories that has yet been installed in Australia, containing as it will all the latest safety devices, and mechanical switches for operating it. All of the equipment, except the bell, clock lighting and striking and the 1 h.p. motor is manufactured by Ingram Bros, in their own workshop.



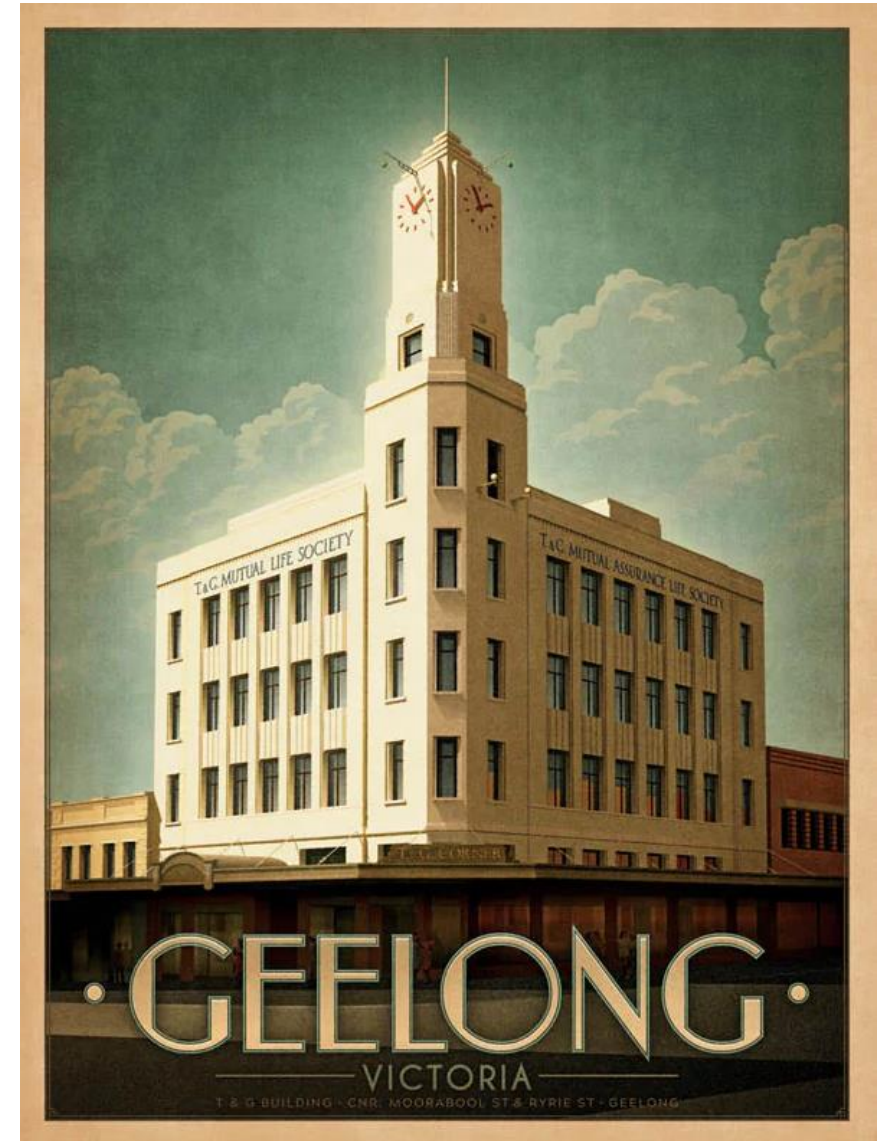
# 1934 Dandenong Town Hall Installation



What's left of the original installation - bell chime system. The hipp toggle waiting train not in evidence. It has been modernised which is the fate of many of the clocks from that era.

# 1934 Geelongs Wonder Clock

- A master clock, manufactured by Ingram Brothers, operated all the clocks in the Geelong T&G Building including the clock on the tower and the farmers striking the bell. Technically, the installation consists of a master clock which controls the four-dial tower clock, other clocks throughout the building, the hour striking, and the movement of the figures. The figures, together with the bell and base, weigh a whopping five tons. While the son is mainly ornamental, the figure of the older man is fitted with all the moving parts for the striking of the bell.



Ingrams is responsible not only for the Geelong T&G Building, but for the manufacture of clocks for all T&G Buildings fitted with clocks Australia-wide.

# 1930 – 1950's Other Installations by Ingrams

1930 Pyramid Hill



1930 Bright Soldiers Memorial



1933 Ararat Town Hall



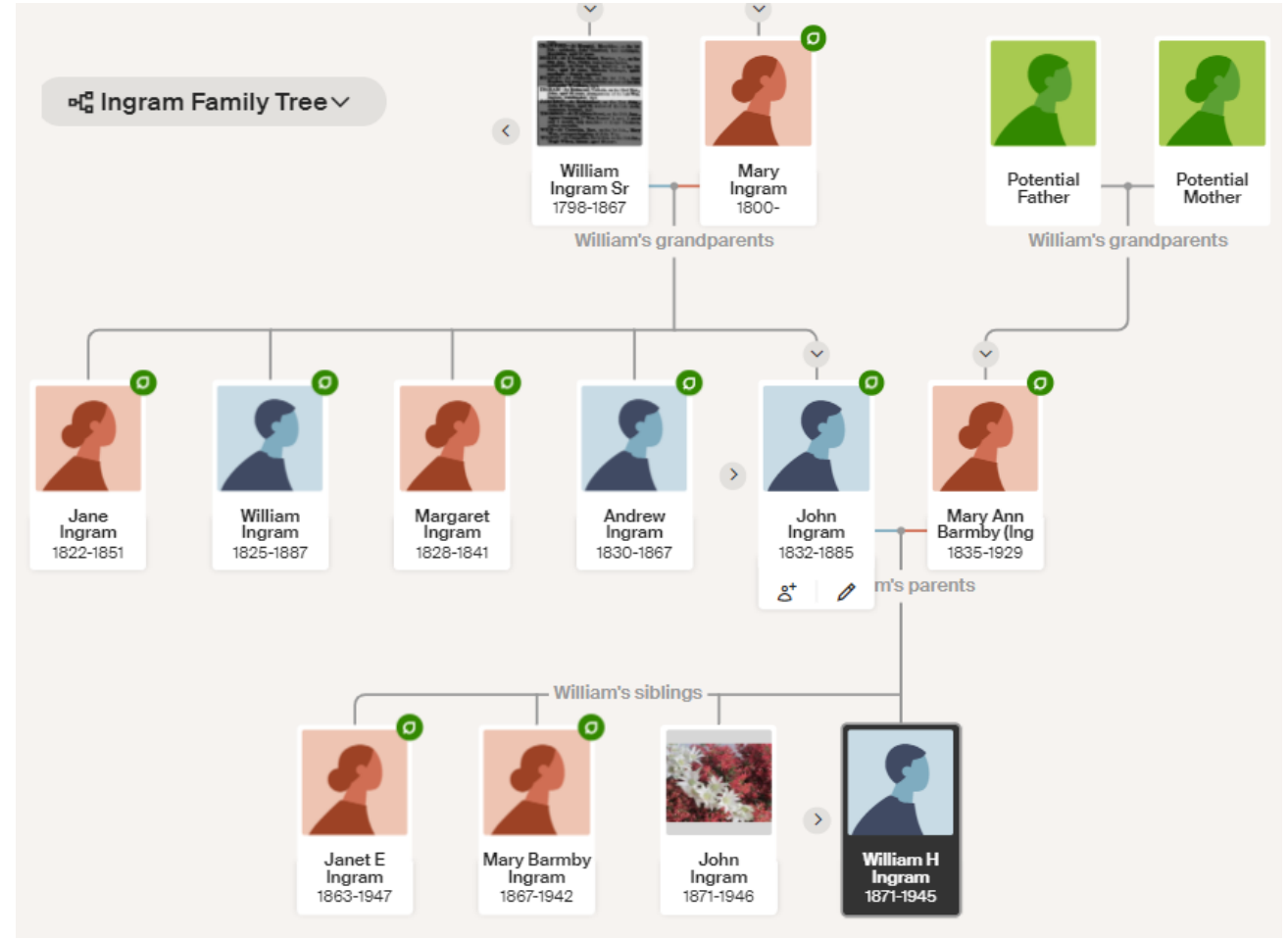
# 1939 Ingrams Build new Factory in Bouverie Street

- 145-147 Bouverie Street, Carlton. The building was designed as a workshop for a well-established jeweller/clock-maker, who also were timekeepers for sporting events, and the wealth of natural light was presumably a requisite for their work. Ingrams Bright remained there until the mid 1960s.
- the Ingram Brothers, J + W H, applied to construct a two storey workshop building in 1938. It was to cost £2,000 and be constructed by H G White.<sup>15</sup> The architects were Peck & Kemter, who were active from about 1912,



# 1942/47 The Ingram Family bow out

- 1945 see the death of William at age 74 and his brother John dies in 1946. Their Sisters Mary Barmby Ingram died at age 75 in 1942 and Janet Elizabeth Ingram dies at 84 in 1947.
- It appears that none of the Brothers and Sisters married or had children and they left their estate to a Wildlife Trust in Memory of their Mother. There were no family members left to continue with the Company.
- This ended the Ingram Family line who had been watchmakers/Clockmakers for at least three Generations. Firstly in Scotland in the early 1800's and then in the growing colony of Victoria in the 1850's and finally in the latest developments of tower clocks and distributed time systems up to the mid 1900's.
- Ingram Brothers bright the company continued operation but with the loss of the Technical expertise of William and John.
- The demand for large expensive locally manufactured installations became less as more and better alternatives from overseas became available.



# 1960's Ingrams bought by the Enkselman Family

- Around the early 1960's Ingrams Bright was bought by Henry Ekselman's Parents and was run by his father almost as a Hobby according to Henry Ekselman.
- Henry was a bit of a non conformist having given up his university studies (Law) to follow an interest in Photography with Camera shops and studios in the city of Melbourne
- He also gained some engineering experience assisting his father with the Ingrams business.
- Henry took over the company around 1980 after his father's health had failed.
- Henry Ekselman was the main force in modernising and rescuing the Company from Oblivion.



Henry Ekselman – he loved dancing

# 1980 Henry Ekselman revitalises the Company

- Around the early 1990's the Taxation Department applies to wind up Ingram due to unpaid taxes.
- 338 Separation Street Northcote becomes the Ingram workshops from approximately 1998 after the Ekselman Family acquire the site in 1995
- From about 2008 Ingrams move to a smaller Premises at Ringwood
- Tragically in 2018 Henry Ekselman (73) was killed while crossing Chapel street by a speeding 29 year old drunken driver who had run a red light.



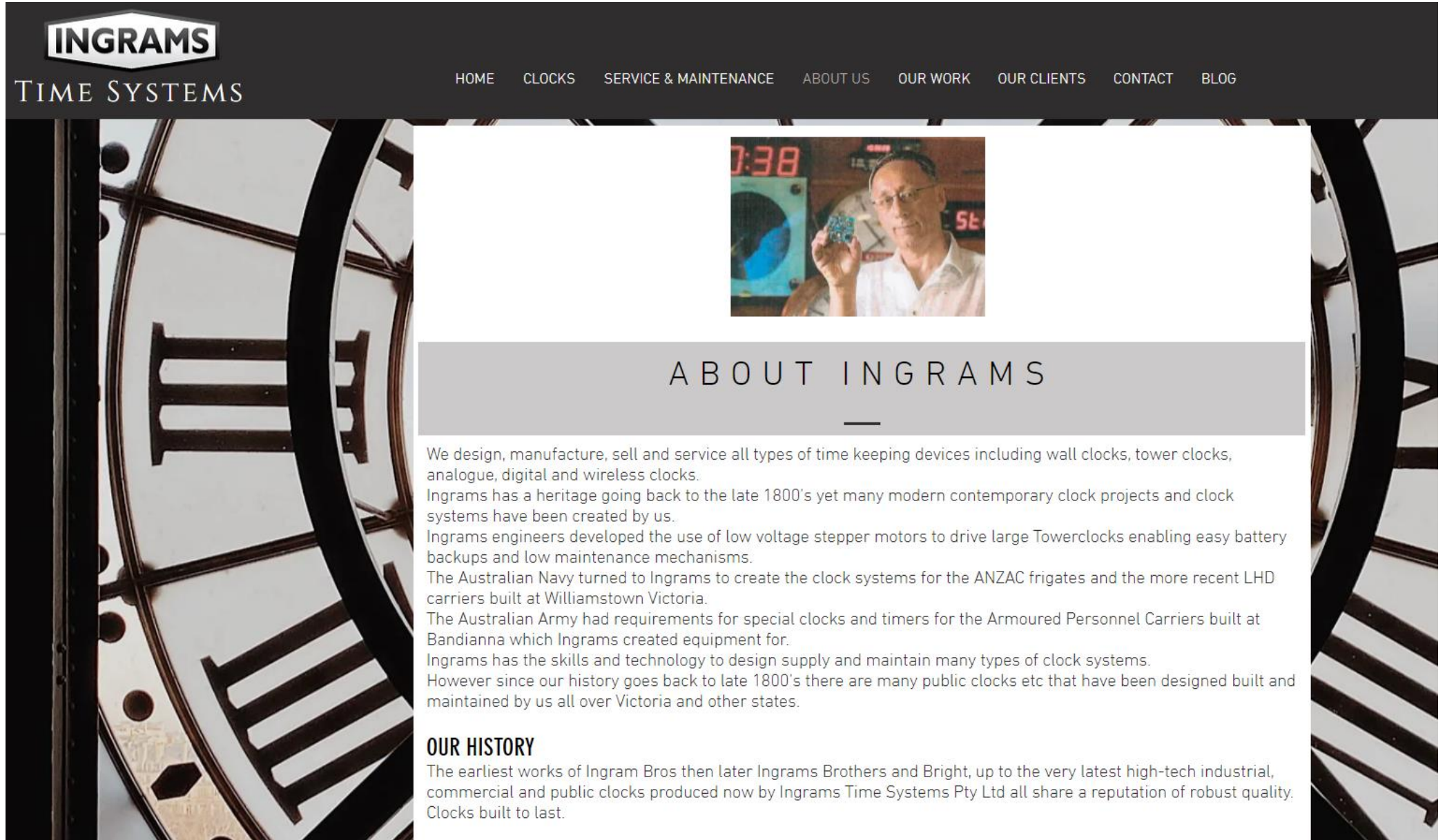
338 Separation Street Northcote premises in 2007




21 Eugene Terrace  
Ringwood in 2017

# 2023 Ingrams Time Systems


The Company continues to operate and have a website where some of their more modern imported systems can be seen.





TIME SYSTEMS

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ABOUT INGRAMS

We design, manufacture, sell and service all types of time keeping devices including wall clocks, tower clocks, analogue, digital and wireless clocks.

Ingrams has a heritage going back to the late 1800's yet many modern contemporary clock projects and clock systems have been created by us.

Ingrams engineers developed the use of low voltage stepper motors to drive large Towerclocks enabling easy battery backups and low maintenance mechanisms.

The Australian Navy turned to Ingrams to create the clock systems for the ANZAC frigates and the more recent LHD carriers built at Williamstown Victoria.

The Australian Army had requirements for special clocks and timers for the Armoured Personnel Carriers built at Bandianna which Ingrams created equipment for.

Ingrams has the skills and technology to design supply and maintain many types of clock systems.

However since our history goes back to late 1800's there are many public clocks etc that have been designed built and maintained by us all over Victoria and other states.

OUR HISTORY

The earliest works of Ingram Bros then later Ingrams Brothers and Bright, up to the very latest high-tech industrial, commercial and public clocks produced now by Ingrams Time Systems Pty Ltd all share a reputation of robust quality. Clocks built to last.