JOSEPH CHARLES FOWELL

Gold-medallist 1962

Born on 2nd August 1891 in Albany, Western Australia, Joseph Fowell was taken to England as an infant. He was educated at the Dominican Preparatory School and Fauconberge Grammar School, Beccles, Suffolk. He served his articles with F. E. Banham and with Travers and Mileham of Westminster. On completion of his training he worked as an assistant in four other London architects' offices before joining in 1914 the partnership of Soper and Fowell of Hammersmith Bridge Road, London. On the outbreak of World War I he first joined the Volunteer Architects Corps and in 1915 joined the Royal Navy, in which he became a lieutenant serving in mine-sweepers in the Atlantic, the North Sea and Gibraltar. It

was the beginning of a lifelong love of the sea and its ways. With a skilful pencil and a sensitive brush Fowell has expressed his love in delightfully executed water-colour paintings of the sea, the ships and the men who sail in them for half a century.

In Australia after demobilization in 1919 he became a lecturer in the School of Architecture at the University of Sydney until 1926 when he joined the staff of Harry Budden. In 1928, in conjunction with Kenneth McConnell, he won a competition for B.M.A. House in Macquarie Street. From this came the partnership of Fowell and McConnell, which through several changes of name and partners is now that of Fowell Mansfield Jarvis and Maclurcan. The work of the firm has been marked by and praised for its clarity of thought, its strength and its beauty. A deeply religious man, Fowell has a great love of ecclesiastical architecture and his many fine churches are widely admired. His firm twice won the R.I.B.A. Bronze Medal in New South Wales, the Sir John Sulman Medal twice, and the Queensland Award for Meritorious Architecture.

Fowell had joined the R.I.B.A. as an Associate in 1914. In 1920 he became an Associate in the I.A.N.S.W. In 1930 he was elected a Fellow of the R.I.B.A. and the following year a Fellow of the R.A.I.A. He served on the council of the New South Wales Chapter, becoming vice-president in 1941-2 and 1946-7. He was a member of the Board of Architects of New South Wales in 1941-2, 1946-7 and 1949-50. Fowell was a member of the council of the Building Industries' Congress for many years. He was a founder of the Blake Prize for religious art in 1950 and has been president of the Blake Society since its inception. In 1962 he was awarded the R.A.I.A. Gold Medal in recognition of his value to Australian architecture and in 1969 was elevated to Life Fellowship. In addition to his buildings, which stand as exemplars to his architectural teaching and precepts, and to his work for the Institute, Fowell's contribution to his profession lies almost as much in the effect his enthusiasm, his kindly strength of character, and his gentle power of natural authority have had on the many students, associates, and colleagues who have known him.