



Celebrating 100 years of continuity

CONSTANT AND consistent are the keywords at E.H.Tebbutt & Sons, which celebrates its centenary this year.

Managing partner John Hunter, who has been with the firm for 26 years, says there have been at most seven partners in his time, and clients are also loyal to the firm.

"We're grateful for those clients whose children and grandchildren require legal services and send them to us. Mostly they come for conveyancing, although in one generation it might be for probate and estates, and then the son or daughter might buy and sell property, and the grandchildren might want to buy their own home."

The firm has been more or less in the same location, in Pitt Street offices or close by Martin Place, for the last century, too.

Ernest Tebbutt, the firm's founder, first trained as a surveyor, then read law while shire clerk at Murrurundi and

began to practise as a solicitor in Sydney in 1910, establishing a practice at 84 Pitt Street. He also became a barrister, and occasionally sat as a judge in the Campbelltown Court.

He was a scholar of both Greek and Latin, then set about learning Hebrew, with the ambition of reading the Bible in its original form. He also became an architect and designed his own family home as well as the Roseville Methodist Church.

Two of his sons, W.A. (Bill) and R.E (Roy) Tebbutt joined the firm in 1923 and 1926 respectively. When Roy joined, Ernest changed the name of his firm to E.H. Tebbutt & Sons, a name that has remained unchanged for 84 years to the present time.

In 1953, Roy's son, H.W (Peter) Tebbutt, joined the firm and remained a partner until 1995. He retired in 2005, but the idea behind the practice – of "a traditional family-oriented type firm especially to private clients but now pro-

viding a wider area of expertise" – has lived on, Hunter says.

Peter Tebbutt was renowned and respected in the legal fraternity as a writer and lecturer on conveyancing law, testament to which was his appointment to the role of editor of the conveyancing section of the *Australian Law Journal* for several years. In its history, three solicitors have achieved 50 years of service to the firm – Roy and Peter Tebbutt, and George Gordon, who joined the firm in 1956 and retired in 2006, but who maintains a consultancy role to this day.

Initially, the core business was in the practice of property, probate and estate law. Diversification has seen the firm today offer commercial leasing and finance, general litigation, including family provision claims and family law, and intellectual property law.

"All partners are very aware of the continuity. I hope the firm will survive for another century," said John Hunter. □



Still proud to call themselves a traditional firm after 100 years, the partners of E.H. Tebbutt & Sons will celebrate their centenary this month, still a stone's throw from where their founder first established the practice: (l to r) Robert Kirby, Michael Sainsbury, John Hunter, Warwick van Ede, Ken Harkness and Jennifer Gordon. Inset: founding father Ernest Tebbutt was a renaissance man at the turn of the last century: surveyor, solicitor, judge, architect and scholar of Latin, Greek and Hebrew.