

## Prime Ministers Avenue

A tale of two P.Ms and four heads.

In September 1975 The head of Gough Whitlam disappeared from the Prime Ministers Avenue. Six months later, when it had not reappeared, Frank Rogers, the Town Clerk, wrote to Victor Greenhalgh, the original sculptor, concerning the possibility of a further casting as a replacement, This was supplied and reinstated only to have the original returned. As Ian Smith later recorded in a letter to the Sun "... now we have two. Some peculiar suggestions have been made as to what we should do with the spare one!"

Victor Greenhalgh had already been responsible for the heads of Forde, Holt, McEwen , Gorton and McMahon prior to Whitlam and was entrusted with that of Malcolm Fraser. Unfortunately, this one created some discord. Ian Smith, the Town Clerk, writing to Peter Nicholson in 1985 stated that "it has drawn constant comment as being different to the rest of the collection; it is a different colour, too big and not a good likeness". The bust had been completed by Greenhalgh late in his life and, as he had subsequently died, after negotiation with his son, Peter, Fraser's head was returned to him and Peter Nicholson was entrusted with the subsequent one which is seen today.

One can only say that for these two gentlemen that two heads are better than one,- ( or than none at all ) – but then, these were Prime Ministers so we should be thankful that in life they kept the one they had, at any rate for most of the time.

*John Garner June 2009*