

Friends of Soldiers Memorial Avenue Inc.

Newsletter Issue 43: June 2009



Highlights:

- ANZAC Week Displays
- Tree Replacements Commence
- Touring the Western Front

Dates to remember:

- August 2009 – Tree Dedications



President's Report

Well, we wanted some rain and we are getting it! Perhaps too much now as my property has become a bog. But this will do wonders for many farmers around the State, as well as for our long suffering trees on the Avenue. Hopefully the rain will have filled all the nooks and crannies in the dolerite on the Domain to sustain the trees through into next summer.

Many thanks to all the members who came and supported the Anzac Week displays at the Town Hall, and especially to all those responsible for setting the displays up. The event was a resounding success.

We are now about to enter a new phase of restoration on the Avenue as the HCC begins to plant out new trees that have been lovingly cared for at the Council nursery over the last 3-4 years. This winter will see a lot of activity as Council crews excavate new holes and plant the trees. We should all be eternally grateful that this will be done with large pieces of machinery and burly men from the Council, as the prospect of trying to dig holes by hand during FOSMA Working Bees is one, I am sure, we would not like to pursue too vigorously! Adrian Howard has compiled a list of the trees to be replaced in the first phase, and how we want involvement from descendants. This is all detailed later in this newsletter.

Don't forget to renew your membership this month, just use the form at the end of this newsletter and send it back to us.

John Wadsley

ANZAC Week Displays at the Hobart Town Hall

FOSMA held a major display of Great War memorabilia, artefacts, photographs and historic records for two days in the Hobart Town Hall as part of Anzac Week.

We also had a major focus on assisting people wanting information on descendants who served in the Great War. We were swamped with requests for help and largely through the efforts of Andrea and Ron Gerrard, many people left happy with new-found knowledge on their ancestors.

Over the two days, we estimate over 600-700 people viewed the displays. Even though the weather was not good, there was a steady stream of visitors. We also raised over \$450 for Hobart Legacy through our gold coin donation at the door.

Our thanks go to the Hobart City Council for their assistance, especially Michael Lonergan and Brian Lumb. Thanks also to Peter Pickering, John Trethewey, Helen Hartley, Kevin Sinclair, Drew Laird, Fraser Murray, John Presser, Graeme Petterd and Kath Petterd who were tireless in helping to erect the displays and to take them down after an exhausting two days.



Above: The Town Hall filled with people!



Left: Fraser Murray (in 52nd Bn uniform) playing the bagpipes at the end of the day (almost lifting the roof off the Town Hall!)



Right: The Lord Mayor and others watch in awe as the bagpipes fill the room with their wonderful sounds



Above: Peter, John and Andrea answering lots and lots of questions!

Tree Replacements – Winter 2009

During July, the Hobart City Council Tree Unit will be planting new trees in the northern part of the Avenue from just below the TCA ground right through to the Soldiers Memorial Oval. During last December and into 2009, Andrew Robert-Tissot, the Council arborist, assessed all the trees in this area.

Naturally **all missing and dead trees are slated for replacement.**

Living trees were assessed in terms of likely healthy remaining life and a score given. Basically trees unlikely to remain stable for at least the next 10 years were deemed '*nearly dead*' and are recommended for replacement.

Why replace now?

The trees are available having been grown from seedlings in the Council nursery over the last 4-5 years. Winter is the best time to plant. Tree stock in the next 2 years is earmarked for the Soldiers Memorial Oval and the southern portion of the Avenue below the TCA. This will exhaust current stocks of new trees with only a small number to be available for contingencies (unexpected demise due to weather, vandalism etc).

Replacing a tree is an opportunity to renew a family connection to the Avenue and involve another generation in continuing that connection and commitment. Trees have finite lives and will die – for the Avenue to be 'a living memorial, evergreen' it is essential that trees are replaced and replanted and in a planned way. In 50 years time the Avenue will be more like what was originally intended and more like it was many years ago.

What if I don't want a living tree replaced?

No tree will be replaced if the family objects. Note that the next chance to renew a family tree will not be until 2019 or later. It is accepted that family has the final say on the replacement of a tree planted by the nearest relatives of the soldier commemorated. It will not be an easy decision to make this break.

Why assess and replace in groups?

In terms of the look of the Avenue in the future, it is best to replant in large sections so there is a consistent look and feel to the landscape.

Planting like this also makes the job of maintaining them easier to manage. Trees will be watered for up to 5 years. Having multiple plantings mixed in together would make keeping track of which trees are to be watered much more difficult. It is also easier to monitor tree health and work out which trees may require more assistance – you can judge 'like with like' in terms of age, size and foliage.

Why not replace all the trees?

There are simply not enough trees and there is little point in removing trees that have many more years of life. Many trees have 20 or 30 more years life ahead.

Removing more trees than needed would also destroy the important heritage and family values of the Avenue – families planted the trees. The overall look of the Avenue with its wonderful vistas of trees flanking the path in many sections would be destroyed.

Tree plans for 2010 – the focus will be on planting new trees along the western perimeter of the Soldiers Memorial Oval to complete the restoration of the northern end of the Avenue.

Tree plans for 2011 – after a survey in 2010, all missing and dead trees will be replaced in the southern portion of the Avenue. Trees without a long-term future (likely to decline within 10 years) will also be replaced.

What happens to the timber from trees being removed?

This can be a great way of maintaining a family connection with the original tree planted by the family. Depending on the size of the tree, and access to some skills, simple mementos could be made to pass on through the family. We advise visiting the tree with a family member or friend who is able to give you some advice about potential uses. In the case of 'nearly dead' trees timber may have to be stored for some time until it can be used. The important thing is to give yourself options.

We will ask the HCC to mark trees as they are felled and arrange temporary storage. Families will be notified of a pick up day and place. Some timber will be stored by FOSMA for later use on the Avenue. The Council will dispose of the remainder.

To register your wishes about tree replacement and to lodge interest in timber from a family tree earmarked for replacement please contact either Adrian Howard 6234 4396 or John Wadsley 6248 7294 by Wednesday June 24th.

Draft Tree Planting List for Winter 2009

Tree No	Name	Tree Condition
246	L/Cpl. William Robert Glennon - DOD 06/04/1917	Missing
251	Pte. Nathaniel Robert Abbott : DOD 10/08/1918	Dead
253	Pte Robert Russell Sinclair - DOD 14/10/1916	Nearly Dead
256	Spr. Patrick James Kelly - DOD 17/08/1917	Missing
265	L/Cpl. Guy (Grey) Winston Terry - DOD 22/05/1917	Missing
267	Pte Henry Thomas Scott : DOD 25/04/1915	Nearly Dead
271	L/ Cpl Vivian Cyril Brooke : DOD 04/05/1915	Nearly Dead
275	Pte Harry Hodgman : DOD 25/04/1915	Dead
279	Cpl. Alan Gunn Hodgman : DOD 07/06/1917	Nearly Dead
283	L/Cpl Spencer Witt Pedder : DOD 20/09/1917	Nearly Dead
284	Pte. Roy Cecil Glover - DOD 08/12/1916	Nearly Dead
285	L/Cpl John Frederick Watchhorn : DOD 28/09/1916	Nearly Dead
287	Pte. James Campbell Rule : DOD 07/08/1915	Nearly Dead
288	Pte. Stanley Hinchcliffe - DOD 15/04/1917	Nearly Dead
289	Pte Ernest Walter Williams : DOD 20/09/1917	Nearly Dead
291	Pte. John Edward Joseph Daly : DOD 30/08/1915	Nearly Dead
292	Pte. Reginald Percival (Percy) Aherne - DOD 23/09/1917	Nearly Dead
293	Cpl. Lionel Eric Chalmers : DOD 25/09/1917	Dead
294	Bmdr. Richard Robert Higgins : DOD 01/08/1915	Nearly Dead
295	L/Cpl. Alan Lindsay Marsh : DOD 06/09/1915	Dead
296	Sgt Gilbert O'Connor Eddington : DOD 01/10/1917	Nearly Dead
297	Lt. Lauriston Brownell : DOD 03/10/1917	Nearly Dead
298	Pte. Eric Arthur Stewart : DOD 23/09/1917	Nearly Dead
299	Unallocated	Nearly Dead
300	Lt. Norman Richard Thomas Meagher - DOD 04/10/1917	Missing
301	Cpl. Walter John Livingston : DOD 04/10/1917	Nearly Dead
302	Pte. Albert Edward Robertson : DOD 13/07/1917	Nearly Dead
303	Sgt. John Stanley Piesse - DOD 13/10/1917	Missing
304	Pte. Henry Edward Caulfield - DOD 05/10/1917	Nearly Dead
305	Pte. Archibald Gilbert Weeding : DOD 04/10/1917	Nearly Dead
307	Pte. Arthur Lawrence Wharmby - DOD 06/04/1918	Missing
308	Pte. Wilfred Alfred Williams - DOD 05/10/1917	Nearly Dead
309	Pte. Ernest Frank Sproule : DOD 05/10/1917	Nearly Dead
310	Gnr. Richard Henry Drake - DOD 04/10/1917	Missing
311	Sgt. Hedley George Venus - DOD 25/06/1916	Missing
312	Pte. Athur George William Fowler - DOD 06/10/1917	Missing
315	Sgt. Robert Richard Rennie : DOD 20/07/1916	Dead
316	Pte. John Henry Green : DOD 07/10/1917	Nearly Dead
317	Pte. Edward Murray Brewer : DOD 07/06/1917	Dead
319	Lt. Charles Daniel Lucas : DOD 25/07/1916	Nearly Dead
320	Lt. Charles Frederick Sharland - DOD 12/10/1917	Nearly Dead
323	Pte. Hector Clarence Pacey : DOD 05/08/1916	Dead
324	L/Cpl. Walter John Goodey - DOD 13/10/1917	Nearly Dead
325	L/Sgt Charles Edward Smith : DOD 12/10/1917	Nearly Dead
327	Pte. Montague Bertram Street : DOD 05/08/1916	Dead
328	Pte. Albert James Gerard Taylor - DOD 12/10/1917	Nearly Dead
329	Pte. Percival Lewis Fowler - DOD 13/10/1917	Missing
331	Cpl. William Henry Andrewartha : DOD 05/08/1916	Nearly Dead
332	Spr. Thomas Albert Burton - DOD 30/10/1917	Missing
333	Cpl. David Leslie Clyde Absolom : DOD 13/10/1917	Nearly Dead
334	Pte. Harry O'Brien : DOD 10/04/1917	Nearly Dead
336	Pte. Arthur Segbert Rometch - DOD 13/10/1917	Nearly Dead
337	Pte. Alexander Reading : DOD 13/10/1917	Nearly Dead
339	Pte. Arthur Albert Albury : DOD 22/08/1916	Nearly Dead
340	Cpl. William Edward Wright - DOD 17/10/1917	Missing
341	Gnr. Eric Henry Murray Windsor : DOD 17/10/1917	Nearly Dead

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342	Pte. William Tapner : DOD 04/10/1917	Nearly Dead
343	Lt. Lennard Lewis Wadsley : DOD 0/09/1916	Dead
344	Sgt. Eric Arthur Hall - DOD 18/10/1917	Nearly Dead
347	L/Cpl. Leonard Christopher Lucas : DOD 04/09/1916	Dead
348	Pte. Rowland John Page - DOD 01/11/1917	Nearly Dead
349	Pte. Sydney Moor Lake : DOD 01/11/1917	Nearly Dead
350	Gnr. George Thomas Clyde Williams - DOD 25/10/1917	Missing
351	Tpr. Roderick Noel White Weaver : DOD 04/08/1916	Nearly Dead
352	Sgt. Oliver Alfred Page - DOD 27/11/1917	Nearly Dead
353	Gnr. Russell Williams : DOD 17/10/1917	Nearly Dead
355	Sgt. Bill Vaughan : DOD 12/10/1916	Missing
356	Pte. Horace Edward Calvert - DOD 22/12/1917	Nearly Dead
357	Cpl. William Richard Cooper : DOD 12/12/1917	Dead
359	Pte. Ernest William Hall : DOD 22/02/1917	Nearly Dead
360	Gnr Leslie Corbett - DOD 14/03/1918	Nearly Dead
361	Gnr. Louis Cleaver : DOD 10/02/1918	Nearly Dead
364	Pte. George Simon Wright - DOD 28/03/1918	Missing
365	Bmdr. Albert Edward Scurrah : DOD 21/03/1918	Nearly Dead
368	Pte. James Henry Wyles : DOD 02/04/1918	Nearly Dead
369	Pte. Arthur Bonser : DOD 28/03/1918	Nearly Dead
371	Pte. James George Frederick Ware : DOD 12/04/1917	Missing
372	2nd Lt. Charles William Hay - DOD 08/04/1918	Missing
373	Sgt. William James Leslie Turner : DOD 05/04/1918	Dead
375	Pte. Harry George Pearson: DOD 15/04/1917	Nearly Dead
376	Pte Kenneth Douglas Mills : DOD 10/4/1918	Missing
377	Pte. Frank Fry : DOD 20/09/1917	Missing
380	Cpl. William Sowby : DOD 19/04/1918	Missing
381	L/Sgt. (Alfred) George Speed : DOD 17/04/1918	Nearly Dead
383	L/Cpl. Thomas Andrew Ahearne : DOD 13/05/1917	Dead
384	Pte. James Bruce Thompson : DOD 07/06/1917	Missing
385	Pte. Charles Wilson : DOD 23/04/1918	Dead
387	387. Unallocated	Missing
388	Gnr John Edward Flanagan : DOD 24/04/1918	Dead
389	Sgt. Wyn Howard Cleary MM: DOD 23/04/1918	Dead
391	Pte. Charles Watkin Cowen : DOD 23/07/1917	Nearly Dead
392	Gnr. Ahlbare Hurst Howell : DOD 25/04/1918	Missing
395	Pte. John William Harrison : DOD 29/07/1916	Missing
396	Dvr. Lionel Chapman Collings : DOD 01/05/1918	Dead
399	Gnr. Archie Youl Flexmore : DOD 18/09/1917	Dead
400	Spr. Nuriel Ivor Evans : DOD 15/05/1919	Dead
403	Sgt. Leslie Roy Jones : DOD 26/09/1917	Dead
404	Capt. Richard William Dewson : DOD 27/05/1918	Nearly Dead
407	Pte. William Pegler : DOD 04/10/1917	Dead
409	L/Cpl. Arthur Alfred Summers : DOD 16/01/1918	Nearly Dead
411	Cpl. Oswald DeWitt Vaughan : DOD 04/10/1917	Dead
413	Sgt Charles Calvert Glenn Woodward : DOD 04/09/1916	Nearly Dead
415	Pte. Leslie Frank Hills - DOD 13/10/1917	Missing
419	Pte James Ernest Turner : DOD 03/11/1917	Dead

August Event – Dedication of New Trees on the Avenue

This has been tentatively set for Saturday August 8th. This is later than the anniversary (a Monday) but ensures some spare time for the HCC work crews in case removal and replanting is delayed, especially by weather. More details will come in the next issue in mid to late July.

This will be a chance to celebrate a new phase in the life of the Avenue, a renewal of commitments and connections and a way of involving broader family especially the young.

Touring the Western Front – Adrian Howard and Kirsty Black

Taking advantage of Kirsty's daughter Alice being in Nice working, we took a long holiday in France. Besides all the obvious advantages (wine, bread, cheese), it placed us within distance of the battlefields and able to visit the graves of many men on the Avenue. In all we visited 26 cemeteries and a number of memorials (including Villers-Bretonneux).

As well as be overwhelmed by the sheer number of graves, and names on memorials for the missing, the experience was fascinating and interesting for a host of other reasons. As many have noted and experienced, the cemeteries are remarkably well maintained with further restoration or landscaping work going on in a number. Gravestones are occasionally replaced (due to problems with the original stone), lawn is re-laid, garden beds revived, trees replaced and so on. The effort and organisation by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission is astounding, and it is a great comfort to know that its members and local contractors are caring, thoughtful and meticulous in the work of maintaining the cemeteries. Most have a Cemetery Register in a small bronze cabinet set in stone somewhere near the entrance with details of all the graves and a map. (If you intend to visit Peronne Communal Cemetery Extension or Australian Field Ambulance Cemetery Vault, it is wise to get the plot details before you go – these registers are kept elsewhere).

Our 'tour' of the Somme was a little different as it was focussed mainly on the cemeteries. One advantage of this was a more nuanced sense of landscape as we tracked through back roads, smaller towns without famous names and obscure roads to find small cemeteries. A survey of dates on graves soon put each place in the context of the various battles and campaigns.

The variation in size was something we expected but has a different impact in reality. Some contained no more than 80 graves, the largest over 10,000. Each setting presented its own special impressions of field, forest, slope and ridge, valley and hill. In smaller cemeteries there was little evidence of visits beyond some scratchy entries in the Cemetery Visitors Register; in the larger small cross of remembrance, flags, photos and notes were spotted here and there. There is no standard size for a plot: in some cemeteries headstones rest against each other, in others they can be up to 2 feet apart. Not all graves are single – in Heilly Station Cemetery (right) many headstones are shared. Each grave carries some badge – for most Dominion troops, a symbol Australians have the Rising Sun badge, Canadians the maple leaf and New Zealanders the fern and the words 'New Zealand'. British graves carry the regimental badge and the Naval Division a simple anchor. A walk through the graves reveals another set of patterns, of unit, date and age, different for every cemetery.



While the task of tracking and photographing graves provided some

armour against the incredible poignancy and sadness, the inscriptions most often overwhelmed us. Inscriptions by the way had to be paid for. Beyond the references to duty, courage and service there were many with more personal and moving lines.

“A brother beloved, a big hearted loyal friend”

“Far from the mother who loved him, sweet be your rest my son so dear”

“Sleep on dear son till the bugle calls again”

“Please Lord make my heart feel, thy will be done”

“Your mother does not cease to think of you for a single moment”

“Until the day breaks and the shadows flee away – a noble son – a soldier”

“Your wife and children think of you still”

“Dearly loved and sadly missed by all at home”

After taking our photos a number of cemetery visits were shortened simply it became too much and there were so many.

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In many of the larger, and particularly 1916 cemeteries, we were surprised at the number of “unknown soldier” graves. These sometimes revealed a different level of detail – “An unknown Australian soldier” lead to “An unknown Australian soldier of the 15th Bn”. In some cases, an inscription referred to rank “An unknown officer of the Black Watch Regiment”. In cemeteries such as Pozieres British Cemetery and Serre Road No1, these graves numbered in the hundreds and even thousands. That really brought home the scale and brutality of the catastrophe. How many have searched in the cemeteries hoping to find a grave close to that missing son, brother or father? In Corbie Communal Cemetery Extension, there are a number of 15th Bn graves, men all killed on 6th August 1918 (including the Battalion CO Lt Col T P McSharry). In the same row are 5 graves labelled as “unknown” one a Lance Corporal, another an officer – all 15th Bn. No family could have ever been sent a list of such unknown graves, or coped with such a list. This also added to the impact of the memorials to the missing such as Thiepval, Villers-Bretonneux and Pozieres British Cemetery. Another point to note is the appearance of German graves in cemeteries – sometimes named, often not – buried near those who died in different uniforms in the same actions or as a result of wounds in the same Casualty Clearing Station. For the Great War, 24% of all graves are marked ‘unknown’.

As implied, no cemetery is the same – the then ‘Imperial’ War Graves Commission’s team of architects separately designed each for its particular setting and size. All have the Cross of Remembrance and in most cemeteries a portico and shelter (sometimes more) with a bronze cabinet for the Cemetery and Visitors’ Registers. Landscaping is not simply impressive but astounding – espaliered trees, free standing trees, shrubs and the exquisite plantings in beds by graves with irises, coral bells, roses and on and on. Each cemetery shows the detailed attention of the local gardener, some with a number of cemeteries to care for, and the lawns would warm the heart of any golfer or lawn bowler.

Left: Kirsty amongst the blossoms in Daours Communal Cemetery Extension.



Besides this special part of the visit to France, we also took time to search out French memorials – this was not a real search as every small town and hamlet has its memorial. They took every monumental and sculptural form imaginable made from stone, carved from stone – names carved or placed on metal tablets. In Burgundy on a still night, we sat under the starlight within 50kms of Verdun and pondered how many nights the families of Coutarnoux, a village now of 60 houses and with its own memorial with 9 names, sat and listened to the great grinder of Verdun and worried for their sons, brothers and fathers not so far away. Australian families were in a sense spared such a disturbing reminder as they waited and waited.

Our photos are now being sorted and loaded onto the web site. There will be a delay in their appearance due a problem in accessing the database managing file links. We took photos of 78 graves and all names appearing on the Villers-Bretonneux Australian Memorial for the Missing. *Adrian*

One afternoon in Corbie I was given a glimpse of a very different perspective on the personal devastations a war can make. My 19-year-old daughter Alice and I walked to the local cemetery together whilst Adrian had a disco nap. To my surprise Alice was deeply moved by inscriptions on the graves, to the extent that she felt bound to walk the entire cemetery to read every stone. Eventually, through both tears Alice explained that reading the inscriptions kept making her think of all her male friends back in Tassie and wondering which of them would not have returned had they all been 19 during the Great War. As we were leaving we saw a group of 3 local youth who were heading into the cemetery with their cans of beer. Alice was horrified and extremely cross at their ‘thoughtless display of disrespect’. Her instinct was to approach these youngsters and ask them whether they appreciated where they were. She told me she would have liked to point out that they had many foreign boys to thank for being free and growing up French rather than growing up in France but speaking German. I hope Alice will remember her visit to the Somme in the years to come, as we will need the hard work of the next generation if we hope to have the ongoing preservation of places of memory.

Kirsty

Many thanks to Duncan Kerr MP SC, Federal Member for Denison and his staff for photocopying this newsletter



Friends of Soldiers Memorial Avenue Inc. Membership Form

Membership for 2009/2010 NOW DUE

Name:

Postal Address:
.....

Email Address:

Telephone (home): (work/mobile):

Newsletter Delivery Preference (please tick): **Via Post** **Via Email**

Subscriptions: Annual Membership is on a financial year basis from 1 July to 30 June: \$10.00
Membership Paid for Life is a once off payment: \$200.00

Membership type (please tick): **New** **Renewal** **Membership Paid for Life**

Do you wish to make a donation with this membership? (please tick): **General** **Plaque**

Total Amount included with this form (membership plus any donation): \$.....

Payments can be made by cheque or postal order posted to: FOSMA, GPO Box 1867, Hobart 7001. Or via direct deposit (you must include your name in the details/ comments box and send an email advising us):

Bank: Westpac Bank
Name of account: Friends of Soldiers Memorial Avenue Inc.
BSB number: 037-001
Account Number: 356809

Do you wish to nominate a Soldier of Interest commemorated on the Avenue? If so, please indicate below:

Soldiers Name: **Tree Number**

(Note: Please inform FOSMA of any change in details so we can remain in contact.)

Friends of Soldiers Memorial Avenue Inc., GPO Box 1867, HOBART TAS 7001
Phone : 6228 0543 / 6248 7294 E-mail: info@soldierswalk.org.au

Patron: His Excellency Peter Underwood AC Governor of Tasmania
President: J Wadsley Secretary: A Gerrard

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