

Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc: Newsletter

Issue 15 October 2004

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SUBS are now due: \$5



Sunday October 17th: Next Working Bee

Sunday October 17th is our next working bee. Arrangements will be as always: meeting at the carpark at the northern end of the TCA at 10am. Work will focus on the southern section of the Avenue and on removing understorey plants within the Avenue footprint. We will be completing the numbering of trees and sites. This will be a tidy up working bee and what work we undertake depends very much on what stage the Project Hahn workers are at. They have begun work removing the large wattles and she-oaks that have been felled by the HCC over the last couple of weeks.

Poppy Day: Sunday November 7th

Arrangements will be as always: meeting at the carpark at the northern end of the TCA at 10am. We will break into small groups and place poppies on the trees. A wreath will be placed on the Cenotaph on Armistice Day in memory of all the servicemen on the Avenue on behalf of the membership.

General Meeting Tuesday October 26th 7:30pm

A general meeting will be held in the meeting rooms at the Globe Hotel at 7:30 to discuss issues in relation to fundraising and sponsorship. It will be held in the meeting room with entry from the carpark at the rear. In particular, we will discuss a proposal to recognise sponsorship and donations. The Committee has discussed a system of three types of sponsor/donor:

- **Descendant of the Avenue:** families and individuals who wish to be recognised as they have a relative on the Avenue
- **Friend of the Avenue:** schools, individuals, businesses and clubs who make donations towards the purchase of plaques.
- **Supporters of the Avenue:** corporate sponsors and those who provide grants for overall development of the Avenue, holding events, interpretation work and the like.

It is proposed that donations and sponsorship be recognised and acknowledged by:

- mention in the newsletter
- creation of a sponsors page on the website, which for Supporters could include a corporate logo
- installation, with HCC approval, of a sponsors and donors board on the Avenue

A full costing for the installation of plaques has not yet been undertaken. Plaques installed thus far cost c\$250 with the HCC actually installing the plaques on plinths free of charge. It is not yet clear if that practice will continue. Plaques will carry full name, rank, serial number and details of unit. Date of death, cause of death, age, place of death, occupation and street address will be included. It is also possible to include a couple of lines about the soldier where details are available (sporting involvement, community involvement, publications for example). It is also hoped to place a unit colour patch alongside each plaque.

It is proposed that donations will be committed to a general fund (our Gift Account) and will only be used for the purchase of plaques and for physical work on the Avenue unless otherwise stated by the donor. The order of installation of plaques will be decided under a plan to be approved by members at a later date, along with a final design. The Committee feels that this should be systematic and aim to create areas of the Avenue where all sites are suitably plaqued. The immediate priority would be to plaque existing trees at the ends and the central section of the Avenue.

September Working Bee



Another very successful day with over 30 members and friends turning up to do their bit. Some new members including three veterans of the Vietnam War joined us. The focus for the work was on the riverside of the Avenue below



the Magazine. The Avenue is now very quickly transforming into a recognisable formal entity and all trees are visible from the pathway. A superb job and thanks to all concerned. Thanks to our sponsors whose continuing assistance is of great value to our spirits and the cause; please support them as they support us. We were also joined by a young Japanese tourist from Tokyo who was greatly interested in the project and will become our first overseas member.

Tasmanian Meat Wholesalers Pty. Ltd.



Also thanks to the Globe Hotel for continuing donations of brewed fluids. Some of the workforce enjoyed beer and snags after their efforts. They are perched on the new pipe insert soon to be placed inside the existing sewer lines on the Domain.



Project Hahn: Work for the Dole

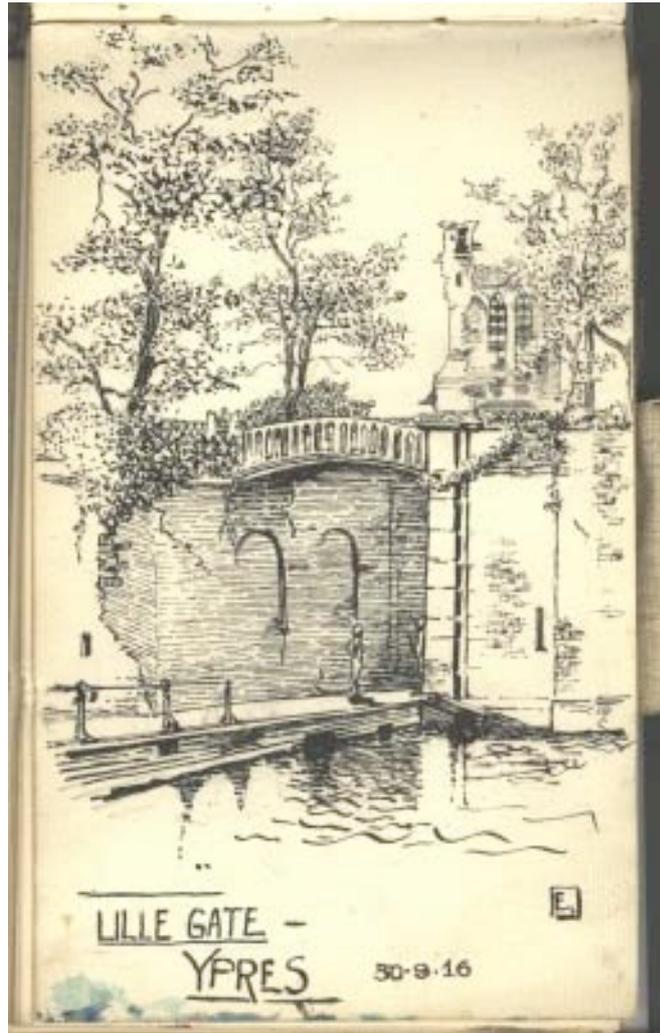
Anyone who has recently walked along the Avenue will have noted the wonderful work being performed by the Work for the Dole crews and Project Hahn. Clearing of woody vegetation is nearly complete and work has begun with the removal of large wattles and other trees within the Avenue footprint. Note that the White Gums will remain and saplings are being retained to serve as 'recruits' for later years when the more established trees die or need to be removed. Adrian Howard recently provided an orientation to the Avenue session for these young people who are genuinely interested and committed to the restoration of the Avenue. Many admitted surprise that the Avenue existed and felt that its existence and the stories of the soldiers should be part of any school education in Hobart. We naturally agree.

An Infantryman's Day in the Front Line: Part II

In the last issue we began serialising this great chapter from Frank Green's *The Fortieth*. We re-commence the narrative at daylight with breakfast and the activities of the day.

An Infantryman's Day in the Front Line

By this time it is quite daylight, and the trench officer comes along and says, "Stand down." Everybody goes to their dug-outs, except whose turn it is to take the first two hours of sentry duty. It is not wise to put his head over the parapet in daylight. Fritz's snipers are pretty keen, and anyhow it gives the position of the post away. So he looks through the periscope fastened on to the parapet, which gives him a view of No Man's Land in front of him. You do not lie down and rest, as breakfast will be along presently. That is, if the communication with the cookhouse is fairly safe by daylight. If not, breakfast, dinner and tea all come up together before daylight, and nothing more will occur till after dark. In that case you depend on "Tommy Cookers" to heat up your tea and stew during the day. Whilst waiting you spend ten minutes cleaning your rifle, running the barrel through with the pull-through, and scraping mud off the outside of it. In trench warfare your rifle is a nuisance: it is always dirty, and you do not use it much, expect to show it to an officer, when he wants to see if it is clean. You then hear heavy footsteps coming along the duck-walk, and a man appears, his figure bent double with the weight of a hot-box strapped to his back. He stops and gasps, "Tea." You help to take the hot-box off his back, and pour drinks into the dixie-lids. The hot-box is replaced on the carrier's back and he moves on to the next dug-out behind the next post, while you wait for the more substantial portion of the breakfast to arrive. A few minutes later another carrier arrives. You take the lid off the hot-box and stare at it, as if you expected poached eggs on toast or a



Pen drawing of the Lille Gate, Ypres by Keith Eltham

grilled chop, but it is the same old inevitable bacon, very thick and very greasy and half-way between hot and cold. You get one piece and the carrier moves on. You put the bacon on bread or an army biscuit (generally known as an "Anzac wafer"), and have your breakfast. Then comes the indispensable cigarette, which even if it is only an "issue," gives a lot of satisfaction. After that you have to clean your dixie. The water in the shell-holes is too dirty for washing eating utensils, even if it is not frozen hard, but you have saved a drop of tea in the bottom of your dixie and wash it out with that, with the help of a bit of sandbag or paper.

The next thing of importance is the daily wash – so far as a wash is practicable. If the shell-holes are frozen you cannot wash at all, but you can generally get water from a shell-hole or trench. A "Maconochie" tin or an old steel helmet is the best washing basin. You fill the helmet, get your pocket mirror, towel, and soap from your haversack, and carry on. If you are particularly energetic and the water is not too dirty, you have a shave. You then take your gumboots and socks off, and sit down in the mud on you gumboots and rub powder on your feet. The powder is issued by the quarter-master-sergeant, and you are ordered to use it to prevent the complaint known as "trench feet." You are doubtful of its virtue, but, anyhow, it is not much trouble, because you have to change your wet socks. In any case it is better to do it, as the officers inspect feet to see if orders are carried out, and if the platoon commander does not inspect he asks awkward questions which make you really wish you had done it, if only to ease your conscience. When the feet business is done, you remember something that worried you last night, so you take off your shirt and singlet, and have a hunt, putting your cardigan jacket and tunic on to keep you warm. You are just getting interested in the hunt, and have made a pretty good kill, when the sergeant appears and says, "I want you chaps to come and do a little job." Now these little jobs vary a good deal. It may be repairing a trench where a "crump" has landed, or building dg-outs, or laying duck-boards, or pumping out water, or cleaning bombs. It may be filling sand-bags, or making wire "gooseberries," or "knife-rests," ready to use at night for building up the parapet or writing in No Man's Land. It may be anything in the shape of work that appears to make us muddier than ever. Of course,

we growl and curse at everything and everybody connected with the war, not because it does any good, nor because we are annoyed, but it relieves our feelings. We would have been surprised if we had not been put on a job.



Sketch by Keith Eltham from Les Halles near Ypres, September 1916.

We work until about noon, when the dinner arrives. One of us goes and relieves the sentry at the periscope. The carriers come along and we get tea, and with our dry rations, consisting of bread and jam and cheese, which came the day before, get ready to have the midday meal. Just as we are going to have it, a salvo arrives from the enemy. Two or three “minnies” land very close, and the food is covered with mud and a lump of dirt falls into your tea while you are dodging falling debris. This time you curse harder than ever, and you start your meal wondering why all these short “strafes” always occur at meal times. It seems as if everything is done by everybody for the purpose of making life just one continual misery to you. While you are after your after-meal cigarette the captain’s batman comes along, with an air of one who speaks with authority, borrows a cigarette from you, and tells you the captain has told him that the battalion is going to the South of France to spend the rest of winter. You are mildly interested, but not convinced, because a runner has already told you during the morning with equal authority that the Australians are going to capture Lille within a fortnight.

You are finishing up your smoke when a drone is heard in the sky, and you look up and see a squadron of German aeroplanes sailing over you, with out old scut machines quietly making off as they advance. The “Iron Crosses” float over – no one moves for fear of attracting attention, and they pass on towards Armentieres, with feathery puffs of shrapnel around them. Then they turn round and come back. The “Archies” never hurt them, and they have probably seen all they wanted to see.

There is now probably a chance of some sleep, and you tackle the problem of converting yourself from a wet, muddy figure in the trench, with great coat and gumboots caked with mud, into an ordinary dry one, curled up with a blanket in a dug-out. The floor of the dugout is probably a foot above the duck-walks (to give drainage), and the dugout is probably 2 feet high, so it is a matter of crawling. It is probably raining, and you take off your equipment and place it handy on the top of the dugout in the rain. Then you get your greatcoat off, and leave it at the entrance of the dugout, while you dive in. Having got your body in, you continue, with much wriggling in the narrow space to get your feet out of your gumboots, leaving them just outside your dugout, with the tops turned down, so that they will not fill with water from rain or drips. This is not as easy as it looks, because there is no room to sit up. Now you can roll up in your blanket and drag your greatcoat over you, keeping the muddy side on top, and you are now ‘set up’ for the sleep you badly want, and will not move till you are roused for tea.

Next Issue: the evening meal and night time.

Spreading the Word

In addition to providing orientations to the HCC, Collex and Project Hahn, we have also provided tours of the Avenue for the Eastern Shore Ramblers and a group organised by the Hobart Women’s Health Centre. In the past we have addressed school groups at Albuera St, South Hobart, Lansdowne Crescent, Friends and Goulburn St as well as Howrah Probus and Sandy Bay Rotary. Addresses have also been given to the Clarence Plains and Bellerive Historical Societies. On October 31, Adrian will be addressing the Tasmanian Historical Research Association conference at the Town Hall on the origins and significance of the Avenue. If you know of a group that might be interested in a guest speaker, suggest us and we will accommodate them.

The Avenue in 1930: Family Gathering



This photo was recently provided by Brian Boon and Jill Rayner who are related to Gnr Russell Williams (Tree#353). The photo dates from c1930: the original wooden name board is still in place putting this prior to late 1931. From the left, unknown person, Alice Gwen Evens (Russell's sister), Alice's daughter Eunice and Gwen (born 1924) mother of Brian Boon. The TCA pavilion can be seen in the right distance and part of the Gunpowder magazine is visible in the central distance.

Lt Clyde Bowman Pearce, 52nd Bn (Tree#261)

The following extracts were recently provided by a new member, Elaine Pearce of Sandy Bay, a niece of Clyde's. Clyde was living in Western Australia at the outbreak of war on a recently bought property. He enlisted with the 10th Light Horse and later transferred to the 52nd Bn, presumably because of Tasmanian connections.

Lieut. Clyde Pearce killed

Mercury 20.6.17

Information was received yesterday that Lieut. Clyde Pearce was killed in the fighting in France on the 10th inst. Deceased was 30 years of age, and was the second son of Mr. Howard H. Pearce, Hampden Road, Hobart. He enlisted in Western Australia, where he was following pastoral pursuits when the war broke out. He saw service in Egypt and elsewhere and subsequently went to England where he received his commission as lieutenant. He then went to France. Lieut. Pearce was prominent in Australian golfing circles some years ago, and in 1905, when holding a favourable position, had, owing to a technical breach of the rules, to retire from the competition for the Australian amateur championship. In the following year he was runner-up to A.E. Gill in Sydney, and occupied the same position in 1907, when Hon. M. Scott was the winner. In 1909, on the Royal Sydney's Golf Club grounds at Kensington, when only 21 years of age, he won the open championship of Australia, and the following year, at Sandringham he broke the record for the links and won the Bayles' Shield. The "Argus", in commenting on the victory, said the shield could not have fallen to a more popular player than Clyde Pearce of Tasmania. Subsequently, accompanied by his brother Bruce, he went to England, America and Scotland. When he returned to the Commonwealth, he took up his residence in West Australia and acquired a large sheep station. He, however, found time for his favourite pastime and twice won the amateur championship of West Australia. The deceased was immensely popular among his comrades and sincere regret will be expressed at the news of his death.

Lieutenant Clyde Pearce

Killed in France, 1917

An appreciation by L.A.O.

With deep feelings of regret I read of the death of Lieutenant Clyde Pearce, one-time open and amateur golf champion of Australia. That Clyde Pearce should hear the call to arms and not respond, none of his friends thought possible. He was early away joining the mounted infantry in West Australia. He fought in Gallipoli, Egypt and in France, graduating through the ranks from private to lieutenant. No doubt he served his country well. He did everything with all his might, until that fateful day in France, when he made the supreme sacrifice, and laid down his life, as so many other noble men have done, for his King and country.

It is when one hears of the death of such as Clyde Pearce that the horror and pity of this awful war is brought home to one. The best of the young manhood of our nation is going out, that future generations may live in peace. Of this great army Clyde Pearce was one of those we could spare least. Of enemies he had none; of friends had had many, who could not help but feel a warm regard for one whose smile always seemed to come from the heart, whose laugh was infectious, and whose good nature and love of fair play set an example to all. There was a personal magnetism about him which attracted us all. As a boy he never presumed, as a man, in spite of all his success at the game he excelled in, golf, he never gave any indications of pride in his prowess as a player. It was always a pleasure to play with him: win or lose, he had the same engaging smile, was always ready to praise an opponent's good play, or sympathise with him in his bad luck. It was a pleasure and an education to watch him, more especially after his return from that golfing trip to England, and to note the ease and abandon of his swing.

It was Clyde Pearce who made Tasmanian golf. His play in some of the earlier championship meetings he attended attracted the attention of the critics, and his triumph when he won both the amateur and open championships of Australia in Sydney was not unexpected. He met and defeated an exceptionally strong field, and was in very fact as well as in deed the best golfer in Australia that year. Although his early golf was all played in Tasmania, he competed only once for the Tasmanian championship after he had attained something approaching the full measure of his powers as a golfer, and won, so that the best golfer we have produced has his name inscribed on the Tasmanian championship cup, which was the gift of his father to the golf council. Other golfers have done brilliant deeds on Australian links, but I fancy that Clyde Pearce will be remembered when they are forgotten. To his parents the sympathy of all golfers goes out to them in their great loss and abiding sorrow, and to us who had his friendship, his death leaves a blank hard, indeed to fill. Clyde Pearce lived a man and died a man, respected by all and loved by many.

Source unknown

The final extract is a letter from a fellow soldier to Clyde's father.

In France

15th June 1917

Dear Mr Pearce

I am writing to let you know some details about poor old Clyde who died doing his duty in the big fight which is just over. At the time of his death he was with his men about five hundred yards from where I was, out beyond the famous ridge, the battle is ranked as one of the greatest victories of the war.

I did not know that he had gone till after we came out and I then went over to his Battalion to enquire about him. Nothing that I can write can possibly convey to you the sorrow and regret that is felt by the whole Battalion at this loss. Men in the ranks who did not even now that I was a friend of his started telling me what a fine fellow they had lost, they would follow him anywhere.

His platoon Sergeant told me to tell you and his mother that "He died as a Hero and A Gentleman."

All, his brother Officers were quite broken up at his loss, he was such a favourite with them as well as with the men. One of the Senior Officers told me that if he had come out he would have received "high honours" for bravery and good work.

I saw the man who was with him at the last, he tried to carry him out but he was too badly hit. He asked him if he had any messages or papers on him that he could take out he said he was all right and that he had left everything back with the Battalion. They will be sent on to you by the Authorities.

The position was taken by our men and he was buried next day near where he fell. He lies at the foot of a tall poplar tree, and a cross is put up and the position recorded.

It is no good my telling you not to grieve over his loss but you should be proud of such a son, if you could only hear what his comrades say about him you could understand better.

I am still going strong but have had wonderful luck, should have been killed a hundred times over during the last twelve months but somehow I have got through, nothing like a bit of luck or Providence, think more of the latter. If you want to drop a line you can get my address from C W Butler, he writes me now and again.

Yours sincerely

A Dowling

(believed to be Corporal Arthur Dowling who enlisted in July 1915 and served with the 12th and 52nd Battalions, the 13th Light Trench Mortar battery and returned to Australia in June 1919 attached to AIF Kit Stores.

Next Issue: A Profile of Keith Eltham (his art work courtesy of R Budd and family)

A big thanks to Duncan Kerr's office for photocopying.

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