

Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc: Newsletter

Issue 19 May 2005

Highlights

- Dedication of Plaques
- Partnership with Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens
- De-Anne Kelly, Minister for Veterans' Affairs visits
- Current Work on the Avenue
- Mothers, Wives, Fathers, Sons
- Lt Norman Meagher
- Donations and Fundraising
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Dates to remember

Next Friends of Soldiers Walk public meeting:

Date: June 14th Time: 7.30pm Venue: Globe Hotel, Mezzanine Room (entry from rear car park off Antill St. All welcome

New Plaques Dedicated

On Sunday April 24th the first of the new plaques were dedicated on the Avenue. This event was well attended by descendants, their families and members of FOSW, with the Lord Mayor, Rob Valentine, Deputy Mayor, Eva Ruzicka and Duncan Kerr, MHR Denison in attendance. Various individuals present dedicated each of the twenty plaques separately, including descendant Lionel Chalmers (see left) who dedicated the plaque commemorating his great uncle and namesake, Cpl Lionel Chalmers.



The plaque for Gnr William Charles (Henry) Pharoah was dedicated by Michelle Holmes, his granddaughter, together with her sister-in-law, Jane Pharoah. (below)



A message from the McGuinnis family of Sydney was read out as the plaque for Frank McGuinnis was dedicated. Other descendants of men on the Avenue dedicated many of the plaques. One of our oldest members, Jim Smith, attended, to honour his father, Charles Edward Smith, tree # 325

Partnership with Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens

Meetings have recently been held with the RTBG exploring partnership options and areas for involvement by the gardens in this project. We are now looking at the RTBG playing a key role in propagating new trees for the Avenue, taking some pressure of the Hobart City Council workforce and allowing funds to be committed to their work on the Avenue.

The RTBG will also be joining with FOSW as a partner in our TCF submission; 'The Avenues Project' providing expert technical input for small communities around the State in the form of botanical assessments of their avenues. Much to be worked out yet but a positive step forward for everybody concerned.

Commonwealth Government Grant Announced



On Friday May 13th, De-Anne Kelly, Minister for Veterans Affairs announced that FOSW was to receive a grant of \$4000 for the purchase of plaques. For us, Friday the 13th was a lucky day! This is a welcome addition to the coffers and means we are well on target to place a minimum of another 40 plaques before August. The announcement came part way through a tour of the Avenue by the Minister. It was as lovely a day as one could hope for, with the eastern Rosellas flashing by on cue. The Minister enjoyed the walk on the northern section of the Avenue and was impressed by the amount of work that has been done thus far.

Minister Kelly and FOSW committee on the Avenue.↑

Presentation: A. Howard and De-Anne Kelly. ⇒

This comes on the heels of a State Government grant of \$5000 in April and donations from members and friends of just under \$14000.

In just over a month since our official launch we have raised 10% of the total required to re-plaque the entire Avenue. This is exclusive of the \$3500 raised through events over the year including the highly successful launch.



Tasmanian Community Fund

We have also just been informed that our application for funding through the Tasmanian Community Fund has passed the Expression of Interest stage and we now proceed to a full application. Our application will focus on funds for the Avenue for plaques and project management costs as well as funds to begin work with other communities around Tasmania. More details in future newsletters.

Current Work on the Avenue

A work programme for the Avenue over the next few months has been worked out with the Hobart City Council and Project Hahn. The priorities are:

- a) Complete clearing of the northern section (removal of wattles, stumps, brush cutting) as far as Cross Roads Oval
- b) Removal of blue gums along the pathway
- c) Clearing of southern entrance section (including wattles, small saplings, brush cutting). This will improve the look of the Avenue and formally define the lower parts near the Aquatic Centre.
- d) Clearing of interior of the copse at Cross Roads. This will re-establish the importance of the trees at the Cross Roads as part of the original Avenue.
- e) Removal of wattles below TCA, opening up the last obscured section of the Avenue and opening up the vista looking southwards toward the Cenotaph.

Removal of some of the blue gums may involve contractors, so the clearance is quick, to minimise the public impact. What all this means is that the Avenue is already dramatically transformed from the messy confused landscape of three years ago and soon will be permanently different with the removal of gums and the steady placement of new plaques.

Mother, Wives, Fathers, Sons

During the Great War a number of support networks developed specifically to organise help by families of service personnel for the families of service personnel. They provided comfort and monetary assistance to next-of-kin when someone died on active service. They also pressed for recognition of the efforts of families by government and lobbied in the interests of returned men.



Both the Mothers and Wives' Association and the Fathers' Association were active in the preparation of the Avenue and kept a watching brief on developments during the 1920s and early 1930s. Many a letter of complaint was sent off to the Reserves Committee of the Hobart City Council pressing for work on the Avenue or noting the lack of amenities, state of name boards and so on. During the Second World War, the associations combined and revived as the Parents' Association and the focus

Crowd on August 3rd, 1918 (Tasmanian Mail 8/8/1918 p18)

changed naturally to the immediate needs of a nation at war. In 1944, Hobart's Lord Mayor, Mr. Soundy, sponsored a memorial tree fund to honour local soldiers who had died and approximately 150 pounds was collected. Meetings were held to discuss the site of the Avenue with one suggestion being the new main road from Cornelian Bay to Berriedale. It is not clear what the outcome was and if the trees were planted. The New Town branch in 1947, proposed an Avenue at Cornelian Bay, to commemorate deceased servicemen and women. There is no indication whether this suggestion was taken up and trees planted.

Extracts from 'The Tassie Digger'

The following extracts come from 'The Tassie Digger' of June 1919 pp 21-23. This was the returned serviceman's paper published up to 1938 on a monthly basis by the State Branch of the RSSILA. Only one issue is held in the Tasmania Library, a few in Launceston and a few years worth in the State Library of Victoria and that seems to be about it! A shame for the historian. Please note that the varying use of apostrophes is from the original.

Mothers' & Wives' Association (By "Mum") The Australian Soldier to his Mother

To My Mother

I left you for duty's sake, and for years, which seemed eternities, fond memories of your sweet and living kindness kept life worthwhile. And yet there was a time when I never thoroughly realised what you are – the dearest, grandest woman in all the world. And my earnest hope is that when you welcome me home again, you'll be satisfied that your son is a soldier and a man – a worthy son of a worthy mother.

Mothers and Wives' Association

The Sailors and Soldiers' Mothers and Wives' Association expresses its thanks to "The Tassie Digger" for the kindly reference made to mother in the first issue of the paper, also for the generosity of the editor in according so much space to the ding of the Association. May the "Digger" keep on digging its way in the popular favour of the public.

"The mother of a soldier never cries." So runs the line of some verse written by Rosalind Goldsmith. It describes how the young soldier prior to leaving for the front, stood before his mother in his khaki in all the glory of his magnificent manhood. Tenderly he whispers to his mother: "Dear, be brave! The mother of a soldier never cries." Then when he is gone to the battlefields the mother is all alone. In ceaseless agony she waits and prays, and with all her fears and hopes so far away. In due course the sad news

comes to her that he is dead. She is heart-broken. Nothing left to live for now. But hark! His dear voice whispers: "Don't give up! The mother of a soldier never cries." She is inspired to cry out:

"No, I will not give up! For there's a thought
That gives me strength to live my empty life:
A man must die some day. The noblest death
Is surely in the glorious heat of strife
Where man, by courage and true sacrifice
Can prove to God his manhood as he dies.
And so my heart is glad, and I see why –
The mother of a soldier never cries!"

Not long ago I read this poem to a friend of mine. He had lost his bonny son at the war, too. He said: "Ah! But the mother of a soldier does cry, God help her."

There now, I must not give way to the sentimental strain, but we mothers cannot help it at times. And, anyhow, you would not wish that we should be otherwise, would you! By the way, the Mothers and Wives' Association has been able to do a lot since the formation of the Association. The president has been active in the matter, and there is nothing so beautiful in this world as the outpouring of one woman's sympathetic, pure heart to another woman. It is consoling. So also is the material assistance and advice which is given in addition. Day by day we are enabled to realise the power for good which lies in the hands of the association. The Repatriation Department is conscious of it, and so is the Returned Sailors and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia. Both bodies propose utilising the Mothers and Wives' Association in assisting the interests of the returned men. The mothers and wives capably demonstrated on May 1, at Hobart, that they can help very considerably. At their stall they raised £50 for the funds of the League.

There were a number of well-furnished stalls at Nettlefold's Buildings, Macquarie Street, equipped and managed by the Mothers and Wives' Association, on the occasion of the raising of funds for the Returned Soldiers League on May 1. Included in the number was a Dad's stall, stocked principally with articles for men. The members of the Association who worked on the stalls were: - Lady Lewis, Mesdames **Meagher**, E A **Peacock**, J Vail, C Goddard, Clements, Harcourt, **Swift**, Field Marsh, A W **Adams**, Brown, H L Bull, F H **Piesse**, **Collins**, **Turner**, C **Shea**, P Facy, Contencin, Hogan, Winterson, Crawford, J **Davis**, Weavers, **Wertheimer**, A H Webster.

[Ed: names in bold appear on the Avenue]

Left: Sen Earle and Mr. Morgan at work on the Avenue (Weekly Courier 1/8/1918)



Fathers' Association

(By "Dad")

Mr. A Seabrook, a member of the Council of the Association, visited Glen Huon recently, and addressed a meeting of fathers, with good results. In company with Mr. W Baillie, also a member of the Council, Mr. Seabrook visited Huonville. Both of these men addressed a meeting of fathers, the outcome being that every father present joined up. This means that there will be a strong local committee established at Huonville, and that the members of the committee will be valuable aids in propaganda work. Other centres in the Huon and Channel districts are receiving attention and will be visited at the earliest opportunity.

For the purpose of information, it may be stated that the members of the Council of the Association for 1918-1919 in Southern Tasmania are: - President, R J **Meagher**; vice-presidents, Rev Dean **Hay**, J B **Burge**; hon. Treasurer, G H **Bailey**; hon. Secretary, H L Bull; council, W T Abel, W Baillie, T Bennetto, A W **Adams**, E C Champion, J E Cottier, Ernest Crisp, H E Downie, A C **Seabrook**, D Rees, J R **Weavers**, P Facy, Dr Gibson, E Houghton, W **Hammond**, W **Leitch**, H **Morey**, H W Roberts, W T

Totham, F H **Piesse**. [Ed: names in bold appear on the Avenue]

The article continues with details of other regional councils of the Association.

A conference between the Northern and Southern Branches of the Father's Association is mooted. In all probability it will take place in the month of June. What about a general conference between the Fathers, the Mothers, and the Sons' Associations right away. Wouldn't it be a big family gathering?

Mr. W Baillie is one of the most enthusiastic members of the Fathers' Association. Just now he is in the country districts of the South, and when opportunity offers he pushes the claims of the Fathers' Association. He has written the secretary (Mr. Bull), forwarding nominations for membership, which he has gathered in his travels. He also forwarded nominations for membership in the Mothers' Association. The spirit and energy exhibited by Mr. Baillie is, I am glad to state, very infectious and contagious. There are other members of the Fathers' Association who have caught it, but they all declare it to be a healthy thing for the Association. ... Members of the Association condole with fellow-member, Mr. W Leitch in the death of his soldier son in London. It appears that, after four years' active service – during which he was badly wounded in April 1918, Mr. Leitch's son had been waiting in London to embark for home. Twice he was taken off the ship's list almost at the last moment. He felt the delay acutely; indeed, he fretted over it, not being in good health and it is thought that this conduced to his demise. We all sympathise with the parents and relatives, for it is hard to lose one's soldier boy after having gone through the four years of the war.

[Ed: W Leitch featured in Issue #13. His tree position is not clear with no surviving records of the dedication in mid to late 1919. Family memories place it in the southern section of the Avenue. W Leitch's experience was unfortunate given his enlistment in May 1915 and embarkation in June 1915. He had served on Gallipoli and would have had priority due to his enlistment date. The originals of 1914 were progressively returning to Australia in 1918 for leave when the war ended.]

Good News From the Australian War Memorial

We recently received a request from the AWM for permission under the Copyright Act, to copy our site for inclusion in the National Library digital archive; a real vote of confidence in us and a practical comment about the quality of the site.

Further to that, we asked for and have received permission to include copies of Red Cross Wounded and Missing Enquiry Bureau files on our site attached to individual soldier records. What does this mean: well again it is a vote of confidence in us from the AWM. The files vary in size from single pages to substantial documents of over 20 pages. These have been collated into a single file for download from our site. A warning and AMW attribution comment will appear with the files. About 220 soldiers on the Avenue have Red Cross files. The files will begin to appear over the next few months.

The original files began with requests for information from families of soldiers posted as killed, wounded or missing about the circumstances or whereabouts of the soldier. Cards were posted in hospitals and base camps asking for information about individual soldiers; those who knew something about the events would then provide short statements, which were collated into a file. Some of these are basic ('not listed as POW') to graphic and disturbing accounts of the circumstances of a soldier's death.

Lt Norman Meagher

The following is an extract from *With the Fortieth* a book of letters, news articles and obituaries from or relating to Lt N Meagher 40th Bn. The book was published by his parents in Hobart in 1918. His father Richard J Meagher was a former Lord Mayor of Hobart, a serving alderman in 1918, a leading light of the Fathers Association and later State Public Service Commissioner until his retirement in 1941. This introduction provides a quite decent short biography of Norman as well as reflecting many of the patriotic attitudes of the time, prevalent though not universal.

Introduction

During Lieutenant Norman Meagher's career on active service in the Great War his letters to his home-folk and to his friends attracted attention. Therefore, when his parents and relatives were considering the question of a memorial to him, they decided that the best form of tribute to his memory would be a book based on the lines now presented, containing selections from his letters. Norman's keen powers of observation, and his ability to put his thoughts and his impressions on paper, are revealed in the somewhat hurried writings that came from the battlefield.

In arranging the matter for publication, I have avoided the use of detail as far as possible, as well as reference to items of purely family concern, at the same time preserving the originality of the writing.

The book, while serving the object in view, should also be of interest as a record on general lines, and as far as censorship conditions will allow, of the doings of the 40th Battalion, AIF, up to the time of Norman's death. He has also dealt with subjects pertaining generally to the war, insofar as censorship conditions permitted. The headings of the various articles have been attached by me, except in a few instances. The only matter intended by Norman for publication is comprised in a few short stories and a little verse, the remainder came along in the ordinary way of his letters.

When Norman entered Ross Camp, Tasmania in October, 1915, he was not a raw recruit. He had had training in the cadet force, was an excellent rifle shot, and was a member of the ANA Rifle Club. Incidentally, it may be mentioned that, in the year 1913, he proceeded to NSW with the champion cadet team, and on Randwick range he went very close to the Cadet Rifle Championship, sustaining defeat by one point. Captain Alderman, who was in charge of the Tasmanian contingent, was so pleased with Cadet Meagher's performance that he personally presented him with a gold medal for "sportsmanship and marksmanship."



Figure 1: The 1914 Championship Winners including Reg Escott (tree500) 3rd from left

Ross Camp was broken up in the early part of 1916, and the men were transferred to Claremont. The 40th Battalion was then in course of formation, under Lieutenant Colonel Lord. Captain J P Clark (now Lieutenant Colonel Clark DSO, commanding the 44th Battalion), who occupied the position of Camp Commandant at Ross, was given his majority, and appointed second-in-command of the 40th, and Norman Meagher, then a sergeant, was, with other men from Ross, also attached to the 40th, Norman being promoted to Company

Sergeant Major. He received his commission abroad. Up to

the last he wrote in high terms of Lieutenant-Colonel Lord, and of his chief in Ross days – Lieutenant – Colonel Clark. It is now a matter of history that the 40th Battalion sailed from Hobart on the 2nd of July, 1916, and that members of the battalion made a name for themselves from the time they first went into action in France. It was in the 4th of October, 1917, that Norman was killed while in charge of 'A' Company, and while leading his men in a rush on an enemy position – a movement that was rewarded with victory. He was shot from close quarters, and died instantaneously. His age was 21 years, 9 months, he having been born in Hobart, 14th January, 1896. *[In this same action, the storming of the Hamburg Redoubt, Lewis McGee was awarded the Victoria Cross for taking a pill-box that formed part of the redoubt defences.]*

His musical keenness, as shown in several articles in this book, is understandable, when it is mentioned that he was passionately fond of music and really displayed a gift in that direction. In his letters he often referred to his young brother Eric, 'Little Mick,' as he affectionately termed him, and requested that 'Little Mick' should be kept up to his musical studies.

In his school days Norman attended St Mary's College (Presentation Convent) for five years, and afterwards went to Officer College, Glebe, and Queen's College, and then onto the University of Tasmania. In 1908, while at Queen's College he won a State Scholarship; in 1910 he passed the Junior Public Examinations in the first class, and at the end of 1911 he matriculated at the University. He was a boy who was never idle. At home, when not engaged in schoolwork or music, he applied himself to reading, and it may be said of him that he was a wide reader of the best literature. His choice of a profession lay between literature and the law. He chose the latter, and at the time of enlistment was taking his LL.B degree course at the University. He was in the Law Department of the Civil Service for about two years, and subsequently entered into articles with the Honourable Norman K Ewing KC when that gentleman was a member of the firm of Messrs. Ewing, Hodgman and Seager. Upon Mr. Ewing's appointment to the Supreme Court the articles were transferred to Mr. W M Hodgman. Norman was

happy in his work for the firm, and I have to thank the members for the interest they displayed in him, and for kindness extended to me, his father.

In a communication received from Colonel Lord quite recently he alluded to the circumstance that Norman appeared to entertain a presentiment that the fighting he was about to engage in on 4th of October, 1917, would be his last fight. The Colonel states:- "I cannot help thinking that the poor by could not shake off a presentiment that things in this particular fight would not go well with him. We got it afterwards in little ways, such as the letter he left, and so on. He did not show it in his work, but kept on pegging away. I believe now though that he had a feeling that way." Other officers refer to the same thing. His friend, Lieut. W T Crosby, says:- "I think he felt he was going into his last fight in this world, but I never saw anyone set a finer example to his men than Norman did in the battle of the 4th October, He was here, there, and everywhere cheering his men during the spells and while advancing, " and he died as he in his letters expressed his wish to die, "in the thick of the fighting and game to the end."

The patriotism, the devotion to duty, and the bravery of these British warrior boys is exemplified in the words of a young English officer writing to his father before 'going over the top':-"You must console yourselves with the thought that I am happy, whereas if I had lived – who knows... But for this war I and all the others would have passed into oblivion like the countless myriads before us...But we shall live for ever in the results of our efforts. We shall live as those who by their sacrifice won the Great War. Our spirits and our memories shall endure in the proud position Britain shall hold in the future."

Norman Meagher has gone. He has paid the price of Empire, and paid it willingly and cheerfully; and so:-

"Even as I think of you, dear dead,
You've sped the path of heroes' was,
Across the seas your blood made red
The Sacred soil of France to-day.
I brush the tears away! 'tis best
To let the chords of memory
Bring smiles of you who are at rest
After a glorious victory."

R J Meagher Hobart Tasmania 1918.

Donations and Fundraising

We continue to seek donations from descendants and members of the community to go into the plaque fund. Our first set of 20 plaques was unveiled on April 24th at the cost of \$250 a piece (plus GST) with installation covered by Project Hahn. This will not be the case in the future and we now estimate that it will cost about \$70 per plaque for the plinth not to mention liaison with the foundry and co-ordinating placement. We will also need funds for interpretation panels along the Avenue, and other works such as placing seats along the way.

All funds from descendants will go into our Gift Account and will only be used to fund plaques and their installation. Our fundraising efforts will also be seeking contributions from business and corporate sponsors as well as sporting and community groups and citizens of Hobart.

WHEN A FAMILY PROVIDES FUNDS FOR A PARTICULAR PLAQUE, THE MAIN FAMILY CONTACT WILL BE SENT A RECEIPT AND A SAMPLE TEXT FOR THAT PLAQUE WITHIN A FEW WEEKS.

WHEN THE TEXT IS CONFIRMED BY DESCENDANTS, THE PLAQUE WILL BE ORDERED AND CAST TO BE STORED UNTIL INSTALLATION CAN BE ARRANGED. WHEN WE HAVE A NUMBER OF PLAQUES IN REASONABLE PROXIMITY AND SPARE FUNDS, WE WILL ARRANGE FOR THAT SECTION TO BE INSTALLED.

Please send you donations to Friends of Soldiers Walk Inc (cheques from descendants should be made out to FOSW Gift Account). Please attach the name of the soldier you are related to. If you wish to make a small donation now and further donations in the future feel free to do so. No one is bound to pay any given amount at any particular time, and it is understood that financial circumstances vary considerably. Names of all donors will be acknowledged in the newsletter and on the website. Note that website entries are not yet in place due to software issues.

We would also like to acknowledge families who have made contributions since the last issue in memory of: Alfred Robert **Cahill** (Dorothy Wright and other descendants of A Cahill); Archie **Flexmore** (Mary Shadforth); Frederick Arthur **Hazell** (Wesley Hazell and other descendants of F Hazell); Frank **Kent-Newbold** (descendants of Frank Kent-Newbold); Adrian Edmund **Husband** (Mrs Bessie Flood); Spencer Witt **Pedder** (Peta Newman); Daniel Augustine **Quinn** (Darby Quinn and family); Arnold Talbot **Wertheimer** (Margaret Rose).

Wine Fundraiser

With this issue you will find an insert about our wine fundraiser, which is being run in conjunction with Prospect Wines of Hobart. The wines are all clean skin i.e. wine purchased in bulk from excess vineyard stocks. This is a standard method by which some of the bigger wineries on the mainland guarantee themselves an income. It results in cheaper prices as the wine is not separately labelled nor do you pay the costs of distributors, warehouse companies, as well as the retailer. Thus all of these wines would sell 'labelled' for up to \$5 more.

Delivery and Pick-Up

Unless you indicate otherwise, and pay the extra freight cost, all wine will be delivered, in separate labelled boxes or bags, to 11 Franklin St West Hobart for collection. If you do not have transport or cannot arrange it, we can deliver but it is preferable if you can arrange it.

Size of Orders

Any size order is accepted but note if you want customised labels, the minimum order is 10 bottles.

Mixed Orders

You can mix and match as much as you like; buying as few or as many bottles as you like. The more bottles the better as we make a set amount per bottle.

Family Orders

If you want to organise a family order with a number of people each buying 3 bottles; list only one contact person for the order.

If a number of people are placing very large orders, it may be best if they use separate order forms so the final delivery does not have to be broken up to be passed on. More order forms are available if you need them, or just arrange for photocopying yourself.

Customised Labels

If you take the customised label option, it will cost an extra \$2 per bottle. Labels have to be created and attached after all. Please note that the sample labels are just that: the final product will be flashier but we had limited time to get this offer out to members.

Suffice to say photos can appear on the labels and where one does not exist a unit colour patch will be used. The background will be a creamy colour and based on our publicity material which most of you will have received in the mail in April.

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



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