

London Legacy e-News



May 2013

The Presidents Report

It is pleasing to report that we had our most successful Anzac DAY period starting with our ANZAC BALL held on Friday 19th April.

With a record number of 230 attendees and a further 50 applications that we could not accommodate, it says something about the strength of our support from the London Australian community and the strong support from our Legatees.

We have six more strong supporters who have agreed to become Legatees, Rachel Wheeler, whose husband is an Australian Federal Policeman in Afghanistan and wants to help our widows by making visits as part of our campaign to visit all our widows over the next two years. Rachel has also introduced Sasha Carozzo, the wife of our High Commissioner Mikr Rann, who also wants to join us visiting our widows.



The Third new Legatee is Carl Dumbrell a leading City Accountant who has already been very useful in helping with contacts and the fourth new Legatee is Professor Nick Athanasou who has a long history with Legacy in Australia, back to his youth when he was supported by Legacy.

Legatee John Crowe is negotiating with Britain Australian Society branches to take on our widows as branch members where possible subject to their locality with London Legacy paying yearly subscriptions. We already have 3 widows living in the Bath/Bristol area of the West Country who are now also branch members of the Western Branch of Britain/Australia. I visited them when I laid a wreath at the Sutton Veny Anzac Day service.

And finally, we are pleased to welcome David and Kathleen Milligan as new Legatees. They are specialists in medals and research and form part of a new committee gathering medals and other items of history from our widows to record and maintain our veteran and widow stories.

We are still looking for a new office to move into. If necessary we will store all our stock in the basement at Queensland House whilst we continue our search as we can meet in the boardroom at Queensland House as required. We mostly work from our homes anyhow so we can continue doing that whilst we continue our search.

I am strengthening our association with Help for Heroes who have opened a new office in London. Their London manager James Burns attended the Ball as our guest and I recently meet with Judge Jeff Blackett a director of H4H and also a Director of English Rugby. I also visited their recently completed Hospital facility in Salisbury.

H4H now have a facility in their offices to house all UK Charities supporting wounded troops, ie Royal British Legion, SAFFRA, Regimental Charities etc. to co-ordinate support as required. We are increasing our efforts to find widows with needs who perhaps are not prepared to sing out for help, hence our program of visits.

Finally, we managed to obtain passes to the Cenotaph and tickets for the Abbey services on Anzac Day for 10 widows both from Australia and the UK.

President Legatee Lindsay Birrell

The Legacy ANZAC BALL Report

London Legacy would like to thank all Sponsors, Entertainers and Guests for making this year's Legacy ANZAC Ball for 2013 the most successful ever.

230 guests enjoyed fantastic food and entertainment in the grand setting of Australia House's Ballroom.

Legatee President Lindsay Birrell said "We are extremely pleased and proud that the Australian and New Zealand community came together in such a magnificent manner. It was the largest ANZAC Ball in recent history, certainly since Legacy has been involved".

All proceeds from the Ball enable London Legacy to continue to care for the families of incapacitated and deceased Australian & New Zealand veterans.

Attendees included representatives from High Commissions, Defence staff, members of the Britain Australia Society, Australian Business, Yeomen Warders and their families and London Legacy amongst others.

The evening's special guests were Mr and Mrs Randolph Churchill. Mr Churchill, the great-grandson of Sir Winston Churchill provided the Guest of Honour speech.



General Birdwood's Grave Restored

The London grave of a British general who led Australian and New Zealand troops at Gallipoli was recently restored after falling into disrepair.

General Sir William Birdwood, known as Birdy to the ANZAC's, also led troops in France and Belgium during World War One.

Our very own President Lindsay Birrell was interviewed by the BBC in January in a report on a topic that has raised real interest here and in Australia.

There was a real need to repair the grave of the World War One English born General, who gave the name ANZAC to our forces.

The Victoria Cross Trust in the UK had been looking for funds to repair his grave at Twickenham Cemetery as it had fallen into disrepair. Even though General Birdwood's grave is a private memorial and the responsibility of his family, the Australian Government made an exception to perform the repair work.



Australia's Department of Veterans' Affairs has been on the job. After Veterans' Affairs contacted the General's grandson, permission was gained to remediate the grave and the repair work was completed this month.

Lindsay told the BBC that the grave in Twickenham was important to Australians. Field Marshall William Riddell Birdwood, 1st Baron of Birdwood was the World War One British General who was

best remembered as the Commander of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during the Gallipoli Campaign which began on the 25th April 1915.

Lindsay said "He had the ability to meld the Aussies and the Kiwis into one fighting force, with the British troops. On one occasion he was patrolling the frontline talking to his men when he was shot at but an Aussie shouted "duck Birdie", saving his life. An officer close by said to the General "Will I charge that soldier for calling you Birdie?" The General replied no "give him a bloody medal".

His nickname of Birdie stuck right through the war.

Remember your invitation to attend the Annual Reception

Please don't forget that London Legacy is extending an invitation to all widows and their families to attend the 2013 Legacy Annual Reception.

The Reception is to be held on Thursday the 13th of June 2013 from 6 to 8pm at Australia House. If you would like to attend our Reception, London Legacy will arrange complimentary hotel accommodation for the night and will contribute to your travel costs where appropriate.

If you wish to attend, please provide us with names and travel dates as soon as possible. For hotel bookings, we will need a commitment to travel as soon as possible.

To register your intention to attend, please contact Legatee President Lindsay Birrell on +44 (0) 7505 145 461 or by email at lindsaybirrell@gmail.com.



Never forget Sutton Veny

Most Australians have never heard of a small village called Sutton Veny, situated in the beautiful Wylde Valley between Salisbury and Bath in England. It's a long way from home and it's never been seen as a compelling story for our history classes. Situated about two miles from the town of Warminster in Wiltshire, it is near popular British tourists destinations Longleat House and Safari Park and holiday place Centre Parcs.

However, there is a particular reason that Australians should not only thank the people of Sutton Veny, but also spend the time to pay a visit to this small but mighty village.

This village was a concentration area during the World War One for units going to and from France. For many Australians, making it through the war was not their only challenge. The great influenza epidemic of 1918 took many lives, including Australians, who as a result never made it back home.

Sutton Veny is the site of one of many Australian cemeteries spread around the world with the Commonwealth War Graves Commission having a cemetery beside St Johns Church. Many of these Australian soldiers were victims of the influenza epidemic.

The village takes great care and offers great respect to the ANZAC's, both male and female who were never able to leave. Yes, female, as two nurses also lie in the Australian War Cemetery there. The



village website contains a wealth of information on ANZAC's and the Cemetery. It also has a picture gallery containing some wonderful postcards and photographs of the period.

Each Anzac Day the village hosts a commemorative service and this year was no exception with our own President Lindsay Birrell in attendance.

The next time you are in the area, or even if you can plan to do so, head over to a beautiful part of England and thank the people of Sutton Veny, as well as pay your respects to those who gave so much for our freedom.

Legatees to visit all Widows

London Legacy plans to visit, where possible, all of our widows over the next 24 months. The purpose of this scheme is to see first hand where we are able most to assist our 51 widows.

For some it may be merely a courtesy call and for others a chance to be able to see if we can make life easier for them by using the funds we have raised over the past two years. It will also provide London Legacy with an opportunity to upgrade its records, as a significant number of widows have no telephone number recorded, when clearly this is not the case.

The widows visting scheme was begun last year and has continued in 2013 by legatees Cathlyn Davidson, John Crowe and Simon Kleinig



Death of a Soldier – A Mother’s Story. Margaret Evison Book Launch

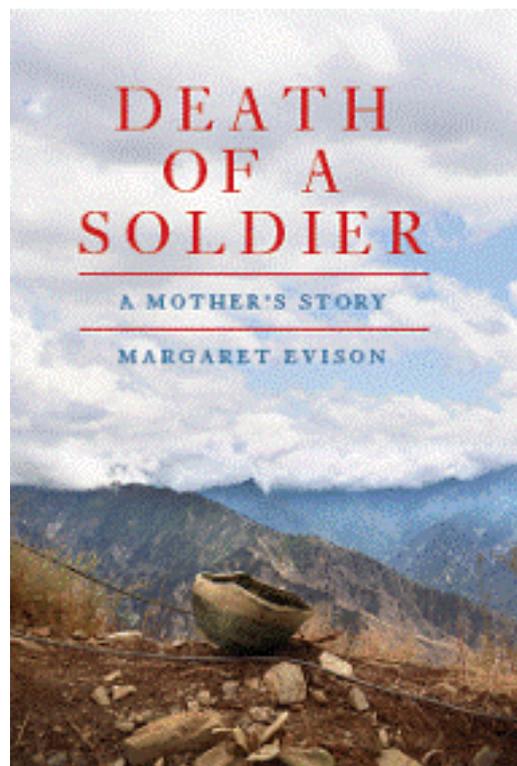
The Annual Legacy Reception on Thursday, the 13th of June 2013 will also be used as an opportunity to help launch Margaret Evison’s book, “Death of a Soldier – A Mother’s Story”.

Margaret Evison is an Australian who moved to Britain when she was in her twenties, subsequently married and raised a family here. She returns to Australia frequently to visit family. Her only son, Mark, spent some time working as a jackeroo on a station in Queensland, before graduating from Sandhurst Military Academy.

Lt Mark Evison served as a platoon commander with the Welsh Guards and was killed in Helmand Province, Afghanistan in 2009.

Margaret’ Evison’s book is an absorbing biography of her son’s life: touching, poignant but never mawkish, which everyone should read. It is at once absorbing, elegantly written and above all an intensely human story. Margaret’s book has received excellent reviews and she has been interviewed about the book on BBC NEWS.

Margaret will be attending our Annual Reception and will be speaking to us in detail about “Death of a



Soldier” and her own journey in writing the book. Margaret will also have copies of the book available on the night for sale and signing. All proceeds from sales will go towards the Mark Evison Foundation which offers sponsorship to young people in various areas of adventure, including working as a jackeroo (or jilleroo) in Australia

Tower of London event in September

This year, London Legacy has the privilege of being able offer a unique evening on a private tour of the Tower of London followed by a privileged viewing of The Ceremony of The Keys, a 600 year old tradition that takes place every night to safeguard the Crown Jewels.

The event is to be held on the evening of the 12th of September 2013.

We are being hosted by our good friends from the Yeomen Warders of Her Majesty’s Royal Palace and Fortress the Tower of London, and Members of the Sovereign's Body Guard of the Yeoman Guard Extraordinary (popularly known as the Beefeaters).



At exactly 21.53hrs the Chief Yeoman Warder, carrying a candle lantern in one hand and with the Queen’s Keys in the other, walks towards Traitor’s Gate to meet the Foot Guards who escort him throughout the ceremony.

Guests will have a private tour of the Tower environs followed by a Tower supper served in the Yeoman Warders Wardroom , all hosted by a Yeoman Warder. After supper, guests will then move outside to witness the Ceremony of the Keys at close hand and experience history as it happens!

Then afterwards, guests will be invited back to the Yeoman Warders Wardroom for the remainder of the evening for drinks.

Places will be extremely limited so to reserve your place, please contact Legatee President Lindsay Birrell on +44 (0) 7505 145 461 or by email at lindsaybirrell@gmail.com; or email Mark Daley at markodaley@hotmail.com

**Patron: The Australian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom
His Excellency Mr. Mike Rann CNZM**