London Legacy Newsletter

June 2020

President's Greeting

Dear Legacy Ladies and friends

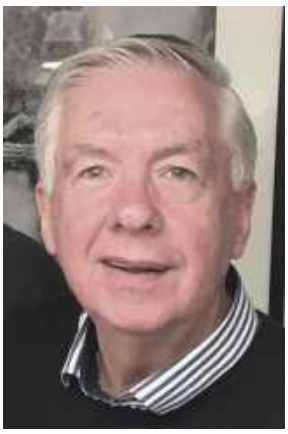
So much has been said and written about Coronavirus that it would be superfluous of me to comment further, other than to tell you how Legacy has responded to this crisis. At no time since World War Two has the work of Legacy been more important, or more appreciated by our dependants. It has been a defining moment in a near-century of Legacy service.

Our legatees have risen to the occasion magnificently. Their duty of care to our ladies has been quite inspirational. Out of adversity comes opportunity and this has been amply demonstrated by the work London Legacy has carried out over the past months.

Some of our Legacy ladies have been isolated in nursing homes cut off from the much-needed support of family and friends. Our legatees have continued to remain in touch by telephone, letter and postcard, and by sending out food hampers where needed; all little gestures aimed at reassuring our widows that they are still important to us, and that we are always here for them.

The work of the NHS, health services and volunteers throughout the United Kingdom has been outstanding. A community spirit has emerged not seen since the days of World War Two and the Blitz, when whole communities stood shoulder to shoulder in a spirit of empathy and mutual support.

This is the first pandemic we have been able to control. When this crisis is finally over we will emerge from it into a world quite different from the one we left before lockdown and social isolation. The effects of this pandemic have been devastating, but I am a great believer in recognising the positives that have emerged too, and will continue to emerge. Tens of thousands of "unsung heroes" have stood up in our community to meet this formidable challenge.



For our part, London Legacy has focused more intently than ever on the needs of our dependants, and how best we should serve them.

Like all organisations, London Legacy's year has been radically altered. Our physical meetings, receptions and commemorative events have been cancelled, postponed or carried out electronically. In the scheme of things these are but minor dislocations. Our duty of care remains undiminished and if anything is reinforced more strongly than ever.

As soon as this crisis has passed we will resume visits to our dependants, no matter where they live. Our Annual Reception at Australia House will be re-scheduled as soon as circumstances allow. Our legatees will continue to be in touch with you regularly.

In the meantime, if you need assistance or advice, or just a friendly voice at the other end of the phone, please don't hesitate to reach out.

As always, our thoughts and best wishes are with you.

Simon Kleinig

in this issue:

The Unknown Australian soldier

One Man we will never know represents the sacrifice of 102,000 Australians

By Ashley Ekins

It is almost 102 years since the guns of the Western Front fell silent after four long years of war. At the eleventh hour on the 11th of November, 1918, the Armistice — or cease-fire — brought to a close the First World War, the most terrible war the world had known to that time.

"The Great War", as it came to be known, produced images of pervasive horror in the wasteland of the Western Front. The trenches of the Somme and the mud of Flanders defined warfare in human memory long into the twentieth century.

That first prolonged struggle between modern industrialised nations left a grim legacy: 13,000,000 dead, 9,000,000 of them combatants. More than a third of the dead were "missing' or had no known graves. The scale of those losses suggested no more fitting symbol of remembrance than the unknown soldier. For this was truly the first war of "the common man".

The impersonal, mechanised slaughter of the Western Front demanded an utterly democratic symbol, devoid of military rank, social class, race or religion. In 1920, the second anniversary of the Armistice was marked by state funerals. Both Britain and France ceremonially buried the remains of unknown soldiers. The remains were chosen by blindfolded officers from six or eight bodies exhumed from significant battle sites on the Western Front.

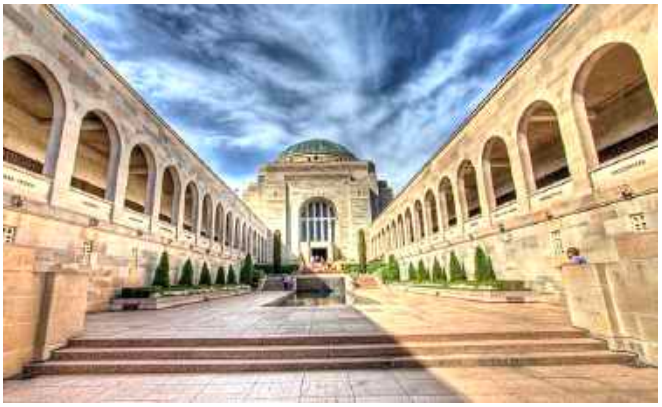
Over the following years many other nations followed suit. The tombs of unknown soldiers became the most common symbols of remembrance of the Great War and acquired the status of national memorials. But no unknown soldier was brought home to Australia — although the Great War had made a profound impact on the young Australian nation.

Almost half the male population of military age had enlisted in Australia's first national army. They were all volunteers. They established a legend which endures to this day. In the process, the First AIF suffered the highest rate of battle casualties of all the armies engaged in the war.

Sixty thousand Australian soldiers died — one man in five of those who served abroad — more than in all our other twentieth century wars combined. Their loss was mourned in Australia for a generation. Thousands of families were left with only the memories of men who should have returned as husbands, fathers and sons.

Of the 264,000 soldiers who returned from the Great War, 156,000 had suffered some sort of wound and war-damaged veterans were a visible reminder of the war throughout the inter-war years.

The writer George Johnston recalled growing up in a post-war Melbourne suburb in a house always full of returned soldiers and "in the fixed belief that grown-up men who were complete were pretty rare beings — complete, that is, in that they had their sight or hearing or all their limbs".



One third of Australia's 60,000 dead were either missing or had no known graves. Thousands were buried in battlefield cemeteries overseas, their resting place marked only with Rudyard Kipling's simple tribute: "An Australian soldier of the Great War — Known unto God."

Only one soldier was brought home — General W.T. Bridges, who died of wounds during the Gallipoli campaign. He was buried above the Royal Military College, Duntroon, in Canberra.

The absence of the war dead was one of the impulses behind the proliferation of war memorials erected in every major city and in country towns all over Australia. By the 1930s there were more than 1,500 local memorials — one for every 40 men who died.

They offered families and communities a focus for their grief as "substitute graves" and were a means of keeping alive the memories of the dead who remained buried on the other side of the world.

But still Australia lacked a central symbol commemorating the national loss of life. In the absence of an unknown soldier, those local memorials and the marking of places of burial on foreign battlefields, were among the few tokens of consolation offered to relatives.

Not until 75 years after the end of the Great War was the depth of their loss given palpable human expression when an unknown Australian was finally brought home.

On 11 November 1993 he was entombed in the Hall of Memory of the Australian War Memorial. The ceremony generated powerful emotional responses across the nation. But why had it taken so long?

The reasons were both political and patriotic. Soon after the war, regional veterans' associations proposed that unknown Australian soldiers be interred in memorials in each capital city, as well as in the national war memorial.

Their proposals were overruled by the federal leaders of their organisation, the predecessor of today's RSL. Motivated largely by notions of imperialist loyalty, the RSL leaders argued that the "unknown British warrior", entombed in Westminster Abbey in London, represented all the soldiers of the British Empire. It was said that he could even be an Australian.

We now know that that is unlikely — the records reveal that the unknown British warrior was most probably a regular British soldier who died in 1914, long before Australian and other dominion troops served on the Western Front.

For over 70 years successive leaders of the RSL maintained this policy. Imperialist sentiment among the leaders proved more powerful than notions of Australian nationalism among the rank and file.

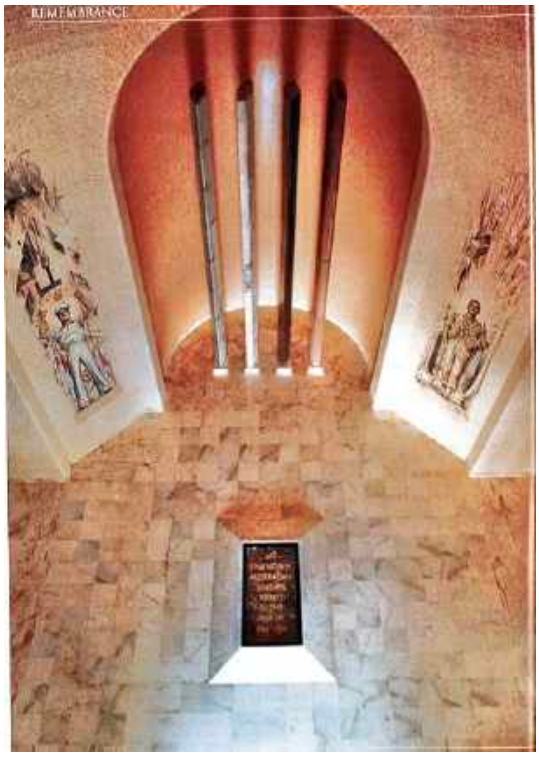
In 1991 senior management at the Australian War Memorial considered a proposal to entomb an

Australian unknown soldier in the Hall of Memory.

They initially rejected the idea, unconsciously echoing the earlier imperialist and conservative objections. They argued that it would be "distasteful" to exhume the remains of a soldier — an objection originally raised by King George V in 1920 — and that it would be too late, too difficult, and potentially too divisive.

A year later, however, the view prevailed that this might be "an idea whose time had come". The RSL and the Memorial reversed their long-standing policy and agreed to the return of the unknown soldier for the 75th anniversary of the Armistice. And so, in 1993 Australia became the first and only nation of all the former British empire dominions to bring home our own unknown soldier from the Great War.

New Zealand had planned to follow Australia's lead and entomb an "unknown warrior" in Wellington. Unfortunately, this was postponed owing to disputes between government, heritage and veterans' bodies. Canadians have also discussed the issue, and they may follow in due course with the return of their own unknown soldier.[1]



There was no shortage of places from which to chose when selecting the unknown Australian soldier. Cemeteries on Gallipoli and in France and Belgium all had an abundance of remains of unknown Australian soldiers whose identity was unlikely ever to be determined.

After much deliberation, the soldier was chosen from one of the most significant battlefields on which Australian soldiers fought; the region around Villers-Bretonneux, where they won their celebrated victory on ANZAC Day 1918.

Adelaide Cemetery at Villers-Bretonneux is located in the heart of the former battlefields. It contains 954 recorded burials, 260 of them unidentified. Of those, 117 are known to be Australian, through such items as perhaps a shoulder flash or badge or some other part of their clothing or equipment.

One of these was chosen for exhumation. For nearly 75 years, the headstone over his grave had born Kipling's simple inscription. This was changed to another that records how the remains of this unknown soldier were exhumed on 2 November 1993 and now rest in the tomb of the unknown Australian soldier at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

The entombment ceremony attracted enormous public attention and clearly touched a chord which resonated widely. Among the varieties of responses, a remark by First World War veteran Robert Comb encapsulated the feelings of many.

At the entombment ceremony his task was to sprinkle onto the coffin soil from the battlefield at Pozières, the place which official historian Charles Bean described as "more densely sown with Australian sacrifice than any other place on earth".

As he did so, Comb quietly said — unscripted and with characteristic digger informality — "Now you're home, mate."

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[1] Canada repatriated the remains of an Unknown Soldier from France in May 2000 and laid them to rest at the National War Memorial in Ottawa. In November 2004 ceremonies were held in France and New Zealand to repatriate and inter the Unknown New Zealand Warrior in a tomb at the National War Memorial in Wellington.

The return of the unknown soldier saw the fulfilment of the Australian War Memorial's purpose, as conceived by its founder, Charles Bean, in his dedication: "Here is their spirit, in the heart of the land they loved; and here we guard the record which they themselves made."

Australia's unknown soldier has acquired the universality of the unknown soldiers in other nations and has come to reflect the human cost and sacrifice of all wars.

But the Australian soldier whose remains now rest in the Hall of Memory is "unknown" in more than one sense. It is doubtful whether Australians ever really knew the Great War "digger" who is such a prominent figure in our national consciousness.

Indeed, the Australian soldier of popular imagination probably rarely existed, especially in his most extreme characterisation as a national stereotype. The image of the digger is laden with contradictions.

For example, the social composition of our armies has probably never truly reflected wider Australian society. As many as one fifth of Australia's First World War diggers were not Australian-born, most of that number being emigrants from Britain. Yet paradoxically, the ANZACs' self-conscious nationalism derived from a distinctive sense of difference from other British soldiers.

More than 1,000 Aboriginal Australians are known to have served in the First AIF. There they achieved a degree of equality with white diggers — only to find on their return to Australia that they were denied equal rights of citizenship.

That was not to come for another half-century. Only relatively recently have there been attempts to write their story back into the ANZAC legend.

Australian soldiers were not all heroes, as the ANZAC legend popularly has it. Charles Bean observed on Gallipoli that, on occasion, some men shirked from battle, while alongside them others went forward; on the next occasion, their actions might be reversed. Among the bravest, including men awarded the highest decorations for valour, some simply ran out of courage under the sustained stress of combat.

There are many other ambiguities about our popular image of the Australian soldier. An American historian urged his colleagues to abandon stereotypes and the "propensity to think in terms of stereotypes", in studying the experiences of soldiers — otherwise, he said, the ordinary soldier "will remain as anonymous as the unknown soldier in the tomb at Arlington National Cemetery".

The unknown Australian soldier evokes a variety of personal responses. His unknown — and unknowable — attributes challenge military historians to resurrect the diverse dimensions of the Australian soldiers' experience. That is part of the role of the Memorial's historians.

In our nation's brief history, 102,000 Australians have lost their lives in war. Their names are permanently recorded on the Memorial's bronze Roll of Honour. Each name represents a personal tragedy to families in Australia, to brothers, sisters, wives, parents and children.

The names also recount the human cost which lies behind the story of Australia's involvement in war. The unknown Australian soldier represents each and every one of them.

Extract from Prime Minister Paul Keating's eulogy at the entombment of the unknown Australian soldier, 11 November 1993.

We do not know this Australian's name and we never will. We do not know his rank or his battalion. We do not know where he was born, nor precisely how and when he died. We do not know where in Australia he had made his home or when he left for the battlefields of Europe. We do not know his age or his circumstances — whether he was from the city or the bush; what occupation he left to become a soldier; what religion, if he had a religion; if he was married or single.

We do not know who loved him or whom he loved. If he had children, we do not know who they are. His family is lost to us as he was lost to them. We will never know who this Australian was. Yet he has always been among those whom we have honoured.

We know that he was one of the 45,000 Australians who died on the Western Front. One of the 416,000 Australians who volunteered for service in the First World War. One of the 324,000 Australians who served overseas in that war and one of the 60,000 Australians who died on foreign soil. One of the 100,000 Australians who have died in wars this century. He is all of them. And he is one of us.

This article was originally published in "Wartime" (issue 25, 2004). It is based on an address delivered on the tenth anniversary of the entombment of the unknown Australian soldier, Remembrance Day, 11 November 2003 and is reproduced with kind permission of author Ashley Ekins and the Australian War Memorial.

Ashley Ekins, former chief historian, Australian War Memorial

London Legacy congratulates new AWM Director

Mr Matt Anderson PSM has been appointed Director of the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, replacing Dr Brendan Nelson AO. Mr Anderson was former Deputy High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, and a strong supporter of London Legacy. He is a graduate of the Royal Military College Duntroon and served as a troop commander with the Royal Australian Engineers, before embarking on a distinguished career in senior diplomatic postings.

His proven background, embellished with a sound knowledge of military history, ensures his continued and valuable contribution as Director of the Australian War Memorial. Matt has officiated at our Annual Legacy Reception and understands well the work of Legacy. London Legacy warmly congratulates Matt on his appointment and wishes him well for the future.

Matt Anderson addresses a London Legacy Annual Reception in the Downer Room at Australia House

The Big One

By Billie Martin

When I attended my last year's medical MOT I was asked three times (yes, three times) what is your date of birth? — Why? Was the nurse deaf, or did she think I was? I agree that I can be when it suits me. Having received my reply, she smiled at me and remarked "Oh, next year will be the big one."

I was infuriated. Such condescension! How dare she! All too often the ageing population are treated as though they are retarded. I chose not to reply. Silence, I thought, would speak volumes, but I wanted to point out that by 2050 the life expectancy of humankind will have reached 124. I heard that on a radio programme recently. Now I know why the BBC are planning to charge the over 75s for their TV licences.

Every day of my life is a "big one". Doing what I have always done. Day in and day out for years. Certainly getting older has a wealth of advantages which were once not available. For example, I called my fishmonger "you darling man" just because he had salmon on the van, and did a similar thing when I called my gardener "darling". If I had been challenged by either of them I would have had to admit that I had temporarily forgotten their names.

I also asked my chiropodist if I paid for my treatment in advance would he give me a discount. He went rather red, so I answered him myself: "If you do it for me would that set a precedent?" I think we parted friends; I hope so. I am due to get me toe nails cut on Thursday. If my dear Andrew was alive today he would have disowned me. Life has been good to me and I look forward to many more "Big Ones".

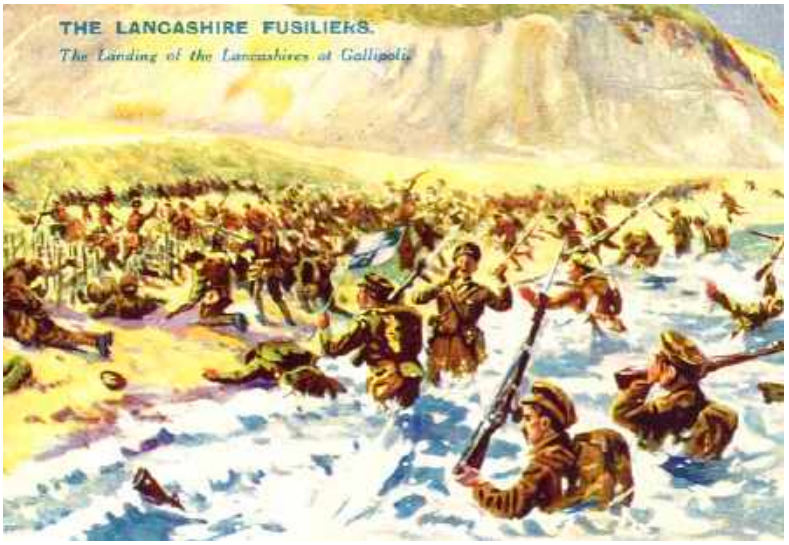
On the down side, the human body is nowhere as cooperative as it once was. I would have dearly loved to have raised my cumbersome walking stick high in the air and dropped it "accidentally" on that nurses's head. But my wobbly arms and legs, feeble muscles and rheumy eyes did not afford me that pleasure. When she then took my blood pressure three times and remarked"oh, dear! It is up again. I will ask doctor to increase your medication", I knew it would be highly probable that that MOT would be my last. And not because I am getting on a bit.

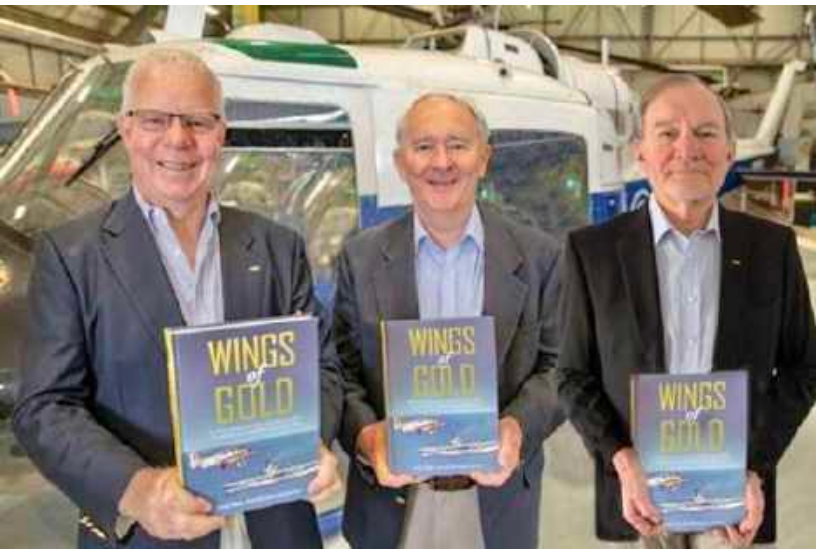
Remembering back to how outrageous I could be when reaching 18 for the first time, am I expected to be more circumspect now that I have reached 18 for the fifth time? I will certainly celebrate being 90 as outrageously as my Claudication, IBS, Psoriasis and Spondylosis will allow.

** Billie Martin lives near Forfar in Scotland. She is a regular contributor to our London Legacy newsletter.*

Six VCs before breakfast

At times someone with a casual interest in World War One could be forgiven for thinking Gallipoli was an Australian Battlefield. Though the contribution of the ANZACs was outstanding, the reality is that the majority of those who landed on 25 April 1915 were British. The image below depicts men of the 1st Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers landing at "W" Beach near Cape Helles that day. Coming under sustained fire from the bluffs above, the battalion took heavy losses. The sea ran red with blood. The bravery of the men that day resulted in the legendary 'Six VCs before breakfast'. "W" Beach would be officially renamed "Lancashire Landing" to commemorate the actions of the Lancashire Fusiliers.





Wings of Gold

by Trevor Rieck, Jack McCaffrie and Jed Hart

Publisher: Big Sky Publishing (Canberra), 2020
hardcover, illustrated, 304 pages
$26.24 (£13.00)

Wings of Gold refers to the much-coveted "wings" awarded to new pilots in the Fleet Air Arm of the Royal Australian Navy. This book tells the story of a group of young Australian pilots and observers selected to train with the US Navy between 1966-1968, many of whom went on to serve in Vietnam.

This book was fully reviewed in the April 2020 edition of *Hobart Legacy Inc Bulletin*.

The AWM may be the repository of the larger war archive, but smaller unit histories like this make a vital contribution which otherwise would be lost to posterity.

Wings of Gold is of particular interest to London Legacy. Trevor Rieck, a former legatee, is one of the book's authors and his recollections form part of the narrative of *Wings of Gold*. Another of our former legatees, Andrew Craig (now Vice President of Brisbane Legacy) is also mentioned throughout the text.

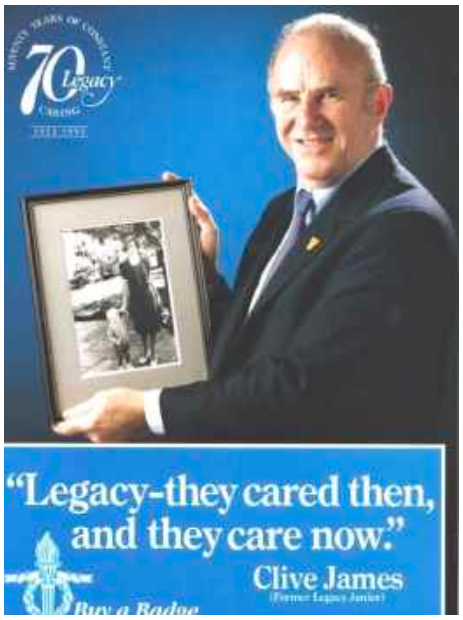
Vale Clive James

The passing of Clive James on 24 November 2019 was met with universal sadness, particularly in the two countries closest to him: his native Australia and his adopted Britain, the latter where he lived from 1962 until his death last year.

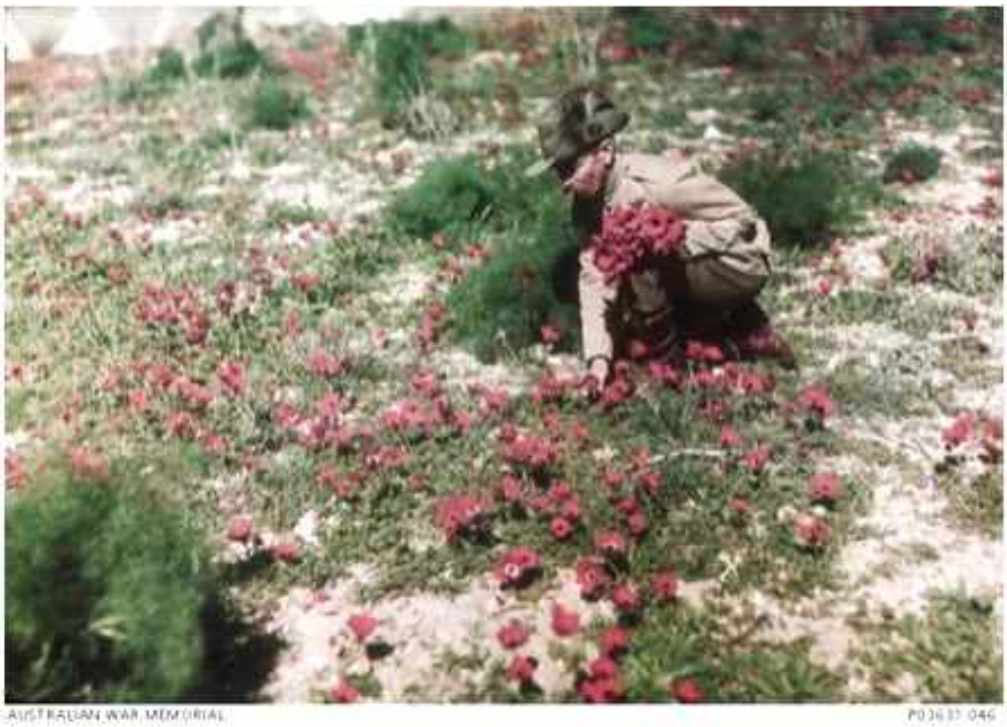
A gifted writer, poet and critic noted for his wry wit and deadpan humour, Clive and his mother were taken under the wing of Legacy following the death of his father in World War Two. Legacy remained close to Clive's heart throughout his life.

In 1993 Clive was guest of honour at a Melbourne Legacy breakfast at the Regent Hotel, attended by 500 people. He explained in humorous terms what it was like for his mother to bring up a child with "his personality".

That year also marked the 70th anniversary of Legacy Australia and Clive said he "felt honoured to have been asked to be Legacy's Personality for the year," adding that he was delighted to be able to speak on behalf of Legacy. Later that year Clive also helped promote Melbourne Legacy's Annual Badge Appeal.



* London Legacy is grateful to Melbourne Legacy for sharing information on Clive James.



A Light Horseman collects poppies in Palestine, 1918

by Simon Kleinig

This historic photograph from World War One tells a story within a story. It shows 2601 Trooper George Redding of the 8th Light Horse Regiment collecting poppies near Belah in Palestine in 1918. George 'Pop' Redding enlisted from Benalla in Victoria on 28 August 1915, stating his age to be 44, when in fact he was aged 57. When this photograph was taken he was aged 61, making him one of the oldest enlisted men in the 1st AIF.

This photograph was taken by Frank Hurley, Australian official war photographer in both world wars. The photograph is held in the collection of the Australian War Memorial. Much of Hurley's work is also held in the National Archives of Australia in Canberra. An intrepid photographer and adventurer, Hurley accompanied Sir Douglas Mawson on three expeditions to Antarctica.

On Shackleton's 1914 trans-Antarctic expedition, Hurley was official expedition photographer. When their ship *Endurance* was locked in pack ice and eventually sank, only Shackleton's leadership ensured the survival of the entire ship's company.

Hurley captured the full *Endurance* adventure in a series of extraordinary images.

Returning from Antarctica Hurley enlisted in the 1st AIF IN 1917. Stalking the trenches of the Somme, Hurley took tremendous risks, more than the average infantryman, and it was miraculous that he survived. Hurley captured the devastating nature of warfare in a number of searing images.

The Palestine image above is not "colourised". Hurley helped pioneer the Paget process of producing colour images. Controversially, Hurley also used composite images and montages to capture the full drama of battle, claiming the technological limits of his single plate images did not do justice to the scope of the scenes he was trying to capture.

This technique drew much criticism, particularly from the official Australian war historian Charles Bean. However, Hurley always stood by the integrity of his images, claiming he used legitimate artistic licence.

Frank Hurley

Poem:
March of the Anzac Men

by N.J. Cocks

Up from wide and sunburnt spaces,
Down from silent mountain places,
With new glory on there faces
Marched the Anzac men.
Fears could not enthral them:
For they heard
The sovereign word
Of faith and Honour call them;
Never till our skies surrender,
Dawn and eve sublime and tender,
Shall we lose that marching splendour
Of the Anzac men.

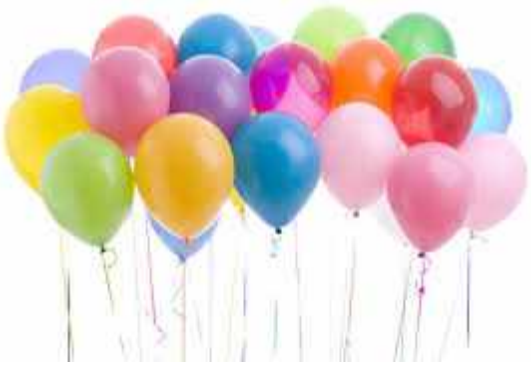
Now beyond war's raging madness,
Past the shadows of our sadness,
In the meadows of God's gladness
March the Anzac Men.

And One goes before them
Who through death upborne them;
Who when they in darkness lay
Bared his banner o'er them;
See far out beyond earth's shaming,
Swift beyond our sorrow's naming,
With Christ's love and beauty flaming
March our Anzac men.

Ye of crowded street and byway,
Lo for you along the skyway
March the Anzac men;
Not for you repining,
Dull and sad resigning,
While they go who suffered so,
With courage shining;

Past your toiling and your pleasure,
Past your halls of song and treasure,
Still with brave immortal pleasure,
March the Anzac men.

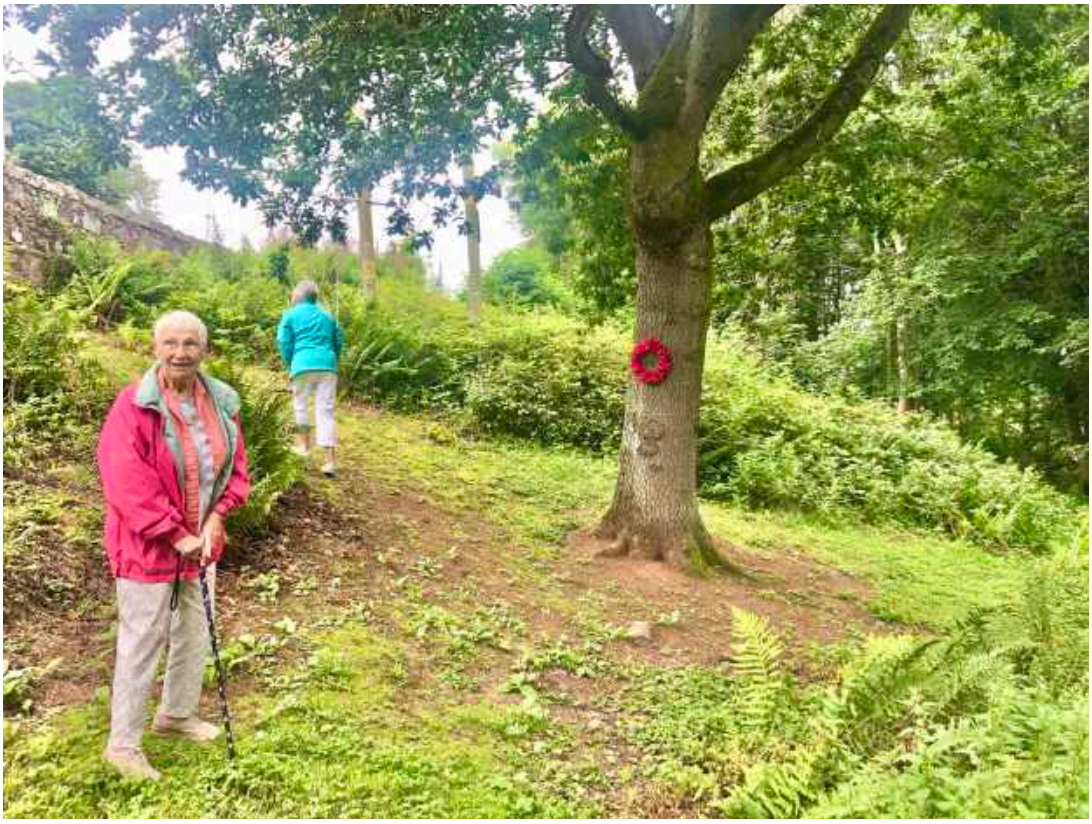
Rev N.J. Cocks wrote "March of the Anzac Men" shortly after World War One. He was a poet, philosopher and minister at Pitt Street Congregational Church, which also served as a refuge for many of Sydney's needy in the immediate post war years. He was a great humanitarian who never failed to offer succour to those in need. He died in 1925.



Happy Birthday!

Our warmest wishes go out to our Legacy ladies who celebrated their birthdays in the first half of this year:

Alma Rosher
Anne Harfield
Jessica Swan
Helga Eltis
Rita Thompson
Claire Thompson
Megan Kaye
Rita Tosh
Joan Spooner
Linda Kaye
Catherine Constant
Ivy Leitch
Isobel Tripney
Catherine Blow



Mr McRae's invitation was to attend a service commemorating the centenary of the tree planting ceremony.

The significance of the planting is monumental, in that it celebrated the signing of the peace treaty which brought the Great War to an end.

A short service was held in Dunnottar Church led by the Rev Dr Alan Murray, moderator of Kincardine and Deeside. Local dignitaries including members of the Stonehaven Freemasons joined the public in the congregation.

The presence of the Freemasons represented their forebears who attended the original planting in 1919.

The Peace Tree

It was pure chance that led us to an event held in Dunnottor Church on Saturday, 6 July 2019. The photo of an oak tree "wearing" a poppy wreath on its trunk appeared in the press and journal. An accompanying letter from Mr Donald McRae invited the readers to attend the birthday service of that tree.

There are many dates which we remember throughout the year. July the 6th is not one of them. We were unaware of the significance until we saw the photo. We were intrigued. Dunnottar Church is surrounded on all sides by hundreds of trees. Protected by nature's sentinels since it was built in the 14th Century. The ideal setting to plant a peace tree.

Following the church service, a gathering was held at the side of the Peace Tree, where a wreath laying ceremony took place.

The Dunnottar Peace Tree, in a wooded area of north east Scotland, is recognised as a living memorial and has a preservation order bestowed upon it by Aberdeenshire Council. The graveyard and its occupants are under the protection of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Long may the Dunnotar Peace Tree live and thrive. It is one of the very few living memorials in this part of Scotland, bringing comfort to all who have been affected by war. It is a symbol of hope in an ever changing world.

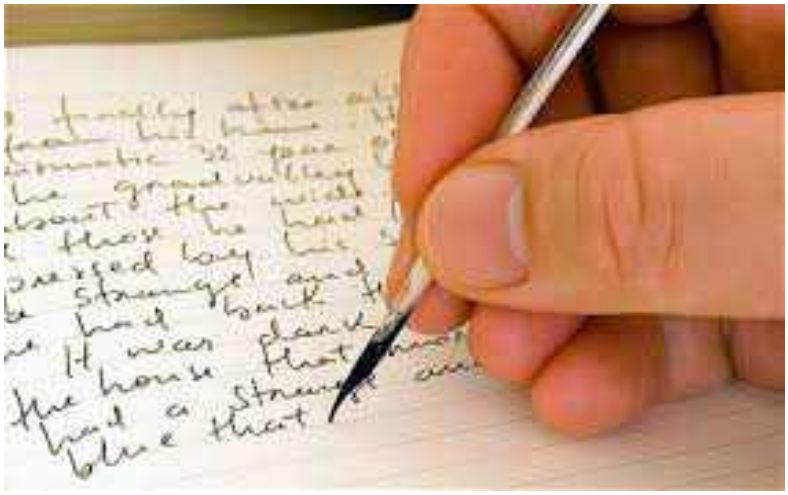
Happy 100th birthday, Oak Tree. We wish you many more centuries safe in the shadow of Dunnottar Church and the tranquility of Dunnottar Woods.

Bille & Christine

Legacy stories

Preserving the past for the future

by Simon Kleinig



Have you ever stopped to think about some of the stories our Legacy widows can tell?

Consider these stories from three of our widows.

Naomi Sinclair had only been married 18 months when her husband, a RAAF fighter pilot was shot down in the Korean War. Naomi tells the story: "He was killed in action aged 22 on the 7th of December, 1951. He was heavily strafed and forced to bail out, only to hit his head on the tail of his Sea Fury; his body was recovered and a burial service was held on HMAS Sydney that day."

Naomi returned to England with her six month old baby son. London Legacy looked after them both, supporting her son through to adulthood and Naomi until her death at the age of 80.

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Joan Spooner's husband, Alfred served in North Africa in World War Two, one of the legendary "Rats of Tobruk". Alf Spooner survived an incredible journey of survival by crossing 300 miles of desert, mainly at night to avoid enemy detection, with little food or water to sustain him, in order to get back to his mates in Tobruk.

On one occasion he was attacked by three enemy soldiers in a fox hole. Alfred single-handedly dispatched them with his bayonet. He pushed on in a debilitated state and when he heard what he took for Australian voices, staggered towards them, only to discover they were Germans deliberately speaking English to trap stranded soldiers trying to get back to their lines. He was captured and endured four years of captivity in various prisoner-of-war camps.

***

Catherine Constant's father, Tom Arnott, went ashore at Gallipoli on Day One, 25 April 1915. Four days later Tom was locked in the heat of battle, working a machine gun up at Quinn's Post in the heights overlooking Anzac Cove, a hugely strategic position which was pivotal to maintaining the ANZACS' tenuous foothold at Gallipoli. "Our most difficult and dangerous post" was how one general described it.

Tom was wounded in a fierce firefight witnessed by Brigadier-General Walker. He was awarded the DCM (Distinguished Conduct Medal) after a recommendation by the general and his ADC, Lieutenant Richard Casey, who would later become Governor-General of Australia (1965—1969).

***

These are just three stories selected at random from our widows. Remember that London Legacy is a small club by Australian standards. Yet these three accounts give us a glimpse through a barely open door at the rich store that lies beyond.

Every legatee in every club can probably relate similar stories told them by their widows. And many legatees themselves have their own stories to tell from conflicts they served in over the past 75 years.

But who will record these fascinating stories to ensure they are preserved forever? The Australian War Memorial holds a rich archive of material, but Legacy has many more unrecorded stories now at risk of being lost forever.

Anzac Day
25 April 2020

This year was the first time since 1919 that we were unable to participate in Anzac Day services, parades and commemorative events. That didn't mean it was any less significant or meaningful to us. We simply remembered and observed it privately and individually, each in their own way.

… At the going down of the sun, and in the morning

WE WILL REMEMBER THEM

Additionally, the Australian and NZ High Commissioners facilitated a number of virtual events to commemorate Anzac Day.

Australian War Memorial Broadcast. This was streamed direct at 8.30pm Friday evening and repeated at Dawn (Anzac Day) in the UK.

Commemoration Service. On Anzac Day at 11.00am, a commemorative service hosted by the High Commissioner for Australia and the Acting High Commissioner for New Zealand was broadcast from their respective homes in the UK.

Australia House Ensemble Recital. On Anzac Day at 3.00pm, the Australia House Ensemble and Friends presented 'Hope and Remembrance', a 30-minute virtual recital of well-known and new music from Waltzing Matilda to music by Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe to commemorate Anzac Day 2020.

Reading of *"One Day of the Year"*. On Anzac Day at 7.30pm, a reading of Alan Seymour's iconic play 'One Day of the Year' with guest presenter Kathy Lette and cast, including Mark Little, Kerry Fox, Daniel Monk, Celeste Dodwell and Paul Haley.

War Horse

by Simon Kleinig

During World War One a horse bearing the curious name of “Bill the Bastard” is now widely regarded as Australia’s finest war horse. Bill gained this uncomplimentary appellation from his habit of bucking his rider whenever he was asked to gallop. This, and a cantankerous disposition, was the result of early abuse: Bill was roughly handled and branded early in life, leaving him with a deep mistrust of humans.

Bill was described as having the legs of a thoroughbred and the body of a draught horse. He was a “Waler”, a shortened form of “New South Waler”, denoting the state of origin of the breed. Bill was a stallion standing 17 hands high who, over time, would repeatedly prove his endurance, courage and unrelenting determination.

Bill’s life as a war horse had inauspicious beginnings. In the first instance, he was transported to Sydney’s Liverpool Army Camp, where he was used by recruiting officers to test the skill and strength of potential Light Horsemen. However, Bill soon came to be regarded as an unrideable mount, effortlessly bucking off each eager recruit in turn. He was seen as a kind of cynical joke, a test for city folk eager to join the Light Horse. Bill was written off as nothing more than a pack horse, a beast of burden fit only for carrying supplies and munitions.

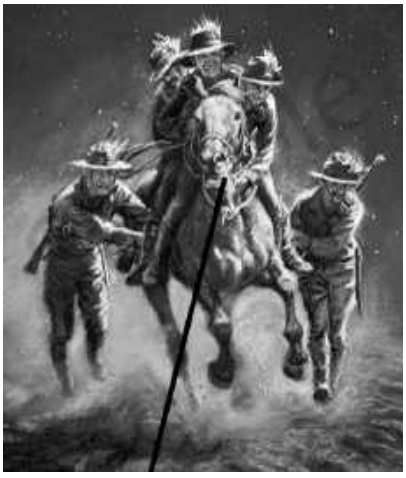
Bill was shipped to the Middle East in late 1914, under the supervision of bush poet and war correspondent Captain A.B. “Banjo” Paterson, who later commanded the Australian Remount Squadron. Paterson became acquainted with Bill early in the voyage, noting acerbically in his diary: “You can’t lead Bill the Bastard to anything, and you certainly can’t make him drink.” Bill was one of 130,000 Australian war horses sent to serve in World War One. Unlike their human masters, none was destined to return to Australia.

After arriving in Egypt, Bill was sent with the ANZACs to Gallipoli. When John Simpson Kirkpatrick (of Simpson and his donkey fame) was killed in action on 19 May 1915, it was Bill who bore Simpson’s body down Shrapnel Gully to Anzac Cove. Bill’s service life as a pack horse entailed

journeying between Anzac Cove and Suvla Bay each day, delivering mail. It was such a dangerous task that Australian and British soldiers stopped placing bets on the likelihood of horse and rider completing the seven mile beach journey without falling to Turkish snipers.

On one occasion the cavalryman he bore was shot, and, despite being wounded twice himself, Bill reared up and managed to get through. He was saved by a vet who worked very quickly on a flesh wound, choosing to leave the other round embedded in the rump, where it remained permanently.

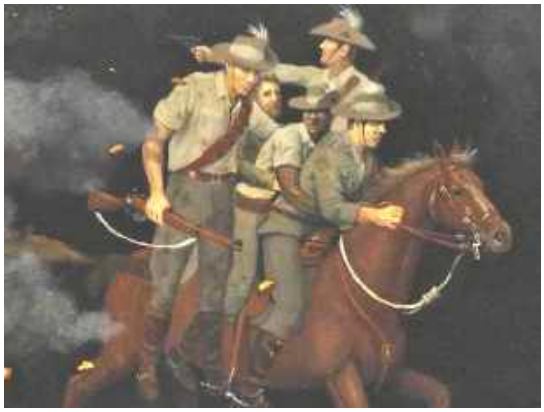
The incident was witnessed by Major Michael Shanahan of the 2nd Light Horse Regiment, who went on to work with Bill, forming a strong bond between horse and rider. Shanahan understood Bill’s nature and applied patience, compassion and understanding.



He took Bill swimming in the sea with him and rewarded him with liquorice allsorts. Bill added to his growing reputation the attributes of being both fearless and naturally instinctive in the face of danger.

Bill cemented his legendary status at the Battle of Romani on 5 August 1916. Shanahan had convinced Captain Banjo Paterson to allow him take Bill into battle alongside 110,000 other horses in the searing 50 degree heat of the Sinai desert. It was a pivotal battle as both sides desperately needed victory to take control of the wells.

Bill performed magnificently. When four Tasmanian troopers from the Light Horse Brigade found themselves outflanked by the Turks and stranded, Shanahan managed to get all four and himself back to the Australian lines. Bill carried three men on his back and one in each stirrup for nearly two miles through the soft sand at a lumbering gallop, rearing up and using his hooves to dispose of two Turks who tried to shoot him, before reaching safety.



In the course of this action Shanahan was badly wounded in the leg and collapsed unconscious onto his horse, but Bill carried him gently and without directions to an aid post where a medic amputated the shattered leg. Shanahan was awarded the DSO (Distinguished Service Order) for his part in the battle.

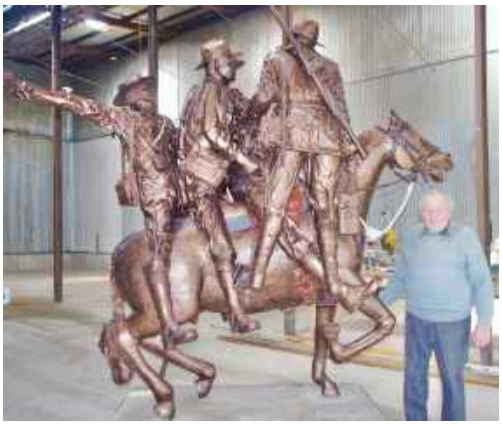
HIstorian Roland Perry has written a book entitled "Bill the Bastard". In it, he describes Bill's part in the Battle of Romani: "Bill went for six hours, his stamina was monumental. One general went through 17 horses in the night. Bill was officially retired after the battle, he performed so well. But he still saw a lot of action—everyone wanted Bill.

He would carry machine guns or lead the line, and was seen as a symbol of strength."

By September 1918, "Bill the Bastard" was known throughout the entire Light Horse, who used his name not as an insult, but as a term of endearment. Bill had become a legend, a symbol the courage and unbreakable will of the Anzac mounted force.

After the war some horses were sold to the British army as remounts for Egypt and India. Others were taken into the desert and shot by their owners. But Bill was left with the villagers at Gallipoli, where he saw out his days in a far more friendly environment than the former heat of battle.

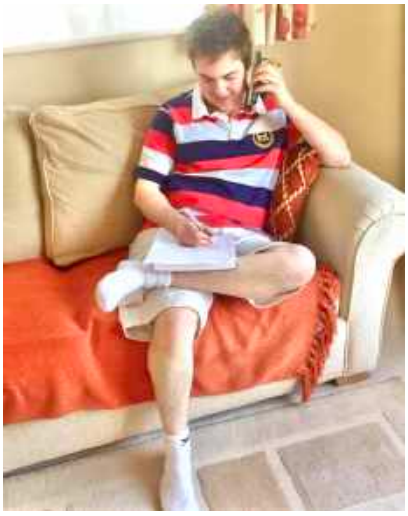
A statue commemorating "Bill the Bastard" now stands in the NSW town of Murrumburrah-Harden, the birthplace of the 1st Australian Horse Infantry in 1897. It is cast in bronze and is the work of sculptor Carl Valerius, who said the statue would help educate people about a widely overlooked part of Anzac history. It fittingly honours Major Shanahan's and Bill's memory.



It’s business as usual at London Legacy

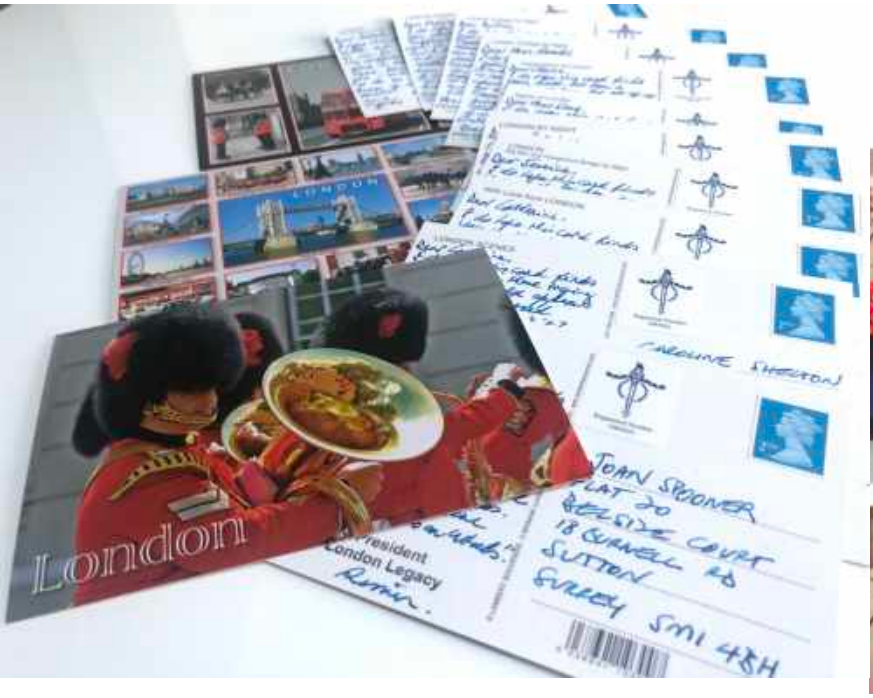
It’s business as usual at London Legacy, despite Coronavirus, social distancing and lockdown. Our legatees continue to stay in touch with our dependants by telephone, letter and postcard. Legatee Adam Gale is shown busy at home on the telephone to widows and writing out letters.

Following an initiative successfully adopted by our colleagues at Brisbane Water (NSW) Legacy, we have been busy distributing food hampers to our widows in the more far-flung parts of Britain, in-cluding northern England and Scotland.



Our legatees have been busy sending out postcards during this period of social isolation just to let our ladies know we are still thinking of them.

Legatee Sian Loftus in Scotland came up with the novel idea of a “notecard” by pasting a photograph onto card, and attach ing a Legacy pin. The image in this notecard shows Sian’s daughter, Alice with Billie Martin at an Anzac Day service at Abroath, Scotland.



Anzac Day 2020 Candlelight Vigil

The ‘Driveway at Dawn’ movement, born out of necessity for Anzac Day 2020 by veterans Bill Sowry and Terry James, was a huge success throughout Australia. Many will remember Bill Sowry as the former Head of Australian Defence Staff at Australia House in London. Bill was a staunch supporter of London Legacy and a regular attendee at our meetings and functions.

In Australia, the RSL got behind the movement and asked all Australians to observe a minute’s silence with their candles in hand at 6am. Neighbourhoods across Australia rose to the occasion and then shared their own “Dawn Services” to social media.

Necessity is often the mother of invention, and this highly imaginative idea in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown, may well become a regular feature of future Anzac Day services, taking an important place beside the more traditional forms of Anzac Day commemoration.

Bill Sowry

New Legatees

Adam Gale

Legatee Adam Gale brings a freshness and enthusiasm to his role as legatee. Adam lives in Surrey and is a recent graduate of Birkbeck, University of London, where he studied history and international relations, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 2019. There is a strong military tradition within Adam’s family, which he recognises and is reflected through his work with London Legacy and his membership of the Britain-Australia Society and the Gallipoli Association.

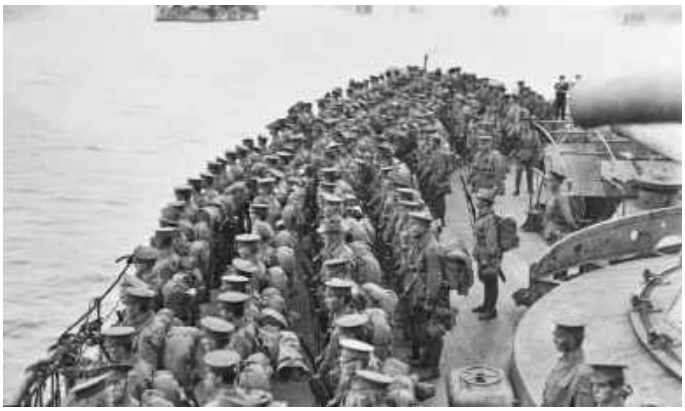
Ken Semmens

Legatee Ken Semmens is a graduate of the Royal Military College Duntroon. Ken served as a cavalry officer in the Royal Australian Armoured Corps, including a tour of Afghanistan as a Troop Leader with the 2nd/14th Light Horse Regiment. He served for over ten years before transferring to the Reserves. Ken is married and works in London in the finance industry. He holds a pilot’s licence and enjoys anything to do with the outdoors. Ken brings to London Legacy skills in many areas, underpinned by a fundamental understanding of the work of Legacy.

GALLIPOLI ASSOCIATION

TO REMEMBER, TO HONOUR, TO STUDY

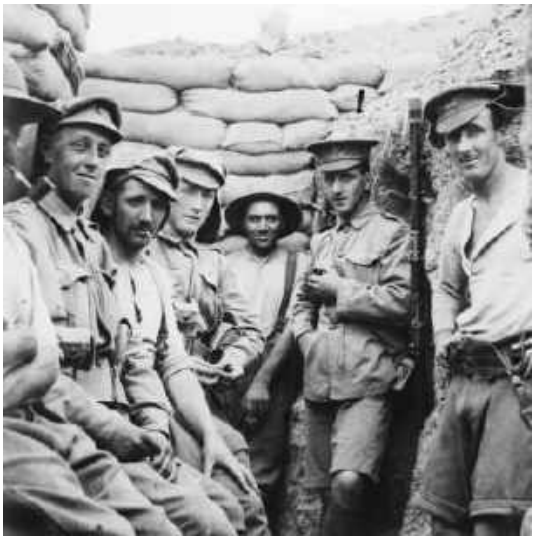
Keeping the memory alive: Ever thought of joining the Gallipoli Association?



Our key focus today is education, in particular the young of all those countries that once took part in this tragic campaign. By raising public awareness of the Gallipoli Campaign, encouraging and facilitating study, our goal is keeping the memory of the campaign, ensuring that all who served in it, and those who gave their lives, are not forgotten.

We have existed for over forty years, having been established by a Gallipoli veteran, Major Edgar Banner in 1969. With a worldwide membership of over 1,000, many of our members are descendants of veterans, but we also have an ever-growing membership of professional and enthusiastic amateur military and family historians who, with the general public, are growing the Association today.

To find out more about Gallipoli, to have a chance to read the excellent “The Gallipolian” journal, or join us at UK-based commemoration events, conferences, lunches and battlefield tours please visit:—



http://www.gallipoli-association.org

or email:

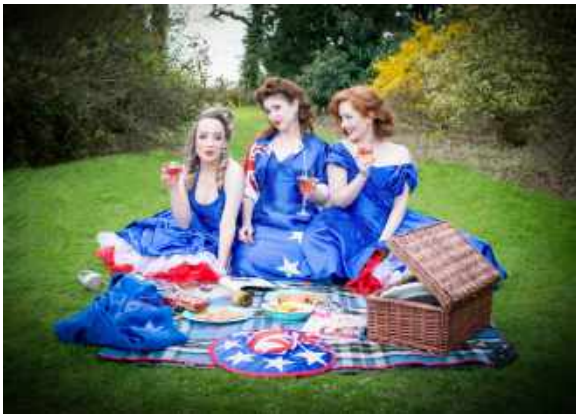
membershipsecretary@gallipoli-association.org

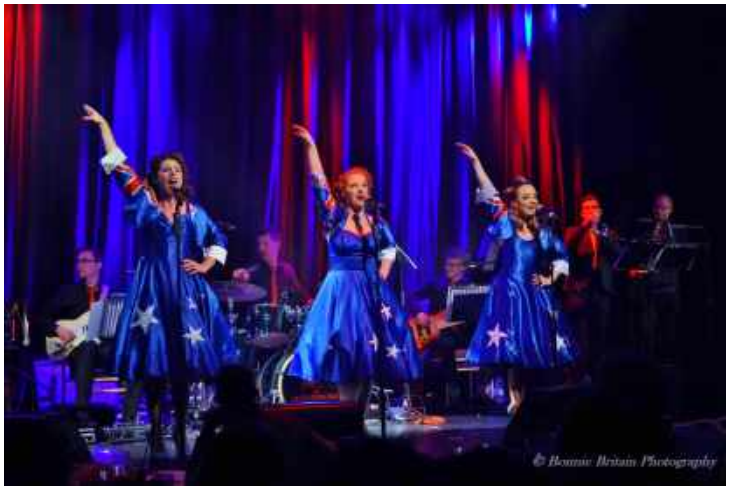
for more information.

THE GIRLS FROM OZ

"Backed by an excellent band, this three part close harmony troupe work their way through Australian themed songs as varied as Tim Minchin, Men at Work, Kylie and even a version of 'Waltzing Matilda', but in highly original arrangements that surprise, entertain and tug at the heart strings as much as they make you smile." - FringeReview.com

Full of sass and armed with killer harmonies, these ladies are a force to be reckoned with. They can sing, they can joke and they can sure put on one helluva an entertaining evening! With their 'Bonza Band' and unique 3-part harmony spin on songs by Aussie legends like Kylie, Men At Work, John Farnham, Vegemite, as well as some well known Vintage Classics from the 1920s through to the 1950s, all entertainment should be this fun!



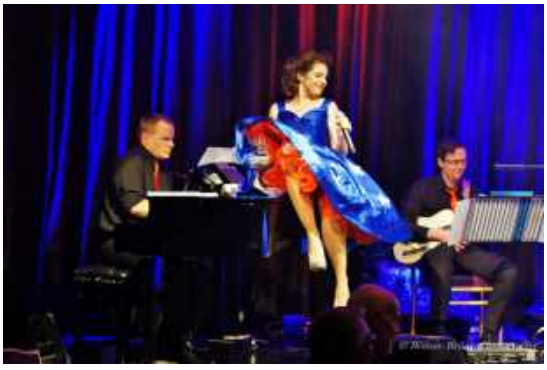


Showcasing a variety of songs and styles, they can offer different packages to suit any event needs, from background entertainment for welcome drinks or a swanky evening around the barbie, to large scale corporate events!

THE GIRLS FROM OZ have performed at our Legacy Anzac Gala Dinner and are keen supporters of Legacy, Anzac Day and all things Australian.

You can support them in turn by booking THE GIRLS FROM OZ for your next event.

www.thegirlsfromozgroup.com



“Behind every service person who risks everything is a family that does the same”

London Legacy

Registered UK charity No. 1085603

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"London Legacy cares for the dependants of those who served their country, through personal support and by continuing to commemorate and honour the sacrifice of our Australian servicemen and service-women."