
THE SOLDIERS MEMORIAL AVENUE, QUEENS DOMAIN.

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This brief paper aims to provide a basic overview of the Soldiers Memorial Avenue as well as the work of Friends of Soldiers Walk in restoring it.

Environment

Soldiers Memorial Avenue is located on the eastern side of the main northwest – southeast ridgeline of the Domain. The Avenue stretches for over 1.5km along the riverside of the Queens Domain from Aberdeen St to the Cross Roads. It covers an area of c15 hectares. Generally speaking, the land adjacent to the Memorial Avenue slopes towards the northeast. As such it is bathed in sunlight, a blessing for the winter walker but combined with low rainfall, drier summers and well-draining shallow soils resting on dolerite this makes for a precarious environment for cedars.¹ The Avenue starts at c20 metres above sea level with the northern Cross Roads end being at about 100m.

The Domain is one of only a small number of expansive remnants of grasslands and grassy woodland in Tasmania.² Soldiers Memorial Avenue is located within a Grassy White Gum (*Eucalyptus viminalis*) Woodland vegetation type listed as a critical priority for conservation of forest communities in Hobart. Located within the Soldiers Memorial Avenue “footprint” are a number of populations of rare or threatened species. Many of these species survive because of the most healthy cedars, living in the suppression zones from cedar foliage thus healthy Avenue trees, exotics, help protect the rarest native species on the Domain. Kirkpatrick notes

“The spreading healthy, and moderately unhealthy, cedars in Soldiers Walk provide excellent habitat for these rare species because they create a wide zone of suppression. Unhealthy and dead trees do not, because they lose this zone of suppression.”³

“Significant species were recorded during this study under, or close to, thirty of the Soldiers Walk trees (Appendix). Listed species noted were *Lepidium hyssopifolium* (6 trees), *L. pseudotasmanicum* (18 trees), *Scleranthus fasciculatus* (2 trees), *Vittadinia gracilis* (2 trees) and *V. muelleri* (3 trees). *Podolepis jaceoides*, a species rare in Hobart, was noted under one tree. In addition, *Diuris sulphurea*, a species rare in Hobart, has been noted by the author at the location marked 11 on the attached map.

Over the last four decades the Avenue has been affected by fire, both from wildfires in the 1970s when most of the Domain was burnt and later from hazard reduction burns conducted without sufficient protection for the Avenue trees. Some trees suffered severely from scorching and lost parts of their lower foliage as a result. In recent years all such burns have been conducted outside the Avenue to protect the trees though this lead to a build up of fuel within the Avenue footprint, now alleviated.

1 Soldiers Memorial Avenue Management Plan Hobart City Council (Hobart) 2004 p18 (hereinafter SMA)

2 SMA p16

3 Kirkpatrick J “Report to the Hobart City Council on Management Actions that will maintain natural and cultural significance of the Soldiers Walk” in SMA Appendix 2 p52

The Trees

The Soldiers Walk, as it most popularly known in recent years, was inaugurated as the Soldiers Memorial Avenue on 3 August 1918 with further substantial additions early the following year. Originally consisting of 513 trees, now approximately 359 trees remain in varying states of health. Two trees were planted by the Governor of the day and his wife, Sir Francis and Lady Newdegate and another by General Sir William Birdwood on his visit to Hobart in 1921 as part of his memorial unveiling tour around Australia.

The original trees were a mixture of *Cedrus deodar*, *Cedrus alantica* and *Cedrus atlantica glauca*: they were probably not the best species choice for the site. Low rainfall and shallow rocky soils have limited growth in many trees. The condition of the trees is highly variable; the largest behind the TCA are well watered and huge healthy specimens over 12 metres tall but within 200 metres are trees barely 2 metres tall with sparse foliage. 210 of the cedars are classed as 'poor' and 97 need replacing being dead in situ or struggling.⁴ Many show signs of fresh growth in a wet spring but lose foliage again in a dry summer.

The Avenue includes 23 Italian Cypresses planted as replacement trees in the 1960s at the expense of the families.⁵ An extension to the Avenue was planted in 1926 to connect the Avenue proper with the Cenotaph with a further 20 trees planted in a double row along the city side of the Cenotaph precinct; of these, 2 survive.⁶

The Avenue

The Soldiers Memorial Avenue on the Queens Domain was originally intended as more than a simple avenue of trees. It was conceived as a mile long park with the memorial trees, each with its individual plaque, interspersed with garden beds, native shrubs and trees and memorials for each of the units represented.⁷ First proposed for Hobart in late 1917, the project was delayed until 1918 for more suitable planting weather.⁸ Under the aegis of the Hobart City Council Reserves Committee, the project came to involve a broad cross section of the community. The New Town Council joined in to plant its own section of the Avenue.⁹ Mr L J Lipscombe, Superintendent of Reserves, and Sgt George Foster, Secretary of the RSA, played leading roles in the planning, preparation and planting of the Avenue. Initially 100 trees were to be planted near the Corporation Quarry but the demand for trees and the influence of Aldermen resulted in a grander avenue along the north eastern slopes.¹⁰ The original plan was to plant in chronological order of death with a single tree for brothers 'at the relatives option.'¹¹

The Avenue begins as two rows and widened to three along the slopes with those commemorating the dead of the landing at the southern end now outside the Aquatic Centre and progressing through to the first deaths in 1916 in France by tree #60. A fourth row was added on the riverside of the path in 1919, which largely

4 SMA p20

5 SMA p20-21

6 SMA p8: interviews with families

7 *Mercury* 24/6/1918 p7

8 MCC/16/72 Reserves Committee Minutes 2/10/1917; 30/10/1917

9 *ibid* 2/7/1918, 16/7/1918

10 *ibid* 21/5/1918; 6/6/1918

11 *ibid* 18/7/1918

commemorates the dead of mid to late 1918. The New Town row is also a 'fourth row' but begins beyond the Queen Victoria Powder magazine and stretches towards the Cross Roads. The bulk of the trees at the Cross Roads were part of the 1919 planting. In board terms, the Avenue tells the story of the war with the greatest number of trees planted for the dead of 1917 particularly July to October 1917 with the battles of Messines, Polygon Wood, Menin Road, Broodseinde Ridge and Passchendaele.

Creation: Community Effort

The preparations were extensively covered in the newspapers and weekly magazines. Holes were dug and basic tree guards erected by groups of Scouts, returned and serving soldiers, representatives of sporting clubs, relatives and friends of soldiers, and groups of workers from businesses in central Hobart. The YMCA and women of the community provided refreshments on the cold winter afternoons while the Labour Fife and Drum band provided music.¹² The size of the task can be seen in photographs of the digging. The holes were 6ft x 6ft with large rocks clearly visible. A pin back badge, now the FOSW logo, was produced to publicise the event though it reflects the original hope for inauguration on the last Sunday in July. A formal programme was also released carrying the names of the 390 men to be commemorated. A crowd estimated at between 6 and 8 thousand turned out for the largest working bee and one of between 8 and 10 thousand for the inauguration.¹³ The population of Hobart and New Town was c 30,000 at the time while that of the area of what is now Greater Hobart was about 40,000.



Figure 1 Family group planting tree on the central section of the Avenue. The Gunpowder Magazine can be seen to the right and trees within the TCA ground to the left. (Weekly Courier 18 July 1918 p21)

¹² Mercury June 30th -August 7th 1918

¹³ Mercury 5/8/1918 p4

The Men Commemorated

The trees were planted at the request of families living in Hobart and New Town who had relatives who had died in active service. A study of the military service of the men commemorated provided some surprises. It is generally understood that most Tasmanian served in a very restricted set of units in the first AIF with most reference being to the 12th and 40th Battalions and 141 died serving with the 12th Bn and a further 52 with the 40th Bn. The picture is broadens by a study of unit histories and the summaries provided in Broinowski so that the 15th, 26th, 47th and 52nd Battalions are included along with the 9th and 17th Batteries AFA as well as representation in the 3rd Field Ambulance and sundry Engineering companies.¹⁴ These four battalions are represented by another 123 men on the Avenue while the 47 gunners are spread over 18 different units. A study of the Roll of Honour cards and the CWGC Debt of Honour¹⁵ register reveal that 110 different units are represented on the Avenue including 39 different infantry battalions of the 1st AIF.

450 enlisted in Hobart and 29 in other States. Some were men like Clyde Pearce, a former Australian Open Golf champion, who enlisted from Western Australia but switched to a 'Tasmanian' unit. Most however stayed with the unit of enlistment. The Hobart connection for a very few was through a widow who had settled in Hobart by 1918 or 1919.

Five men died with the New Zealand Expeditionary Force and as many died serving with British units: one, Jack Cook of Hope St New Town enlisted in the 12th Bn as a private and died as a Lieutenant in the 11th Bn Queens Royal West Surrey Regiment having won the Military Cross. Five pilots and one sailor are commemorated. While most of these units would have been well known to people at the time, following their fates in the newspapers, they now have little resonance except for military history buffs.

Research on the soldiers also reveals some of the impact of the war on a small community. In the small cluster of streets around the bottom end of Arthur St in West/North Hobart, eight men died from Arthur St, five from Mary St and five from Little Arthur St: eighteen men from within less than a hundred metres from a small intersection. This pattern is repeated across the centre of the city. These concentrations represent pockets of grief and loss at a level unique in the history of the city. This in itself explains the reason for the large crowds on the Domain for preparation and planting.

A study of occupations and workplaces is similarly revealing and illustrates the far-reaching effect of the war and consequent grief and sense of loss. It also provides a better understanding of the passions aroused by the conscription debate and political re-alignments of the war. Prominent among the diggers of July 1918 was Sen. John Earle, former Labour Premier, whose brother-in-law, Pte Albert Blackmore was commemorated on the Avenue. He had published a book of poetry in 1909, *Shades and Echoes*, and the Earle's published a booklet of his war poetry in 1920.¹⁶ A former Lord Mayor of Hobart Alderman Meagher was also there planting a tree for his son Lt Norman Meagher of the 40th Battalion. The family published a book of his letters and reports from the front, along with obituaries, as *With the Fortieth*.¹⁷ Among the

¹⁴ Broinowski op cit

¹⁵ AWM145; CWGC Debt of Honour Register op cit

¹⁶ AWM 145 Roll of Honour card A Blackmore. *Shades and Echo?* Hobart 1912 and 1921.

¹⁷ N Meagher *With the Fortieth* Hobart 1918

dead commemorated were four solicitors, fifty-two building tradesmen, nine butchers, four accountants, eight teachers and eleven PMG employees. There was not a workplace untouched and the loss of so many was obvious to all; it is not surprising the debates were so bitter. Some families were hit harder than others; the Avenue commemorates fourteen sets of brothers and a father and son.

Commemorative Activity

Beyond the initial plantings, families and friends continued to use the Avenue as a focus for commemorative activity. The first service to celebrate the Armistice was followed by visits to the trees by many families.¹⁸ This practice continued and it became common for relatives to gather at the tree on Armistice Day and Anzac Day as well as other significant or convenient dates. Flowers and wreaths would be left at the base of the tree or on the tree guard and their removal was keenly felt as complaints to the Reserves Committee testify.¹⁹ This also highlights the source of the Avenue's importance to many. The trees represented the graves they could never visit if a grave even existed; it was simply outside the means of most to consider a trek to Europe or the Middle East. Some families even included the name of a fallen soldier on a family tomb or created a grave for them at Cornelian Bay cemetery.

The existence of the Avenue also provided an opportunity for more private grieving than was possible on Anzac Day which with its large crowds and organisation was an event encompassing many themes not simply loss. Family photos of gatherings at trees have been passed to Friends of Soldiers Walk dating from the 192s to the 1980s. Some trees still are draped with flowers on Anzac Day, such as that for Alf Cahill killed in the Great War which also serves to commemorate his son killed serving with the RAAF in Europe in 1944. Descendants tell of family rituals such as the grandmother-mandated gathering before attending the Hobart Regatta. Some families also took it upon themselves to replace missing plaques such as for Pte Alf Cahill, and Gnr Roy Edwards, for whom 4 plaques survive.²⁰

Looking After the Avenue: Between Wars

Unit associations, most prominently the 12th and 40th Battalion Associations, played a continuing role on the Avenue painting the original tree guards²¹ and holding working bees on the Avenue well into the 1930s. The Soldiers Mothers and Wives Association and the Soldiers and Sailors' Father's Association also kept an eye on the Avenue writing letters to the Council suggesting improvements, bemoaning the state of the Avenue and the name boards.²² At one point the RSSILA offered to take over responsibility for the Avenue but their request was refused.²³

The major path up through the Avenue was constructed and gravelled in 1919 as an unemployment relief project for returned and lightly disabled soldiers. Further work was done on the pathway in 1931 and it was re-gravelled.²⁴ Consideration was given to employing a caretaker permanently on the Avenue and advertisements were placed

18 Mercury 13/11/1918 p4

19 MCC 16/72 Reserves Committee Minutes 9/1/1919

20 These plaques are in the possession of the Hobart City Council. Family reminiscences reported to author.

21 MCC 16/72 Reserves Committee minutes 2/9/1919; 30/9/1919; 22/11/1921

22 see for example *ibid* 23/10/1923; 19/8/1924; 5/4/1927; 22/11/1928

23 *ibid* 30/8/1927

24 *ibid* 1/4/1919; 29/4/1919; 27/5/1919 and 28/1/1931

for a disabled soldier to fill the position²⁵ but is unclear if the scheme was followed through as in 1924 the Mothers and Wives Association called for one or two men to be employed to care for the Avenue.²⁶ Trees were replaced as needed until the 1960s though by this time, replacements were paid for by the families.²⁷ Seats were placed along the Avenue in 1923 in part paid for a collection organised by Mr. W H Seabrook MHR.²⁸ This had first been suggested in 1921 but little occurred until a public collection was organised.



Figure 2 Name plate for C E Luttrell still in situ in 2001, since removed for safekeeping, one of the handful to escape removal in the early 1980s.

The problem of water was recognised early on and in 1922 the decision was taken to lay a water pipe along the full length of the Avenue with taps at regular intervals to allow HCC workers and families to get water for the trees.²⁹ The theft of taps and other vandalism led to constant complaints and problems; the Council first restricted the placement of taps to certain times of year³⁰ and later removed all of them but assured the Mothers and Wives Association that the trees would be cared for and watered in summer.³¹ It is not clear when this basic maintenance ceased. At other times there were proposals to fence the entire Avenue and to place a stone tablet to mark the entrance of the Avenue replacing the original noticeboard.

Fundraising efforts by the RSSILA in 1929 and 1933 funded some other works and provided some minor employment during the Depression.³² The original name boards were replaced progressively from November 1931 with metal ‘tablets’ hung from the tree guards or branches.

25 *ibid* 21/2/1922

26 *ibid* 1/12/1924

27 Interview with descendants

28 Reserves Committee minutes 25/9/1923

29 *ibid* 9/2/1922

30 *ibid* 5/4/1927

31 *ibid* 22/11/1928

32 *Mercury* 18/7/19129 p2, 6/7/1933 p6, 8/7/1933 p10

Decline

The history of the Avenue after the Second World War is not yet well-researched though it seems that the Battalion associations continued to take an interest.³³ It was however during this period that the Avenue suffered from the fact that the old associations had declined, few veterans of the Great War were still active and no longer were there relatives of the fallen or returned soldiers on the Hobart City Council.

In the 1955, representatives of Hobart High School approached the Council pressing for the creation of a new and larger oval near the Cross Roads to provide much needed facilities for the fast-growing high school.³⁴ There was no clear decision but much discussion over the next few years and while the original suggestion was for a small oval that would not touch the Avenue, plans soon expanded to a full sized oval. Protracted negotiations began between the Education Department and the Hobart City Council to establish the final size of the oval and the relative contributions with the Department wanting to maximise their exclusive access and the Council wanting to ensure the Department paid at least half the cost. The Department pulled out and the idea as shelved until a new tip site was needed. Various options was violently opposed; the solution came with the suggestion to put the tip at the Cross Roads with added bonus for later conversion to an oval.³⁵

An approach was made to the RSL in relation to moving Avenue trees that would be lost due to the oval and an onsite inspection was conducted.³⁶ It was agreed that the trees would be replanted and the new oval named the Soldiers Memorial Oval.³⁷ The proposal drew hated criticism over a period from some veterans and descendants. Typical was the comment of Dr Nigel Abbott, who wrote "Conversion of the northern end of the memorial to a rubbish tip, for however short a time, would be a disfigurement, an act beyond neglect."³⁸ In the end over 80 trees were bulldozed and the current Avenue disappears into the slope of the oval with a small remnant of eight trees exists hidden in the copse at the Cross Roads.

In 1987 at least 11 trees were lost due to changes to the junction of Davies Avenue and the Tasman Highway. In addition over the years fire has caused considerable damage in the northern sections. In the southern sections, many trees suffered the effects of cars as part of the Avenue was used for parking area at Regatta time. The general development of Hobart has not been kind to the Avenue or the Domain.

Behind all this was the great killer and transformer of older Hobart, the motor car. From the building of the Hobart Bridge in 1933 to the creation of the Brooker Highway from 1964, the borders of the Domain have been progressively eroded turning what had been Hobart's big backyard into an island. By the 1970s, the Domain was only a playground for the children of the Glebe. Even for them, it was not as accessible as it had once been. The building of the Hobart Olympic Pool (1961), the Tennis Centre (1962), the large Cross Roads Oval (yip 1962, then slow work to create the oval up till 1968) and the Athletics Centre (1969) created a series of barriers along the southern spine. The New Town kids were long since locked out

33 HCC files (uncatalogued). Papers from Brig Dollery returned to the HCC after his death in 1967 including lists of trees for members of the 12th Battalion.

34 MCC16/72 Reserves Committee Minutes 2/2/1956

35 *ibid* 1965-61; MCC16/61 Public Works Committee Minutes 1959-61; MCC16/2/35 Correspondence Domain Cross Roads Vol1

36 MCC16/72: 7/4/1960; 28/4/1960

37 Mercury 26/8/1961 p22

38 Mercury 8/8/1961 p4

unless they wanted to risk their lives crossing the Brooker Highway cutting at the northern end of the Domain. The Domain became less a place for informal recreation as it had been before the Second World War and more a place for local dog walkers and weekend sport.

The increasing usage of 'Soldiers Walk' for the path and the removal of most individual tree plaques in the 1980s broke the link between individual soldier and tree and effectively hid the purpose of the Avenue for many.

Anecdotal evidence and aerial photography suggests that the Avenue was regularly slashed and mown until at least 1983. In the 1970s blue gums were inter-planted along the pathway; while this may have satisfied a nativist temperament, they served to obscure the visual integrity of the Avenue and in any event have not thrived being themselves unsuited to the environment. By 2001, the outer rows of trees were in the main no longer visible from the central pathway and, in the northern sections, some trees adjacent to the path were entirely obscured by black wattles. The wattles also caused the terminal decline of a number of trees, being deeper rooted and using all the available water in dry summers. The transformation of the natural environment from the open grassland of the early years to the scrubby grassland filled with weeds, wattles, blue gums and prickly box nearly obscured parts of the Avenue, hiding them from view with many surprised to be told there are actually 4 lines of trees.

All these developments not only physically diminished the Avenue but also gave a clear message to descendants and residents of Hobart that the Avenue was no longer valued.

Revival

In 2002, Friends of Soldiers Walk (FOSW) began a series of working bees under the aegis of the Hobart City Council Bush Care program. These working bees focussed initially on clearing competing smaller vegetation around the trees and later extended to a six-metre radius around the canopies. Number plates were also installed to allow identification of Avenue trees. In 2003, FOSW received a grant from the Hobart City Council to develop a website and a map of the Avenue.

In 2004, the HCC endorsed a management plan for the Avenue, developed in co-operation with FOSW with a commitment to the restoration of the Avenue by 2014 and an allocation of \$20,000 per year over the decade for replacement trees and maintenance on the Avenue. In addition, other budgets have been used to resurface the path, install new signage and other works along the Avenue. The Management plan includes provision for the replacement of not only missing trees but missing sites and the installation of new plaques at each tree. "For every soldier a tree, for every tree a plaque" was the basic slogan for FOSW's efforts and this has now been accepted as a proper goal under the plan.

In 2004, a Project Hahn Work for the Dole group began on the Avenue focussing on clearing larger trees within the Avenue footprint. This work has continued with the creation of 2 exhibition sections at the south and in the central entrances to the Avenue.

The Plan

The management plan sets August 3rd 2014, the 97th anniversary of the first plantings, as the goal for total restoration. This was chosen as August 4th 2014 is the centenary of the outbreak of war.

All missing trees will be replaced as the main priority followed by the dead and the unwell, with family agreement. The replacement trees will be *Cedrus libani*; chosen as it is more drought resistant and is in keeping with the original style and texture of the Avenue. The Governor and the Lord Mayor have already planted two on August 3rd this year. The HCC has purchased 100 trees to be matured and planted in 3-4 years; another 100 will follow in the next year. The Friends of the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens will propagate the trees to follow. The timber from dead and replaced trees will be used on the Avenue for furniture and incorporated in interpretative panels and points.

A landscape plan funded by the HCC is being drawn up to identify replacement sites and landscaping work that is needed. This ground work will be undertaken by Project Hahn. An important significant element of this phase will be the placement of plinths ready for plaques along the new routes for replacement trees.

Maps and new signage will be placed at the three major entrances to the Avenue. New directional signage to assist pedestrian flow to the Botanical Gardens is also being positioned.

Further research work on the history of the Avenue has been funded by the HCC. Responsibility for plaques rests with the fundraising of FOSW, which has already placed 63 and has funds for another 100. Our goal is to have all plaques in position within 4 years.

The potential for combined tours has been discussed with the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens and with trials this summer aimed at the local and cruise ship markets. This has already been tested with local community groups and schools. Educational resources will also be developed.

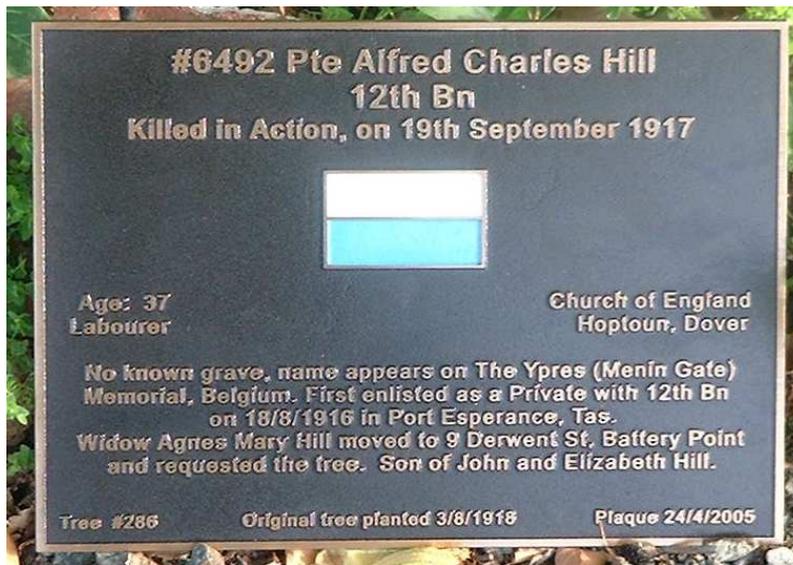
Commemoration

The Avenue exists as a place of community and family commemoration in a significantly different way from monuments. Monuments are the prime focus of most formal ceremonies on Anzac Day, Armistice Day and so on. To many they are associated with pomp and ceremony and officialdom. They also remember en masse. For veterans and families those ceremonies are poignant and full of meaning.

Avenues commemorate individuals with individual trees and make real the cost to specific families and individuals of war. Those families with the closest connections through the children of the servicemen maintain quiet remembrance leaving flowers and tokens at trees.

A key element in the revival has been intensive research to re-discover the individuals commemorated. While dates and units may have resonated with the generation that planted the Avenue, this limited detail means little to many now. It has been essential to flesh out these details to create the picture of an individual and through them to reflect the community they came from and created the Avenue.

The 65 new generation plaques now on the Avenue carry sufficient detail to help



create an image of the servicemen and their families. This has been a conscious decision to ensure that a modern visitor can better understand the time and the Avenue. It is also clearly in keeping the original desire to create a place of reflection and contemplation.

Figure 3: New plaque carrying great detail. Other plaques also include place of death, names of children, settler origins, relations also serving and so on.

This Avenue, like any other, not only contains the stories of individual men but also the community from which they came and the chronology of the war. The new plaques are a source of great interest to tourists and have begun to draw many back to the Avenue. In summary, intensive research and high detail on the ground are essential: they demonstrate commitment and demand as well as allow personal identification.



Figure 4: New plaque being dedicated. Plinths are at a standard distance from the tree and slightly angled to make easy reading.

Plaques are placed on concrete plinths and the overall effect is reminiscent of headstones. This introduces an appropriate level of formality while not being too intrusive. Another important element of commemoration has been the placing of poppies on the trees for Armistice Day. This has become a regular event and was actually our first major commemorative act on the Avenue. It marked out the memorial trees for any passer by, it raised questions, it demonstrated the continuing significance of the place and it touched many people. It is easy, simple and cheap and is important.

Schools

Schools in particular are finding the level of detail of great value. A tree provides a tangible link to the times and allows a level of personal identification needed by the young especially primary level students. Schools are adopting the trees of servicemen from their school and children visit before Anzac Day and Armistice Day to place flowers at these trees. The website provides additional factual material and photos of many of the men commemorated. The Avenue provides an opportunity for excursions and an incredible range of activities; brass-rubbings, find the unit colour patch, average the ages, and measure the trees and so on. Schools report that visits to the Avenue have created a level of engagement among students previously difficult to arouse beyond weapon-focussed boys.

Schools provide an important link to a wider community; convince a key teacher or principal and you have another means of reaching the community and raising awareness. This aids recruitment and fundraising. A number of schools have not only adopted trees but are actively raising funds to purchase plaques.

Families

The revival of the Avenue has been all about families whether on working bees or through connections to individual servicemen. Most of the photographs and a lot of individual stories and articles have come from descendants only too glad to help and see their family story told. This is the lifeblood. It should be nurtured. The FOSW constitution stipulates a level of descendant representation on the Committee.

Families by and large want to see their ancestor honoured and are willing to provide funds to do it. Some have over-paid knowing they help with other plaques. One woman contacted 80 members of the extended family around Australia and suggested they all provide \$10; nearly \$450 has come in so far. Most mail marketers only dream of such results.

Where we are in contact with a descendant family, they dedicate the plaque or in the case of mainland descendants provide some message that can be read on the day. A simple form of words is provided (“This plaque is dedicated to the memory of ...”); this takes the pressure of those uneasy with a public role, creates a common thread through all ceremonies and provides a good start or finish for the more loquacious. Ceremony is essential and provides a focus for all the activity both in the preparation and on the day. More than one tear has been shed.

Partnership

There is only one way to get a restoration on the agenda of local governments and that is in partnership. It was our starting point that it was FOSW’s responsibility to see this Avenue restored not somebody else’s; no ‘aorta’ syndrome in sight.

A working group was established with the Hobart City Council to work through the myriad issues raised by restoration. In this context, we provided Council with the assurance we were in the for the long haul, we were professional, we were willing to listen and would expect the same. Further we would take total responsibility for raising the funds for plaques from other sources. This was naturally attractive to Council as an asset is improved and an attraction created without them having to pay for all of it. It was also an important element in creating community buy-in; for the Avenue to truly survive it had to go back to its roots as a community movement.

It was also made clear from the outset that our commitment was physical as much as anything and all the early clearing of this huge area was done by members. In fact we rank as the most successful Bush Care group in Hobart with a high average turnout regardless of weather. Some matters are put off for another day to allow real work to begin. The process of drawing up the management plan took over eighteen months. Because we did not expect a miracle, we got one.

The key was to keep a clear eye on the goal: a tree for every soldier. We got it. The process educated those of us often less than sympathetic to local government and educated councillors and staff about the treasure on the Domain. Revitalising the whole area has become an issue in upcoming elections and the whole topic of the use of public space is part of conversation in the unlikeliest places.

The ADF has also provided important assistance: buses to move people along the Avenue for large dedications, fundraising in reserve units, ADF personnel and bands at dedications and fundraisers. No weapons are ever in evidence and the support is low key and appreciated by even the most pacific of our membership.

Politics

The politics of commemoration are that there are none. Our working bees see an environmental activist and veteran of forest blockades working with a Forestry Tasmania district supervisor. Politicians of all persuasions are invited to all functions, ceremonies and working bees as a matter of course. They are all sensible enough not to play politics with it themselves.

Dedication ceremonies are a time not just for speeches in general but for providing a role to elected representatives in dedicating plaques for whom there may be no descendants present. This is a powerful transformer that has turned some 'conscripts' into advocates.

Grants and Fundraising

Money attracts money. We started by raising money to immediately spend: on basic research and dedicating the first 3 plaques. Plaques in the ground made the theoretical tangible and until you have tangible outcomes, few will provide money for a dream.

Basic research and a few plaques created the basis for a *Saluting Their Service* Grant to turn the research into a database for distribution. The existence of a carefully professionally researched body of information allowed another grant from the HCC to create the website and map. The distribution of 10,000 copies of the map provided further family contacts, greater general awareness and the beginnings of other partnerships with the Royal Tasmania Botanical Gardens, tourist information centres and so on. The steady increase in profile meant we were able to raise enough money to plaque a section of 20 trees to create a showpiece section. This raised profile

further on the ground and reassured everyone we were serious and could achieve. At each stage, a clear intermediate goal with a clear and tangible outcome that leads directly to another stage.

The increasing visibility of changes on the Avenue attracted our first serious donations and another Commonwealth grant.



The endorsement of the Management Plan and problems for another project lead Project Hahn to explore using the restoration as a work for the dole project. This is now in its third round, has a high attendance rate and has created a real sense of pride for participants. They love the place both fits position and its meaning.

Figure 5: 1st of many working bees

FOSW has just received an \$88,500 grant from the Tasmanian Community Fund to fund further work on et Avenue, to research other Avenues in the State and develop a trial a 'how-to' kit with 10 other communities around the State. These will be selected by region, site (urban, semi0urual, small town), condition (erased, partial, needing replacement) and size. This grant was possible because of our achievements and our steadily improving profile.

The receipt of this grant will be used to lever the State Government for matching funding; many MPs are supportive including all local members. The broader tourism and education potential of restored Avenues around the State is becoming clear. Te investment for them is quite low, the outcomes quite good.

The introduction of tax deductibility from July 2006 will further boost fundraising. We are currently receiving discounts, goods, use of vehicles and equipment from a number of businesses. Professional associations have provided donations in memory of particular servicemen. We are working with a large company wishing to make 5-figure donation annually for three years.

Press Coverage

Our experience is that press coverage is easy. Restoring an Avenue is a good news story and provides great human-interest stories and visual material. The local press, radio and TV as well as national outlets have consistently covered our work. The involvement of Alec Campbell, Frank MacDonald and many descendants ensured that the necessary 'interest' has always been present.

An important factor in the continuing coverage has been the assiduous creation of stories and angles by FOSW so there is always a new story: an unveiling, a school project, a son or daughter of the Avenue, a cheque handover, a launch and so on.

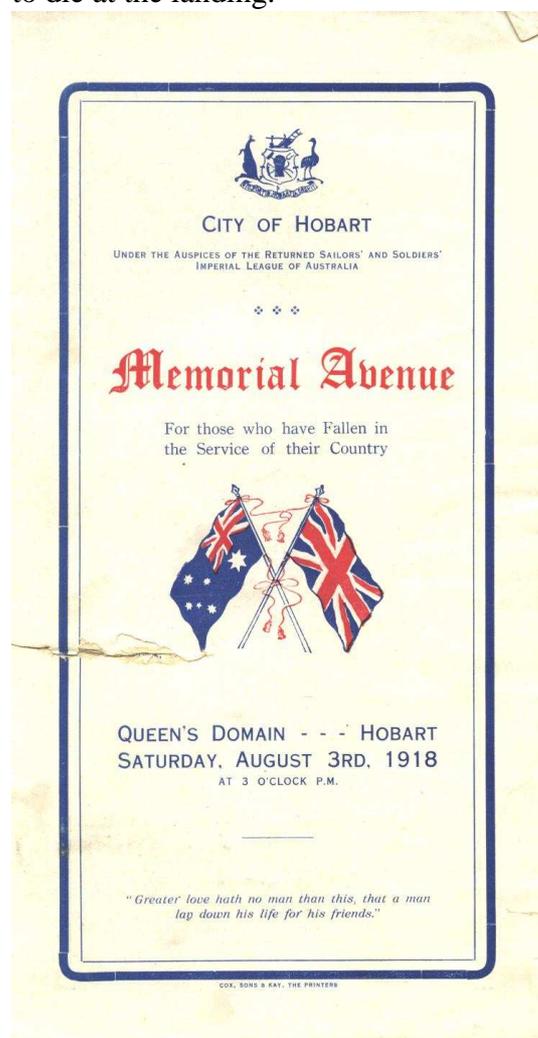
We have also worked at finding our own spaces. The two planting anniversaries were an obvious start as well as the day before Anzac Day. This was chosen to avoid direct competition with formal ceremonies and to provide copy for the morning newspapers and evening news in the lead up to Anzac Day. The finding of old nameplates and even working bees have created further interest especially when a new point is made; a working bee in October got coverage because of the anniversary of fighting at Broodseinde Ridge and the large percentage of men on the Avenue who died in the latter part of 1917.

The greatest difficulty in working with large news organisations is that every pool journalist needs to be educated as every event brings a new reporter. At least gaining converts at the editorial level has been important in ensuring that journalists turn up.

Another feature of the press coverage has been supplying copy for the print media that only requires them to do layout. Last Anzac Day the *Mercury* published a special supplement with a paragraph on very single servicemen commemorated on the Avenue.

Patrons

FOSW has been very lucky in our patrons. Our first official patron Frank MacDonald MM was the last Tasmanian survivor of the Western Front and the last surviving medal of gallantry recipient alive in Australia. He remembered visiting the Avenue and was able to tell stories about some of the men commemorated. One of Alec Campbell's last official acts at the sole survivor of any army form the Gallipoli campaign was to unveil a plaque for a man believed to be one of the first Tasmanians to die at the landing.



Our current patron is Mr. William Cox AC RFD ED Governor of Tasmania. His father served in the Great War and took his son to the Avenue to visit trees of men from his unit as well as those of friends. Our patron remembers those visits and has other associations as a former artilleryman himself. He has drawn attention to the Avenue in speeches at Anzac Day, launched our fundraising campaign and hosted a descendant's reception. This highlights the need for an apolitical patron who is generally respected and not simply by virtue of a title.

Presentations

Over the last two years, presentations have been made to schools, service clubs, Probus, Rotary, schools for seniors, war widows, business lunches and so on. These are essential in getting the word out, providing information and recruiting new members. As momentum builds these become more frequent and more successful.

Exhibitions and Memorabilia

These have been a feature of our activity since foundation. Many people are fascinated by the ephemera of postcards, trench art, commemorative plaques and scrolls and old photos. In addition to family collections, they may well be memorabilia relating directly to the Avenue being restored. Thus FOSW has original copies of the 1918 program, 3 pin back badges and a collection of photographs from contemporary local magazines plus a colour copy of an original name list and a Council map of the Avenue from the 1930s. We also have a number of the 1930s name plates. These are invaluable in presentations and for loans to schools: next to being on the Avenue, these tangible links to the Avenue are the best means of getting the message through about the purpose of the Avenue.

One of our committee is a collector of Great War memorabilia including letters, postcards, scarves and handkerchiefs, uniforms and medals. These have been the basis for our annual Anzac Day exhibition in the Powder Magazine on the Avenue. Post working bee barbeques have been made even more interesting and informative by the sharing of photos and serve records among members. Every level of interest can be accommodated and the experience builds interest and understanding because it helps create the grounds for personal identification and links to the events and the Avenue.

Environmental Issues

Potentially FOSW found itself in the position of fighting against interests likely to resent the re-clearing of the Avenue and removal of native vegetation. This task was made easier by the botanical study undertaken by Prof Jamie Kirkpatrick and his advice in relation to the restoration of the natural environment, grassland, and the importance of a slashing and mowing regime to promote the health of these grasslands and encourage the spread of rare ground covers along the Avenue. This provided a clear scientific rationale for the new management regime. In addition, the removal of the 1970s blue gums has been justified by their clearly poor condition and their insufficiency as a food source for swift parrots. Further their removal is more than matched by plantings elsewhere by the HCC. Still there are some who resent the changes but as the basis for the changes is explained, attitudes change. The presence in our membership of many environmentalists has been a bonus and emphasise the importance of inclusion.



Figure 6: Family group at tree for Russell Williams c1930.

Everybody's Avenue

Success has always been underpinned by consciously making sure that the organisation and the project is a broad church. The RSL, all levels of government, professional associations, the media and a broad range of occupations are represented in the membership. FOSW incorporated at foundation and provision was made for ex-officio positions on the Committee for the RSL and the HCC. Equally it also made clear that a minimum number of descendants had to be represented on the Committee. Getting this balance right is fundamental to success.

Our message has always been about not only commemoration of the servicemen but also the community from which they came. Plaques carry us much detail about their civilian lives as military service. The Avenue was created as a community effort and its restoration is a commemoration of that while community effort as much as anything. Five hundred is easy to say or write, walking past that many trees and pausing to read plaques soon makes it abundantly clear to all just how many that is.

Conclusion

I trust this has been enough to provide some insight into the Avenue and the process of restoration. Hopefully by the end of next year, all this will be distilled into a proper how to guide based on this experience and those of the other communities we will work with over that time. The kit will incorporate diagnostic tools and decision trees, helpful hints and assistance with exploring options and cover all of those topics raised above. It will incorporate historical accounts of the planting of other Avenues, some video footage and be supplied on CD/DVD. It is being developed in partnership with the Royal Tasmanian Botanical Gardens who will provide input on species selection and are also providing botanical assessments of other Tasmanian avenues as part of the TCF funded project. While this is being tested and refined with 10 communities we hope for State Government funding to take it to all Avenues and Commonwealth funding to take it national. At each stage we will be seeking active local and national partners in this effort.