

MONUMENTALLY SPEAKING No. 20 – Nov 2013 ONLINE

New South Wales—National Boer War Memorial Association Newsletter



NSW Committee of NBWMA Inc
Chairman David Deasey

Patron-in-Chief Her Excellency Ms Quentin Bryce AC CVO
Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia

National Patron General David Hurley AC DSC Chief of the Defence Force

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Sculptor Louis Laumen has completed the half-scale plasticine maquette of the first trooper of the National Boer War Memorial Design.

See story page 4, and more photos on page 8

Cast in eternal bronze.
On display forever on ANZAC Parade in Australia's capital.

Wouldn't you like to be able to say to your descendants "that bit's our family's!"

It's time to get really serious about fundraising. Sculptor Louis Laumen is seriously getting on with the long and complex job of the progressive stages of shaping the intricate action forms of horses and men, carving the minute details that will make this the most striking memorial along ANZAC Parade. He is being generous with his commitment to the job but he has to make a living from his knowledge, technical skills and above all his artistry in creating this masterpiece. Can local communities help us keep Louis Laumen on the job?

This is a national memorial but NSW donors have to date contributed by far the most towards its building.

See the brief story on page 4 how a town in Western Australia got serious about local fundraising.

NSW Chairman's Message - November 2013

In this issue, we have some exciting news with the unveiling of the half size maquette of the statue of the first horseman—the cover picture. I'm sure that you will all agree that it is a stunning representation.

We still have a long way to go however. Our next target is \$70,000 for the first stage of the supporting engineering drawings and it is also urgent that we start the second horseman early in 2014 which is another \$475,000.

Can anyone help us with local fundraising efforts or do you know of anyone who would love to be a major contributor to these targets.

Your committee is also desperately seeking more members to fill such roles as Secretary, Descendant's Registrar and Assistant State Treasurer. We also need volunteers about four times per year to assist in the mail out of newsletters. If you think that you can help in any way please contact us.

2014 is the 150th anniversary of 'Banjo' Paterson's birth on 17 February 1864. Paterson was a war correspondent in the campaign and a great supporter of the Australian soldier. He wrote a range of poetry and articles on the war. He is also regarded as one of the greatest of our bush poets and symbolizes our theme for the year of "*The Bushmen of 1900*".

We invite you to join in a commemoration to mark the occasion.

The function will be a lunch for supporters and descendants to celebrate the sesquicentennial and will take place on Sunday, 16 February 2014. This is a fund raiser for the project. It will be held at the 'Banjo' Paterson Cottage restaurant at Punt Road, Gladesville in Sydney. This 1830s building, over-

looking equally historic Looking Glass Bay, was originally his grandparent's cottage, where Paterson spent many years, whilst attending Sydney Grammar School.

There's parking space for 50 cars, but you could also come by boat and tie up right outside.

Numbers are limited to 100 seats and the cost of tickets will be \$150 per head. Acceptances will be on a first in basis. [See invitation on page 12.](#)

The NBWMA has had a unique opportunity to republish Robert Wallace's book '*Australians at the Boer War*'. It is one of only three modern books which provide a comprehensive coverage of the war from an Australian perspective, none of which are in print (until now) and are often scarce even on the second-hand market. Modern overseas works tend to ignore the general colonial effort and seem ignorant or confused on Australia's contribution. Not helped by some sneering assessments by some senior Australian historians who claim that the Australian contribution had a negligible impact on the course of the war. If you want a good overall picture of Australia's Boer War effort especially on the early period then this is the book. Wallace is a great read, so if looking for a Christmas present, this might well be what you are seeking.



Reminder:

Planning for 2014's Boer War Day.

The date for this is Sunday 1 June. The 2014 theme is recognition and commemoration of the Bushmen's contingents of 1900.

David Deasey Chairman
NSW Committee of NBWMA

**PLEASE DONATE FOR THE NATIONAL BOER WAR MEMORIAL NOW
SO THAT IT CAN BE COMPLETED PRIOR TO 25. 4. 2015**

Please don't hesitate to contact me to arrange a speaker for your association. Our presentations are about 40 minutes allowing time after for questions. They can be adapted for both shorter and longer periods to meet your needs— lunchtime or a conference.

The story of Australia's contribution to the Boer War is little known and our presenters are delighted to put our first war as a nation into context. 23000 Australian soldiers and nurses served, 1000 did not return. We are remembering them.

Regardless of the duration of the presentation requested, our speakers need a working computer, video projector and screen for supporting visuals, and for larger groups, a microphone.

Guest Speaker Schedule

To arrange for a speaker contact David Deasey
0409 585 877

Presentations schedule:

2014 (Known at time of printing)

19 Mar Saratoga Probus TLJ
25 Mar Hornsby U3A (am) and Parramatta Legacy (pm) DD
12 Apr Kuring-gai History Society DD
12 Aug Parramatta Legacy KS
TBA Karuah RSL TLJ

August 1900—the siege at Elands River

Sergeant Major James Mitchell, a Tenterfield Mounted Rifles reservist, enlisted in the 3 NSW Bushmen's contingent. His one object was to meet the Boers. Instead he had been posted to the routine duty of guarding convoys of British supply wagons overnighing on a flat above the Elands River. On 4 Aug 1900.

The Boers, who had been quietly surrounding the staging post and had dug in artillery on top of the kopjes around it, attacked with the object of capturing the supply wagons. They were unsuccessful in dislodging the mixed force – Australians and Rhodesians with a sprinkling of others— even when they offered a surrender on generous terms. The attacks increased in duration and intensity killing every horse, mule, bullock and the stock cattle, as well as many men. Aggressive fire damaged the supply wagons.

S/Maj Mitchell was wounded in the leg on 9 August. His wound wasn't serious, but he was taken to the Queensland makeshift field hospital (Capt A Duka) where he was much more seriously wounded when a Boer shrapnel shell hit it.

His leg had to be amputated, but the wound then became infected and he died on 12 August.

The story is told in a letter from the Capt James Francis Thomas, who was at that time the CO of A Sqn NSW Citizens Bushmen at the siege. (Later was the solicitor appointed to defend Lts Handcock, Morant and Witton.) Capt Thomas had positioned his men carefully, organising six defensible sconces walled with rock and bully-beef boxes, earth and flour bags

“...on the eastern side, all guarding the water supply, under Lt Zouch. S/Maj Mitchell took charge of one of them. ...the bombardment was terrible. ...Tpr Waddell was killed instantly, almost at the same moment poor Jim Duff. Next a shell struck the sconce that S/Maj Mitchell was in and all three in it were wounded. [Tpr James] Struck, [Tpr Charles] Hurtz and [Tpr Samuel] Lawer and myself dug his grave. ... We placed grass at the bottom. Struck and Lawer wrapped him in blanket and carried him to the grave. It was a sad duty for us.” Wallace p 268

Descendant and Donor Reception 15 August 2013

Guest of Honour, Her Excellency Prof. Marie Bashir AC CVO, received 130 guests at the Officers Mess, Victoria Barracks, Paddington. Her Excellency said that Australians needed to remember the Commonwealth's first contribution to the British Empire's major war, in South Africa. This was a poignant reminder for the ten first-generation descendants in attendance.

The Army was represented by Brigadier Mike Prictor, Director General of training.

Left—Mrs Barclay and Rev Dr Barclay; Centre—Mr Michael Crouch AO and Tony Larnach-Jones; Right—Brian Walters in BW tie.



Story and photos continued on page 7

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The Scots College and The Boer War

Founded in 1893 as an independent Presbyterian boys' school in Sydney's eastern suburbs, it was still young when the Boer War broke out in 1899. Nevertheless it contributed significantly.

Three figures stand out in the College's magazine *The Scotian* and the Old Boys' *Lang Syne*: Lieutenant Gideon Grieve, Thomas Hutton Clayton and a Mr E Cox.

Lt Grieve initiated the College's Cadet Unit. In 1898 while the Adjutant of the NSW Scottish Rifles, he approached the College, noting that military training in Presbyterian schools for boys had a long tradition in Scotland. The Cadet unit was formed in 1899, and to this day continues the association with Scottish Regiments.

Lt Grieve sailed to South Africa with the first NSW Contingent. He had been detached from his unit to be a Staff Officer to take up whatever duties the British Commander-in-Chief thought appropriate.

On landing at Cape Town on 12 Dec 1899 Lt Grieve was posted to help untangle the mess ashore resulting from many ships landing thousands of men and horses and tons of equipment and to get them on railway wagons for the 300 mile journey north to join battle.

In the same week, up north near Kimberley, in the northern Cape Colony but very close to the Orange Free State border, the Black Watch, Seaforths and Gordons attempted to storm the heights of the Magersfontein range. On that fateful 11 December 1899 the well-entrenched Boers killed most of the junior officers and many of the brave Scots.

Lt Grieve was posted to command F Company, 2nd Bn of The Black Watch when they regrouped. He did so through the next six weeks of minor battles and skirmishes. On 19 February 1900 General Kitchener sent the remnants of the

Highland Brigade against the Boers entrenched along the Modder River at Paardeberg Drift. Leading his company, Lt Gideon Grieve, though wounded, attempted to help a more seriously wounded soldier and was killed.



The second soldier, Mr Thomas Hutton Clayton, had been a Staff Colour Sergeant in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, and was the first Drill Instructor for the Cadet Corps. *The Sydney Morning Herald Thurs 14 March 1901* reports: "The Scots College was the scene of a pleasant function on Friday evening when the Principal, on behalf of the Cadet Corps, presented their drill instructor, Staff Colour Sergeant, of the Argyll and Southerland Highlanders, who is leaving with the 2nd Regiment for South Africa, with a wristlet watch and a combination matchbox and sovereign case, which had been subscribed for by the Cadets. The Cadets fell in and, headed by the pipe band, escorted Sgt Clayton to the tram".

The '2nd Regiment' was 2 NSW Mounted Rifles. Staff Sergeant Clayton became its Regimental Sergeant Major, and earned the Queen's South Africa Medal with five clasps.

The third person is a complete mystery. In the *Scotian* of October 1904 there is a brief mention of Mr E Cox "who lately returned from South Africa where he served during the Boer War". Was he a former master or student, a benefactor? Does anyone have any information?

Debra Crowe, Archivist, The Scots College d.crowe@tsc.nsw.edu.au

Spreading the load. Esperance, WA: five old soldiers, members of the local RSL, teamed up to chop up a trailer load of wood, raffled it from a card table outside the Post Office (as well as various other methods of persuasion!), and sent a cheque for \$827 to contribute to the building fund for the National Boer War Memorial. They also found two more first-generation descendants—daughters of Boer War veterans. Beat that!!

Editorial: Tasmania's best-known BW memorials

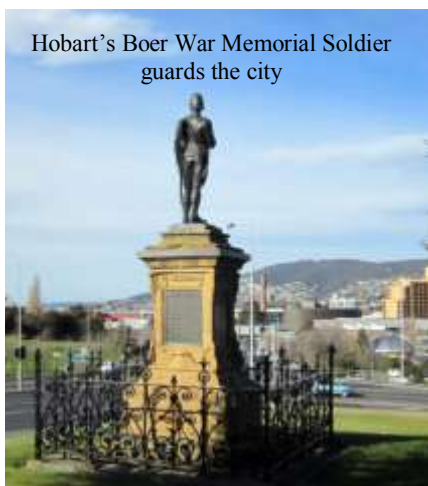
Your Editor's wife had been owed a visit to Tasmania for more than a year. Early August wouldn't be the time most people would choose. However, dressed in the style of Michelin man, we headed for Hobart. It is not this journal's role to report on the Salamanca Market, Bruny Island and our 10 nights around western and northern Tasmania, but the trip was a first opportunity to meet Tasmania's representative of the National Boer War Memorial Association, historian and writer Reg Watson (right). Coffee and chat later we headed for Hobart's Boer War memorial.



Reg Watson with Tas Premier Lara Giddings

What a surprise! First its site, overlooking the city and snow-topped Mt Wellington. The memorial is a trooper, standing relaxed but observant, guarding the city from his vantage point not far from two larger memorials, the Cenotaph commemorating both World Wars and the newer portals framing it, a tribute to all of Tasmania's VCs.

The A3 Tasman Highway to the north and east divides the Queen's Domain parkland, leaving the two bigger memorials on one side and the Boer War memorial on the other, but in the company of the Aquatic Centre and other sporting facilities on the edge of the Domain and the Royal Tasmanian Botanic Gardens.



Hobart's Boer War Memorial Soldier guards the city

(While in Hobart your editor couldn't resist a tour of Australia's oldest-and-still-in-use Anglesea army barracks, but that's a story for another edition of *Monumentally Speaking*.)

Our visit to other towns revealed many other war memorials, though none specific to the very high pro rata number of Tasmanians who served in the Boer War until, on our last day, we found, almost by accident, a significant Boer War memorial in Launceston.

Driving north in Tamar St past the magnificent Albert Hall we turned right into Cimitiere St looking for a parking spot, finding one near the old gas works. It turned out that this was opposite the main gates to City Park and promised delights such as a coffee shop at the back of Albert Hall, the nearby John Hart Conservatory botanical collection and the famous Japanese macaque monkey enclosure.



Launceston's Boer War Memorial

Good tourists, we followed that sequence, but leaving the hilarious macaques we noted through the bushes what looked like some sort of memorial.

No longer out in the open, Launceston's Boer War memorial stands proudly despite its limited space, and is well maintained. Close to its surrounding

fence there is a plaque erected by the Reserve Forces Day Council in 2000. This memorial deserves better signposting and including in Launceston's publicity and signage to ensure that is not lost to locals and visitors alike. Also on Google Earth as a tourist attraction in its own right.

Both Hobart's and Launceston's Boer War memorials are the focus for Boer War Day ceremonies each year, both stimulated by Reg Watson.

Keith Smith Aug 2013

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Boer War and the Lifesaving Society?

WO John Bond, a coachbuilder, then joiner, enrolled to be a medical doctor. He never completed the studies. Instead he joined the 1st (NSW) Infantry Regiment, transferring to the Medical Staff Corps where he became the Staff Sergeant Major in 1892. At the outbreak of the Boer War he volunteered and as a Warrant Officer was with the 1st NSW Contingent's Medical Corps—November 1899.

However, in 1894, the Life Saving Society was formed and, with his medical interest, John Bond volunteered as the drill instructor. He designed the first surf lifesaving reel and devised the drills for rescue.

Post Boer War, he was prominent in turning the small group at Bronte into a nation-wide movement. The combination of his practical skills, his medical training and military experience

made him a most valued member in the Surf Lifesaving movement. There is much more detail: www.bwm.org.au/site/John_BondNDD.asp

Other Boer War veterans were Bronte Surf Life Saving club officers: Maj Gen Arthur Holmes, Maj (Dr) Reuter Roth and war correspondent Banjo Paterson.



A Neat Gold Medal - The Gunnedah and District Active Service Medallion—1

At the peak of the Boer War in late 1900, the small town of Gunnedah in north-west NSW decided to support their brave boys fighting in South Africa by presenting them with a symbolic gift.



Cpl Newton Fewkes leading charge on a Boer position.

In January 1901, a prominent member of the Gunnedah community, T P Willsallen, suggested the gift be 'a neat gold medal' for each soldier from the district. He donated £5 5s, roughly a month's wages for the average worker; the equivalent of about \$850 today. His idea was taken up with enthusiasm. A special committee was set up to organise the creation of the medal and solicit funds. It consisted of several important locals, including the Mayor, William Pritchard, as President, several aldermen, and the Rev George Baker as secretary. However, due to the death of Queen Victoria, and Federation, the start of fundraising was delayed until May.

The Gunnedah community was highly supportive of the project to reward their soldiers. They used several methods to raise funds for the medals, the most lucrative was the individual contributions given to the Fund. A standard



Cpl WN Fewkes, NSW Imperial Bushmen

subscription of five shillings was set, but members of the community could donate any amount greater than one shilling. Extensive canvassing of the town was undertaken by the members of the Committee, and a circular letter was also distributed. A total of £28 8s (~\$4500) was raised, a truly gargantuan effort for a town with a population of around 2000. One of the notable donors to the Fund was Colonel J A Kenneth Mackay, founder of the 1st Australian Horse, who gave £1.

Several events were organised in order to raise more money. A football match between Gunnedah's two teams held on the 13 July succeeded in raising £2 9s 3d. Many players within the football clubs had volunteered to go to South Africa, and four of its members were serving there at the time of the funds being raised.

A 'Welcome Back' Concert held on 26 July to receive Corporal Fewkes, who had been mentioned in despatches for charging a kopje under heavy fire and causing the enemy to flee, raised nearly £5 10s through entry fees for the medal fund.



On 21 October, the *Gunnedah Advertiser* announced that no more funds were required, with a grand total of £40 17s 6d (\$6200) having been raised. A truly stunning effort for a town very proud of its soldiers.

Grace Turner Sept 2014

Grace Turner, along with Geordie Clark, is writing a book on Gunnedah and the district's contribution to the Boer War.

If you have any information relating to Gunnedah, its veterans and the Boer War, it would be very much appreciated if you could contact them. Grace can be reached at.

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What's in a name?

Elands—NSW town name: From Taree about an hour's drive north west on Tourist Drive 8, Elands is a small town on the Bulga Plateau a short way from the marvellous 20 metre drop Ellenborough Falls, one of the highest single-drop waterfalls in the southern hemisphere.

Vashti Farrer hasn't been able to go anywhere without checking out street names since we last ran an article on them in [Monumentally Speaking No 13](#) page 4. Her latest discoveries

are: Buller street in Bellevue Hill, Transvaal Ave in Double Bay, Plumer Rd in Rose Bay, and Ruthven in Bondi Junction (there's another in Milperra). There's a Rimmington St in Artarmon, a Methuen in Riverwood. Bound to be more, especially in towns and suburbs that were developing at the time. Please let us know what you find.

As we get closer to the centenary of WW1, it's particularly interesting to find BW veterans who volunteered again, and who fought well in it, achieved higher rank and, of course, those who paid the supreme sacrifice in it. **Lest we forget.**

Federation, the Boer War and our first national flag 1901 Flag day observed on 3 September 2013, it's 112th Anniversary

With the Boer War at its peak intensity as the date for Federation 1 January 1901 drew near, and while the complex negotiations about the politics, finance and government were being finalised, the questions of both an anthem and a flag had not been prominent. *God Save the Queen* had to change only three weeks after Federation to become *God Save the King* (for Victoria's son Edward VII on 22 January 1901) and momentum for a truly Australian anthem had to wait until 1973.



ANF - 1901-03 flat, colour artwork. — courtesy John Vaughan

Strangely, the competition to determine what was to be our internationally recognised flag symbol wasn't initiated until November 1900 and then by a private, now long-defunct, monthly magazine called *The Review of Reviews*.

It had been founded in London in 1890, 1891 in New York and 1892 in Melbourne by WT Stead, something of a Murdoch in his day. Stead, while an inspired journalist and prolific writer was not good with money and the paper folded in 1914. The Boer War was part of that problem. Stead was virulently anti the Boer War, a position that ran counter to the broader public view in England and Australia, and over the course of the war he lost the majority of his subscribers.

Long before Federation there had appeared a number of flags in the Australian colonies. One, for a national colonial flag, was proposed by Governor Sir Thomas Brisbane (6th governor of NSW 1821-1825), white ground 'charged with the red Cross of St George and a star in each corner to simulate the Southern Cross'. Perhaps this design influenced the best known of our early flags, the Eureka blue

cross with a star at each end of the white St George-shaped cross.

Because no flag had been proposed by December 1900, WT Stead's magazine offered £75 prize. Shocked into action the government took over the competition, added another £75. A commercial company soon added another £50 to make a decent-sized prize in those days. When the competition closed at the end of June 1901, an amazing 30,000 designs had been received.

Lady Hopetoun, wife of our first Governor General, opened the exhibition 3 September 1901, but the decision had by then been made to award the prize to five who submitted designs so similar that it was impossible to say who had the idea that was considered most appropriate first. This design was raised above the Exhibition Hall. Because of Australia's status at Federation the proposed design had to be approved by King Edward before the Commonwealth Gazette No 8 of 1903 could proclaim it as our national flag. So it was too late for the Australian Commonwealth Horse to fight under it, rather than the Union Jack.

The other Boer War connection came soon after. In the photo (right) the new flag is draped over Breaker Morant's grave. It is easily identified by the Commonwealth Star having only six points, not changed until 1908 when the seventh point was added symbolising the inclusion of Australian Territories including New Guinea with the six States.



Morant grave—photo dated Feb 1902

KS—from information supplied by John Vaughan, Vexilographer
www.australianflag.org.au

Continued from page 3: **Descendant and Donor Reception**

Mr Ian Haylen won the bidding when NSW Chair David Deasey auctioned an original 1905 copy of Murray's official records of the Boer War. Lt Col PL Murray, a Boer War veteran, compiled the book from available reports kept by unit commanders and official records eg pay-books. It took him more than five years to complete. This highly valued work was donated by Jilly Warren.

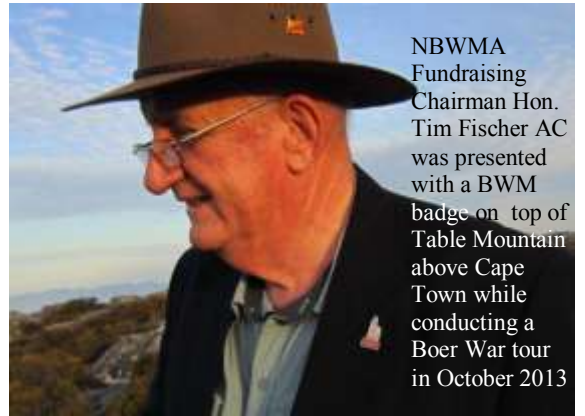
NBWMA NSW Committee arranged this fundraising event, and is planning others. Please let us know if you would like to be invited.

The Governor of NSW HE Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO and Lt Col (Rtd) Tony Larnach-Jones.

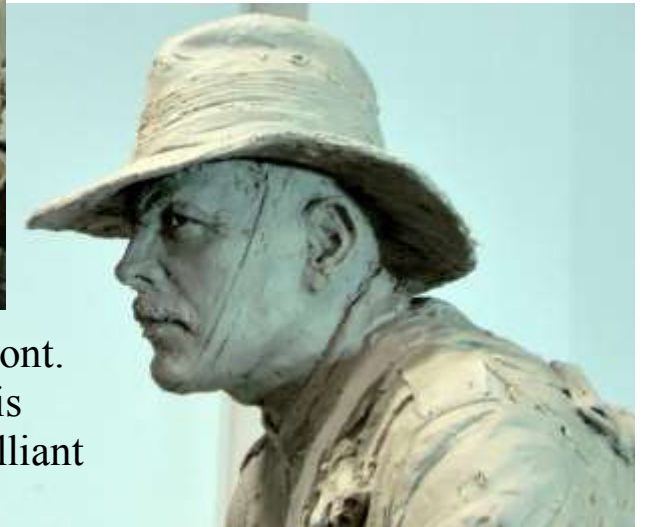


ACT Committee of the National Boer War Memorial Association

BWM's first trooper half-scale maquette — some other angles



NBWMA Fundraising Chairman Hon. Tim Fischer AC was presented with a BWM badge on top of Table Mountain above Cape Town while conducting a Boer War tour in October 2013



Cover story cont.
Sculptor Louis Laumen's brilliant details.



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Monumentally Speaking online editions are the same as this paper one, except all the links to other sources 'work' when you click on them with your mouse. <http://bwm.org.au/Newsletters.php>

Kings School was founded in 1831 so was a 'mature' institution by the time the Boer War broke out in 1899. Critically it had had an active Cadet Unit from its earliest days, inculcating an ethos of military preparedness, service and discipline.

The King's School Parramatta



The King's School Contingent to South Africa

A recent edition of "Monumentally Speaking" [[No 16 Nov 2012—front page article on "Belltrees"](#)] mentioned Lt. Alfred Ebsworth killed on July 25th 1900 at Bronkhorst Spruit.

Ebsworth was the first of five Old Boys from The King's School who lost their lives in the South African War. 72 past students had volunteered. They represented New South Wales, Queensland and some English regiments. The editor of The King's School Magazine diligently recorded their names, reprinted letters and poems sent back to the School and recounted deeds of bravery and mateship. The School was—and is— a tight-knit community and the loss of one of its own ripples afar. The School held a memorial service on learning of Ebsworth's death.

The magazine accounts describe individual encounters with the enemy as well as the affairs of individuals. In it we learn that Lt WJS Rundle (6th Dragoon Guards Carbineers) was taken prisoner while scouting and was in captivity at Nootigedacht for two months. Following an extemporised sports meeting where he won the officers 100 yards race the decision was made to set free the other ranks but move the officers to Barberton. Rundle, disguising himself, managed to escape and returned to his regiment.

Rundle was recognised as a daring scout and had been mentioned in despatches before being promoted to captain



Lt WJS Rundle
6th Dragoon
Guards (UK)

and made Adjutant in Brabant's Horse in January 1901. Not long after this he was again promoted, and as Major Rundle, commanded Brabant's Horse. In early August the news arrived that he had been shot through the head aged just 25. He had been present at the relief of Kimberley, the engagements of Paardeberg, Poplar Grove, Driefontein and took part in the march northward from Bloemfontein to Pretoria. The magazine's obituary closed with the words "one more had been added to the long roll of our young nation's sons who had sealed the bonds of Empire with their blood".

The bond between soldier and horse was captured in a poignant ballad written by Campbell Cowley who joined the Queensland Imperial Bushman. After an engagement at Rhenoster Kop Cowley contracted enteric fever and was invalided to Natal where he eventually recovered and returned to duty. He would, just 12 years later, like many of these veterans, again volunteer this time to fight at Gallipoli, in Palestine and on the Western Front in WW1.

The Old Boy's network embarked on a campaign to raise funds for a memorial to Ebsworth, but as the Boer War lingered and the roll call grew ever longer, a tablet was unveiled in the Chapel on June 19 1902 in memory of those who lost their lives. Ultimately a memorial board to all those known to have volunteered was hung firstly at the Old School and then moved to Gowan Brae where it currently hangs in the Trophy Room, the Staff and Senior Dining Room at The King's School.

Story and photo from Jenny Pearce, Archivist, The King's School.

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SOUTH AUSTRALIA **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT** David McGowan PSM

ANTICIPATING DESCENDANT'S DAY 2013

At the time of writing Members of the SA State Committee are looking forward to the third Descendant's Day function on November 10th.

This annual event gathers an increasing number of South Australians who have links to the Boer War. Advertising by "word of mouth" and mention in appropriate columns of the weekend newspaper has been successful in swelling the numbers with an interest in the soldiers and nurses who left these shores 110 years ago.

The day's programme includes a presentation by the descendants of the blacksmith who was the model for the Boer War monument that stands at the entrance to South Australia's Government house.

There will be a panel offering insights the history of the war and the SA Contingents in particular. The panel includes Dr Tony Stimson PhD who has just returned from a personal tour of the battlefields, and John Spencer an historian with the RSL, who in addition to his interest in the historical context of the war has another insight to offer from his knowledge of the armaments and tactics. The general lack of knowledge about the events of 1899-1902 is only exceeded by the thirst for such information by descendants and others.

A recent small matter of interest here was a paragraph in the weekend newspaper describing a South Africa medal, found, inscribed "D McNicol" and asking if anyone knew of it and wanted to claim it. The name was not found in the SA muster rolls, however a Grand daughter recognized the circumstances and claimed it. It belonged to the Reverend D McNicol, who had served as chaplain to Scottish regiments throughout the war, after which he took up a post as a senior nonconformist clergyman in South Australia whose religious history gave the State the appellation "Paradise of Dissent"

Officially the State Committee carried by acclamation a resolution of thanks to past chairman Mike Norton who has taken a break from official duties for a while. We shall miss his energy and enthusiasm.

DMcG

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FAMILY MATTERS

Old South Australian Name

Re John Henry DOWNER

Many who have started researching their family records for military service in WW1 have been surprised to find that their soldier or nurse ancestor had previous service just 12 or more years earlier in South Africa.

While searching her own family's records, SA committee member Mrs Monty Smith came across a John Henry Downer, L/Cpl, No. 16, in the 4th South Australian Imperial Bushmen for service during 1900.

Stumbling across this famous SA surname warranted looking further.

A year after completing that tour of duty as a Bushman, Cpl JH Downer volunteered to serve again, this time shortly after Australia's Federation, for the 4th Australian Commonwealth Horse (SA) and because of his service record

was promoted to Lieutenant.

He was the eldest son of Sir John William and Elizabeth (nee Henderson) Downer, solicitor, State and Federal MP, Member for Barossa 1878 to 1901.

John Henry was educated at Saint Peter's College. His name appears on the school Boer War Honour Roll.

John Henry Downer lived at Blackwood and was an orchardist. He never married.

Regrettably, he did not long survive the post-war period. He died aged only 38 on the 29th June, 1911.

Our present Alexander Downer is a grandson of Sir John Downer, and descends from Sir John's second marriage with Una Haslingden Russell. Sir John's first wife, Elizabeth had died in 1896.

RESERVE FORCES DAY COUNCIL and . . .

The Reserve Forces Day Council (RFDC) has just launched the 2014 RFD Parade. The focus will be the ANZAC Centenary 2014-2018 and the speakers including General Cosgrove AC MC covered the mobilisation and impact of WWI and the plans for acknowledging the Centenary.

The launch was presented in Paddington on Saturday, the 2nd November, 2013, to a good crowd of supporters.

The RFDC is keen to talk with the descendants of other members of the Australian Navy and Military Expeditionary Force (AN&MEF) in German New Guinea and invite them as special guests to the Launch.

The RFDC is also especially keen to talk with the descendants of the two Officers who are veterans of the Boer War and WWI—see photographs:

Major General William Holmes CMG DSO VD, born in Sydney in 1862,



Rear Admiral, Sir Leighton, Bracegirdle KCVO CMG DSO born in Balmain, Sydney in 1881. For further information, please contact RFDC Brian King 0412 709 081 or email bpking@oneseniors.com.au ASAP.



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Gosford's BW Patriotic Fund

The old School of Arts at the corner of Mann Street and Georgiana Terrace, was originally built in 1888, partially burnt down in 1927 and rebuilt on the stone foundations in 1929.

Owned by the Education Department in modern times, it was the scene of a great many events in its colourful history, such as the Magic Lantern shows enjoyed before movies were invented (precursor to today's slide show), and there were magicians, tumblers and jugglers, singers and dancers, flower shows, silver and golden wedding celebrations – whatever—it probably happened in the School of Arts.

During the Boer War in South Africa, local men who volunteered for the army were given send-offs and welcome home parties in that hall. These were all very well attended, and the men were pressed to give descriptions of camp life, or the happenings on the battlefields.

One man told the audience that he hoped he could fire bullets better than words. Another said he would rather face the Boer bullets than make a speech! The Boer republics—the Orange Free State and Transvaal—were at war with the British, and a great many Australians volunteered to go and fight alongside the “Home Country” troops.

In April 1900 *The Gosford Times* wrote about a “Send-off to Our Boys” which it described as the largest and most enthusiastic event held in the School of Arts for a long time. The resi-

dents were honouring the departure of enlisted members of the Imperial Bushmen's contingent.

The men were Sergeant Flem Campbell, Corporal Tom Humphreys, Troopers George Fletcher, Herbert Ogden, Joe Aggett and John Murray. In addition were Corporal W. Murdoch, Troopers Robinson and Ben Partridge and Private Bill Lilley (3rd contingent). Other volunteers were farewelled at different times.

The hall was well decorated with ferns and flags and women being well represented among the 125 people at tables with Mayor Jeremiah J. Mason.

The toast “The Queen” was honoured enthusiastically. Queen Victoria's long reign ended with her death less than a year later, in January 1901.

The soldiers of the Queen were each presented with a silver matchbox, to be suitably inscribed before their departure.

Earlier in the Boer War, the Mayor Jeremiah J. Mason had convened—and chaired—a public meeting to form The Patriotic Fund called the Gosford and Brisbane Water District League.

It was held in the Council Chambers, temporary premises in that year of 1900, as the first purpose-built chambers were not opened at the south end of Mann Street until 1912.

The fund was established to assist such members of the New South Wales contingent to South Africa who might be

injured or wounded, or the wives and families of those who lost their lives doing their duty. Mr C.E. Cotter said, “no matter how enthusiastic we may be in the cause, we cannot all go to the front, but it is up to patriots who remain to look after those left behind”.

The Mayoress similarly called a meeting of Ladies of Gosford on 1 Feb 1900 to form a Women's Branch of the Patriotic Fund.

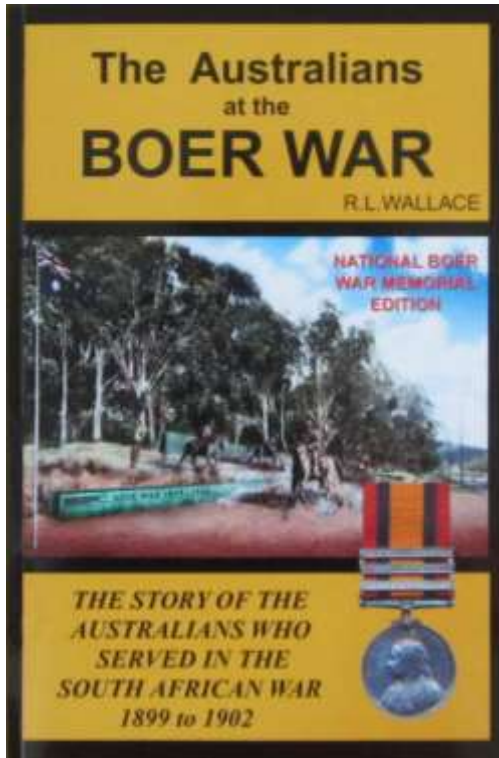
Because many people of low income wished to donate, the Patriotic Fund opened “A Shilling Subscription” and most (like one who called himself Absent-minded Beggar) paid anonymously. Australians are quick to donate to good causes.

In 2013 Gosford held its first Boer War commemoration for many years. Like the historic meetings, this one was a combination of support from commu-

nity groups led by Kay Williams and support from Gosford Public School led by Jenny Newton whose students completed a unit of work on Gosford and the war. The community came together to take part in the commemoration of Boer War Day then the students showed visitors their assignments on the war.

Gwen Dundon 9/13





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