



St Kilda Historical Society

No. 156

AUGUST 2002

ABN: 25 188 646 275

Patron: Sir Zelman Cowen

Secretary, P.O. Box 177 Balaclava; Phone: 9690 9584, 0407301695

email: meyereidelson@yahoo.com; website: www.vicnet.net.au/~hsosk

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Memberships are now due. We very much hope you will continue to support the Society by renewing your membership, if you haven't already done so.

Membership fees are critical for the day to day running of the Society. But just as importantly they show us we have your moral support and enable us to advocate for improved heritage services on behalf of the community.

Our recent AGM was an opportunity to report to members on the years achievements and thank many for their outstanding contribution over the year including Joan Charlton, Vida Horne, John Hulskamp, Melanie Eagle, Irene Johnson and many others too numerous to mention.

Eight nominations were received and accepted for the officer bearers and ordinary members of the committee of management. Seven of the previous committee members were returned with the addition of Peter Johnson. (see below).

Another vote of confidence is that we recently received \$9000.00 in additional grants for a children's history project (Granny) plus a history of Hotels in St Kilda and South Melbourne.

A key goal for next year is the cataloguing of the collection. Next month we will open the dungeon for the public and members. By next year we hope to have recruited volunteers for a cataloguing group. We still have a funding application of \$4000.00 for a preservation grant.

Please join us down in the dungeon on the 18th August (see calendar). It is like the ultimate garage sale except that, as a member, you own everything in the garage! A fantastic world of papers, photograph, portraits, artefacts and icons awaits you.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OUTCOME

Eight nominations were received as required more than week prior to the meeting. All elected positions were declared filled as a result. They are:

President: Meyer Eidelson

Vice-President: Tom Ingram

Secretary: Melanie Eagle

Treasurer: John Hulskamp

Ordinary member: Gillian Upton

Ordinary member: Pearl Donald

Ordinary member: Vida Horne

Ordinary member: Peter Johnson

Joan Charlton continues as our **Welfare Officer**, supporting members who are experiencing illness, or bereavement

We are seeking further voluntary positions including:

Archives Officer/Cataloguing team

Public Relations Officer

Fund Raising Officer

If interested please contact Meyer 9690 9584 or Melanie 9534 6866

THE COLLECTION

The Society has been meeting monthly with the library staff to look at the future of the collection.

A workshop will be held with a working group on the evenings of 9th and 16th September to explore future policies and long term directions.

An **Open Day** will be held at 3.00 pm on 18th August for members and the public (see calendar).

The CoPP has generously offered to provide 60 hours of time to assist in training and recruitment.

This is an exciting time in the Society's history: an opportunity to make our 30-year collection accessible as a valuable resource to the community.

In the future we plan to establish a working group that meets regularly to catalogue the collection.

Ultimately we hope to add this to the library catalogue system accessible by Internet.

IF ARE YOU INTERESTED IN BECOMING PART OF A FASCINATING HERITAGE PROJECT RING 9690 9584 OR 9534 6866

URBAN HISTORY CENTRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

This council committee completed its deliberations to establish an urban history center.. SKHS members on the panel argued that such a centre should improve all heritage services across the whole city particularly in libraries and not just in a new centre. The council has made it clear the South Melbourne library is their preferred site but our Society has not endorsed any site. The society also made it clear that the purpose of such centre should as a priority include excellent research facilities in addition to as exhibition and staff space. The proposal for such a centre will now go to council. The council proposes to raise half the funds from private sources.

EVENTS

ST KILDA CEMETERY TOURS

Sunday 25 August at 2.00 PM: An illustrated (slide) tour of European Cemeteries (Moscow and Vienna) – venue to be confirmed.

Sunday 27 October at 2.00 PM: Horticultural Tour of the Cemetery.

Sunday 24 November at 2.00 PM: Notable women of St Kilda Cemetery.

Cost \$5.00 Bookings not required except 25/8. *Inquiries Pearl 9531 6832.*

25 AUGUST GILLISON MEMORIAL SERVICE

St Georges Church St Kilda 10.00 am, near cnr Dandenong and Chapel. This event honors the memory of the heroic World War One activities of the church pastor. Our Society will provide the 14th Battalion banner and the 100 Years Book. *Inquiries Chris Waters 0419 032 109.*

SUNDAY PUBLIC EVENTS CALENDAR (*see attached*)

NEXT GENERAL MEETINGS: OPEN DAY AT COLLECTION

At our next meeting at the **18th August at 2.30 p.m.** at the St Kilda library. At 3.00 p.m curator Roger Palmer will be taking us down into the dungeon to look at the collection and discuss future directions.

Entry after 3.00 pm will be via the rear underground library car park accessed from Duke Street.

VICTORY AT PRINCES PIER

Earlier this year members of St Kilda and Port Melbourne societies addressed the panel convened by the government to consider Mirvac's proposal to build multi-story buildings on the pier. The members argued that Mirvac's proposals were not in the public interest particularly as they involved development foreshore crown land that until now has been regarded as community property.

The government panel roundly endorsed our view and ordered a new planning process requiring consultation between residents groups, council and developers similar to the process that has successfully been used for the Esplanade site. Further inquires **Janet Bolitho 9645 2269.**

OUR BOOK PROJECTS

Our two history projects are approaching the draft stage. The books are *Historic Buildings of St Kilda* and *Churches of St Kilda*

We have started an editing process to ensure the books are of the highest standard. The current aim is to have the books completed by the end of the year and put them on our web site by February 2003.

CONGRAGULATIONS

Our member Judith Buckridge's new book *A long and perilous journey* on the history of the Port of Melbourne was recently launched at the new Readings store in Bay Street, Port Melbourne. This beautiful illustrated hardcover book is priced at \$39.95 and is an essential guide to the early history of Melbourne. Last year Judith was a guest speaker at one of our General meetings on the subject of her then upcoming book, which I'm sure, will be available from our local library.

CONTACTS

Heritage Officer: Peter Johnson 9525 3696 or email: prj@mac.com

President: Meyer Eidelson 9690 9584; 0407301695; meyereidelson@yahoo.com

Secretary: Melanie Eagle: 95345688; mse@alphalink.com.au

Claude Blatchford: Resurrecting a Forgotten St Kilda Soldier

By Craig Phillips ©

Getting started

I have a passionate interest in Australian Military History, reading books on the subject as time allows, and was more than pleased when given the opportunity by the St Kilda Historical Society to write a short military article. While I have not served in the military myself, some members of my own and my wife's family has, including my nephew who is on his second tour of East Timor with the Third Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment.

We decided to choose a 'forgotten soldier' from St Kilda Cemetery and restore him to living memory. My wife Eryl and I wandered through the cemetery with pen and note book in hand, taking down at random the details from First World War returned servicemen's headstones. All together the details from fifteen graves were noted. This included finding a distant relative of Eryl's - **Joseph Winbanks** (1894-1953) who was born and lived in St.Kilda and had served with the 22nd Infantry Battalion.

I decided since I was about to turn forty that my first choice from the list would be a gentleman who had passed away in 1931 at the age of forty. But I was unable to find a "living link" so the next fellow on the list was chosen. His name was **Claude Blatchford**. After some investigation I was very fortunate to locate his great nephew **Frank Blatchford** who had some knowledge of his family history. My research, with Frank's essential help, would proved to be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for both of us.

The Blatchford family

Frank is the second child to Reginald (1917-1969) and June (1920-1994). He has two sisters - **Margaret** (the eldest) and **Dianne**. He spent a large part of his childhood living in southern New South Wales and attended Echuca High School. He was only twenty years of age when his father passed away. His grandmother **Mary Blatchford (nee Bailey)** taught him most of what he knows about his paternal family history. She passed away in 1979 at the age of eighty-six. The Bailey family once ran steamboats along the Murray River for many years and Frank remembers holidaying on the steamboats as a young child at Morgan in South Australia.. Claude's father, **Frederick Blatchford**, married

Annie Grogan in 1880 at Richmond. Their first child Albert William was born at Richmond (1881-1898) but the other six children were born after they moved to St.Kilda: **Charles, Mabel, Reginald, Alfred Edward, Claude** (born 1889) and the youngest **Edward**.

Frederick was a Leather Cutter by trade, renting a shop somewhere between 232 and 260 High St, a five room building with the nine family members living above the shop itself.

In the years following, the seven children attended the All Saints Grammar School (1871-1937) behind the All Saints Anglican Church on Chapel Street and Dandenong Road. Alfred Deakin was a teacher at the school between 1874-1876. The family was musically gifted, members of the family played piano and violin and two of the Blatchford brothers sang in the celebrated All Saints church choir.

The family eventually moved to Brunswick Street, North Fitzroy. In 1913, at 24, Claude married **Gertrude Froggitt** at North Carlton in 1913. Their first child Mary was born November 25th 1915.



Illustration opposite: Edward Blatchford killed in action in France in 1917

Enlisting for the cause

In 1915 Claude was working as a Clerk at the GPO when he enlisted for service in the A I F early in November. On the enlistment form Claude gave his address as Pigdon Street, Princes Hill North Carlton. This later changed to Drummond Street, North Carlton.

His description was listed as *height 5 feet 4 3/4 inches; weight 11 stone, sallow complexion, grey eyes and black hair.*

By 1916 Claude was stationed at various camps-Royal Park, Castlemaine, Bendigo, Seymour and Broadmeadows. He received temporary promotions including Acting Sergeant, being finally placed with the 13th Reinforcements, 22nd Infantry Battalion, 6th Infantry Brigade, 2nd Division. (Australian Imperial Force.)

On July 3rd 1916 Claude waved farewell to Melbourne aboard the "Ayrshire" and disembarked at Plymouth England on September 2nd. From there, after some weeks, they sailed

aboard the "S.S.Victoria" to France where he joined the Battalion.

In the same year the youngest child Edward, who was living with his parents and working as a grocer, enlisted on January 31st. His description was given as 5 feet 7 1/4 inches, 143 lbs, medium complexion, brown eyes and brown hair. Edward was stationed at a camp in Geelong before being transferred to Broadmeadows for the 60th Battalion. The 60th was part of the 15th Infantry Brigade commanded by Brigadier General "**Pompey**" Elliott and considered of the most experienced brigades in the 5th Division. On July 8th Edward sailed from Melbourne aboard the "Ajana" arriving at Devonport England on August 31st. Then on December 6th via the "S.S.Princess Henrietta" joined the 60th Battalion in France. Edward was hospitalized with severe frostbite to the feet some time between March and August 1917.

Trench warfare in France

Between September and November 1917, Australian troops participated in the ferocious battles on the Western front: Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Broodseinde, Poelcappelle and Passchendale. On September 23rd Germans viciously shelled Allied positions at Polygon Wood. Overall there were 5,770 casualties at Polygon Wood.

On September 25th the morning weather was fine with a light haze. To the back of the line men were busily preparing for the offensive scheduled for the next day when the Germans launched a counter attack which fell on British units south of the Australian 15th Brigade position. The Australians assisted in fighting off the attack and securing their own area. On the 26th at 5:50am the Allied advance began as planned, all objectives were taken. But it would seem that during the initial attack, Edward Blatchford was killed in action.

Earning the Military Medal

Early on the morning of May 19th 1917, the 6th Brigade advanced on Ville-sur-Ancre a small village about three kilometres west of Dernancourt. It was during this action that Lance Sergeant Claude Blatchford earned the Military Medal for "conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty".

The citation stated:

"This Non Commissioned Officer displayed great dash and determination in leading his

section to the objective. On reaching the ground to be consolidated he found himself in charge of the platoon. He at once reorganized the men and commenced the work of consolidation. With one man he pushed out in front of the line of posts to search some low ground. They met with considerable resistance and his comrade was wounded. In spite of the heavy fire maintained by the enemy he completed his work and managed to carry his wounded companion back to the line.”

Return to civilian life and family

On July 7th 1919 Claude sailed from England aboard the “Chemnitz” arriving Melbourne September 5th. Almost a year later, Claude and Gertrude’s second child, **Annie Joan** was born at Drummond Street.

Their third child **Frederick** was born in 1922 when the family were residing at Elster Avenue, Gardenvale. On July 10th 1933 after prolonged coronary illness Claude passed away at the Alfred Hospital in Prahran aged only 44 years. He was buried at St Kilda Cemetery on July 11th. By 1943 Claude and Gertrude’s son **Frederick Blatchford** had joined the Royal Australian Air Force and attained the rank of Sergeant (401734). While stationed at Bairnsdale with the No1 Operational Training Unit he was killed in a training accident near Swan Reach on Monday March 15th 1943. He was buried at the Bairnsdale Cemetery in the War Graves section. By 1954 Gertrude moved from Gardenvale to Ormond Esplanade, Elwood. In 1955, aged sixty-five, she passed way at Elwood.

Note: Above article is also on website under ‘articles’