



**FIRST WORLD WAR AVENUES OF HONOUR:
SOCIAL HISTORY THROUGH THE LANDSCAPE**

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Preface

There are several times throughout this thesis where there are variant spellings for words.

Ballarat/Ballaarat

Throughout this thesis, Ballarat is the form of spelling used for the place name of the city except where referring to newspaper reports or correspondence particularly relating to the official pre-1990s form for the then “City of Ballaarat” (a very localised precinct within the urban area). The earlier Shire of Ballarat and Town of Ballarat East (amalgamated into the city in 1920) officially contained no double “a”.

Taafe/Taffe

There were eight children in the family of John Taafe at Ballarat (1868–1905). Of these children, son Michael changed his name by dropping one “a” in the spelling of his surname. All Michael’s children from 1898 onwards were Taffe and their cousins, aunts and uncles, including Michael’s brother, John, were Taafe.

Honour/Honor

Most Australian newspaper and correspondence references of the Great War period had the spelling as honor with no letter “u” as it is in North America, and this variance is reflected throughout the thesis. The spelling used throughout is “honour” except in citations.

Premier

This term throughout the thesis means “the first”.

War Memorial

This term in relation to this thesis refers to outdoor monuments and not published honour rolls “scoreboards of commitment” or honour boards, which were not at the time regarded as war memorials and were considered as “interim artefacts”.¹

1. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 107.

Preamble

The discovery of gold in 1851 catapulted Ballarat into the international arena and transformed it from a quiet grazing area with scattered flocks, 'with scattered flocks and Indigenous and the few new, non-Indigenous inhabitants into a boom town of 25,000 people. By 1900, Ballarat was a garden city and a centre of culture.

I live in a nineteenth century family home of five generations. Where family documents attest to members being involved in many aspects of the cultural activities of the town. With the outbreak of war, this very patriotic city answered the call and my great-uncle John Taafe enlisted at the age of 40 years. My father Michael, at 16 years of age, was playing in musical competitions and was a member of the 71st Battalion bugle band.



Michael Taffe, 71st Battalion Bugle Band, 1919. Taffe cornet, music *The Boys of the Dardanelles*

The local neighbourhood community was drawn together very much at the outset of the Great War, with the Roman Catholic Taafes at the local state school digging holes for the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour. The Ballarat showground at the end of the street, where our family home stands, was used as an army camp and soldiers paraded in the nearby streets including ours. Near neighbours included the Clennell, Rogers, Dagget, Lingham and Dunstan families. These people, all from the nearby Methodist church community together with our Irish Catholic families, supported each other throughout this period.

They were also all represented in the local Ballarat North Avenue of Honour and Matilda, better known as Tilly Clennell, became Mrs Thompson. It was as Tilly Thompson that she gained a reputation for her drive and support of returned servicemen and her work in the war effort, particularly with the establishment of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and the Arch of Victory.

These factors whetted my desire for exploring the story behind the nearby avenue of honour in Beaufort Crescent, where a tree was planted for John Taafe and also the legendary avenue that Tilly Thompson was so involved in establishing.



Ballarat North Avenue of Honour 2006

Growing up in Ballarat, I was always conscious of the city's Avenue of Honour and the legends surrounding it. Ballarat was the centre of my childhood universe with three great monuments standing above all else: gold, Eureka and the Avenue of Honour. My childhood was nurtured by being present for the celebrations surrounding the centenary of gold and the centenary of the Eureka Stockade. I visited Tilly Thompson's home many times and knew her and many of her associates, some of whom were neighbours. There was also her brother's tree in the neighbourhood avenue at Beaufort Crescent.

Our family also had its stories, and in my adult life the coming together of all these stories, local history, local personalities and genealogical factors influenced my passion for this topic.

This thesis is the result of that passion and the journey.

Abstract

This thesis argues that avenues of honour were the first choice of memorial to the Great War created by Australians. Despite not being the first such avenue, the thesis argues that, by virtue of the massive amount of publicity it brought to focus on this form of memorial, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was a significant cultural statement by Australians during the Great War. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour was inspirational and pivotal to the establishment of a movement that saw similar memorial avenues planted throughout Australia and also in the U.S.A., U.K., Canada and New Zealand.

Using examples from municipal council minutes, correspondence and newspaper reports the spread of this form of memorial is followed from its infancy in South Australia through the Ballarat experience to Britain, North America and New Zealand. Following Australia's first plantings in 1915, there was a groundswell from many communities throughout Australia who adopted this form of memorialisation. Australian communities took control of their own need to honour their heroes, their local volunteers, in avenue of honour plantings.

Following the example of Ballarat after 1917, this desire to plant memorial avenues became a movement. Examples of the growth of this memorial movement, while government aimed to control spending by curtailing 'waste' on memorials, are outlined and analysed. The thesis also examines the symbolism of avenues against the perceived superior 'worthiness' of later built memorials.

By the time the movement declined in Australia, other countries were continued to plant avenues. The diminution, and eventual fall, from memory of many of these heritage landscapes is explored as a part of the politics of identity. In examining the arguments, the links between Ballarat's avenue and others throughout Australia, the respective Commonwealth countries as well as the U.S.A. are developed.

Statement of Authorship and Originality

Except where explicit reference is made in the text of the thesis, this thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been relied upon or used without due acknowledgement in the main text and the list of references of the thesis. No editorial assistance has been received in the production of the thesis without due acknowledgement. Except where duly referred to, the thesis does not include material with copyright provisions or requiring copyright approvals.

This thesis is fewer than 100,000 words in length, exclusive of tables, maps, bibliographies, footnotes and appendices.

Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael J. Taffe". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

(Applicant)

Signed

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ken Reeves". The signature is written in black ink and has a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

(Supervisor)

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Historical society records have been important to this project, and I thank the staff at the Sebastopol Historical Society, especially Lois Spencley, and those at the Queenscliffe Museum and Historical Society, particularly Bryan Marra. I would also like to thank Bill and Pauline Riches and all at the Woody Yaloak Historical Society as well as Marg Cooper and volunteers at the Meredith Historical Group, Alan Hall from the Blackwood Historical Society, Judy Files from the Daylesford Historical Society and the committee of the Central Highlands Historical Association. I thank you all.

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Abbreviations

Organisations and Institutions

ACF – Australian Comforts Fund

AIF – Australian Imperial Force

ANA – Australian Natives' Association

ANZAC – Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

CAFS – Child and Family Services

CTA – Commercial Travellers' Association

CRCAH – Collaborative Research Centre in Australian History

HACBS – Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society

RSA – Returned Services Association

RSSIL – Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League

RSSILA – Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League of Australia

RSL – Returned Services League

Places

UK – United Kingdom

USA – United States of America

NSW – New South Wales

SA – South Australia

Records

VPRS – Victorian Public Record Series

GM – Gold Museum

Repositories

AWM – Australian War Memorial

GM – Gold Museum

PROV – Public Record Office Victoria

Introduction

*The white road leads past the old country store
Where sugar gums stand in a row near the door
Each memorial tree represents a life lost
In a war to end wars but oh what a cost.
("Courage" by Fay Lucas)¹*

Ken Inglis research attributed the Adelaide monument dedicated 7 September 1915 as Australia's first memorial to the Great War.² Neither Inglis nor this thesis acknowledge Honour Boards and Honour Rolls as memorials in this sense. This thesis argues that Australia's premier, in terms of being the first, memorials to the Great War were its avenues of honour, where, as Fay Lucas poignantly wrote "each memorial tree represents a life".³ In arguing the case it will demonstrate that Ballarat, having coined the term "avenue of honour", went on to popularise these avenues as a form of memorial throughout the nation. Following extensive promotion of the Ballarat story, the concept spread beyond Australia and similar memorial avenues followed in Britain as well as across Canada, the USA and New Zealand. The thesis locates the Australian, and particularly, the Ballarat story in an international context. In the thesis, avenues of honour are defined as rows of trees planted with individual markers as a memorial to those who have served their country. Following on from this, the thesis also looks to the revival of meaning and plantings from 2014 onwards.

In arguing the case of these memorial avenues as the first memorials to the Great War the thesis will show why they were planted as well as the extent, character and sequence of their plantings. It examines the politics, culture and meanings surrounding their reasons for them being planted. In doing this, it demonstrates the influential role of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour in the broader process of plantings and memorialisation. It explores how the avenues fit into the narrative of memorialisation, and examines how these memorial avenues have been mainly overlooked by later generations of historians and left to be interpreted largely by garden historians and horticulturalists. Having demonstrated that the first and most popular form of memorial created across Australia during the war was the avenue of honour, the thesis examines the messages inherent in this form of memorial together with its social context and outcomes.

1. Fay Lucas, Mallee, *The Landscape of My Soul* (Melbourne, Vic: Helen Merrick-Andrews, 2005), 8.

2. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 78–79.

3. *Ibid.*

Following the arrival of the Europeans and the development of their huge flocks of sheep, much of Victoria's scrub was transformed into grasslands. A century of grazing, stock movement and bullock dray transport had cleared swathes across the land as transport routes were stripped of trees. These routes, kept clear by stock movement, opened up the country, which enabled primary produce to be brought to the coastal centres and they eventually became main roads. The onset of the gold rushes in the 1850s resulted in the landscapes of these auriferous regions being pillaged, with diverted streams, sluices and timber felling being created for the burgeoning mining companies, and rapidly growing communities and institutions, 'a broader social and cultural significance'.⁴

When Australia became a federation in 1901, the eastern states adopted the position of a united nation. Commercial travellers, operating between Brisbane in Queensland and New South Wales, Victoria and Adelaide in South Australia, developed a camaraderie and sense of common purpose as the Commercial Travellers' Association (CTA). Following the Boer War, the town of Horsham in Victoria planted an avenue of trees to honour its volunteers and re-named Platt Street as Roberts Avenue after the hero of Ladysmith, Lord Roberts.⁵ Horsham was situated on the main highway linking Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane.

Some places, such as Normanville, and Renmark in South Australia, planted memorial avenues to honour their volunteer heroes of the Great War as early as 1915. At the same time, Laurieton and Gundagai in New South Wales were exploring the possibility of similar plantings. Within a year, memorial avenue plantings had commenced at Laurieton and Gundagai in New South Wales, at Port Lincoln in South Australia, and at Warrion, Eurack and Sassafras in Victoria. This occurred at a time when the earlier Boer War avenue was in its prime in the harsh wheat belt centre of Horsham in Victoria's Wimmera region.

Context

This PhD research project was primarily qualitative; however, it must also be considered as a mix of methodologies as some quantitative analysis was required in making comparisons between national and international examples of these arboreal memorials. Landscape architecture and horticulture students have undertaken quantitative research over the past 30

4. Keir Reeves and David Nichols, eds., *Deeper Leads: New Approaches to Victorian Goldfields History* (Ballarat, Vic: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2007), 1.

5. "Two Notable Functions," *Horsham Times*, February 21, 1902.

years. Some of these findings are used throughout this project, with some methodological reservations, which are explained in the relevant sections.

The people of Ballarat in Victoria, possibly more than those of any other centre, demonstrated the cultural–social importance of landscape as a human construct earlier and more so than most other places in Australia. Within four years of the municipality’s establishment, “the main squares in the central blocks ... were planted”.⁶ The planting of avenues was particularly prominent throughout town and city, with the Sturt Street and Victoria Street avenues having commenced in 1859. The magnificent avenue of *Sequoiadendron giganteum*, known as Wellingtonia Avenue in the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, followed in 1874.⁷

The leading citizens were all involved in the local horticultural society and its goals, and the botanical gardens and other urban landscapes had been commenced.⁸ Street planting continued throughout the nineteenth century and the early twentieth century in Ballarat. In this way the town tried to offset the effect of its pillaged mining landscape by creating a new ordered landscape in the best European image (Figure 1). As late as 1892, Sydney and Melbourne were still trying to catch up to Ballarat in this more holistic approach to urban landscape despite their early botanical gardens. Comparing the metropolitan cities to Ballarat, H. A. James wrote that Ballarat was exceptional in a country where it was impossible “to see any attempt made to form avenues”.⁹

This socio-cultural sense of importance occurs not only through the urban landscape produced but also in a way in which the population can identify with its own profile and self-image. This landscape is also implicated in power relationships through control and manipulation of power elites. At Ballarat this was demonstrated in the growth of alternative industries to mining. One of these was the development of tree nurseries in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

6. Michael Taffe, *Growing a Garden City: Ballarat Horticultural Society 1859–2009* (Ballarat, Vic: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2014), 24.

7. Carol Henty, *For the People’s Pleasure: Australia’s Botanic Gardens* (Melbourne, Vic: Greenhouse Publications, 1988), 86.

8. Taffe, *Growing a Garden City*, 17. The involvement of key figures as well as people at all levels of society is highlighted throughout the initial chapters.

9. H. A. James, *Handbook of Australian Horticulture* (Sydney, NSW: Turner and Henderson, 1892), 99.

10. Taffe, *Growing a Garden City*, 159.



Figure 1. The Avenue, Sturt Street, Ballarat. *Premier Album of Ballarat Views*, c.1880.

Most industries, however, were engineering and foundry works, although there were also machinery manufacturers which were servicing the rich rural hinterland and a range of textile and clothing manufacturers. One of these, formed as a company in 1913 with 150 employees, was local clothing manufacturer, Lucas's which became the largest such company in the city.¹¹ People that rose to prominence, such as the proprietors of industries like Lucas's, exercised power. They were involved with their peers in maintaining the image of a cultured and civilised society, one that displayed and deployed its status through its industry, art and landscape.

Looking more widely, each of the former colonies, when it became a state within the Commonwealth, continued to retain a sense of individual sovereignty through having its own governor to represent the British monarch. This is confirmed in the naming of institutions such as the National Gallery in Victoria, and even 20 years after Federation, Melbourne's

11. Weston Bate, *Life After Gold: Twentieth-Century Ballarat* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1993), 31. Bate mentions that other white-work factories employed 200 women in their businesses. In the Factory Day promotions of 1916–17, four other white-work manufacturers are listed. The Sands and McDougall *Ballarat and District Directory 1906–07* records Lucas's as a clothing, underclothing and baby linen manufacturer. Advertising for the Ballarat industrial exhibitions of 1916 and 1917 show other white-works factories in Ballarat: W. J. Cordwell, Main St, Ballarat East, Salmonow Pty Ltd, Lydiard St, Tylers, Grenville St, Mrs Jones, Main St, Ballarat East and Lucas & Coy. At the end of the war, there were only Lucas's and Tylers, with the latter eventually becoming solely a retail outlet before its ultimate closure.

Shrine of Remembrance was initially coined “the National Shrine”.¹² The initial location of the Governor-General in Melbourne, while a temporary arrangement, helped Victorians hold to their nationalist mindset well into the Commonwealth era. The case of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour exemplifies the concept that identities are located within that space, which could be described as local/parochial sovereignty.

The many commercial travellers belonging to the CTA, who were regularly journeying on the rail and road links of the east coast centres, were all aware of Ballarat’s long memorial avenue.

Methodology

The method of research for this thesis has been through archived minutes, letters both published and archived as well as newspaper reports and then theses and published works. In researching contemporary newspaper reports, I argue that Inglis’s interpretation and dismissal of the avenues of honour is a major misunderstanding and misreading of the history both of the avenues and of their place in wartime Australia. By subsequently excluding further reference to the avenues in *Sacred Places* and concentrating on other memorial types, his interpretation devalues the role of these avenues in regional and rural Australia. What the State Recruitment Committee letter proposed, in fact, was to “enable returned soldiers to be employed with a suitable vocation, something that they will take an enthusiastic pride in”.¹³

While the letter from the Recruitment Committee in 1917 was the source of Inglis’s comment on Ballarat’s response, he chose not to highlight the reason stated. Many more avenues had certainly been planted in 1918–19 and over 200 had been planted in Victoria before the end of the war (see Appendix 1). While they were sometimes enlisted as a recruiting tool in the rhetoric of dedication ceremonies, so, too, were most public gatherings of the era from horse races to school fetes. Multiple plantings in three states, including those in Ballarat, pre-dated by up to two years any letter issued by the State Recruitment Committee in 1917.

It is this misreading and the neglect of this aspect of home-front wartime history and local actions, coupled with loss and memory at the personal and community level, that this thesis

12. William Russell, *We Will Remember Them: The Story of the Shrine of Remembrance* (Melbourne, Vic: Trustees of the Shrine of Remembrance, 1980), 47–48.

13. “Work for Returned Soldiers: An Avenue of Honour,” *Ararat Chronicle and Willaura and Lake Bolac Districts Recorder*, September 7, 1917. Other newspapers published the letter sometimes varying the wording or emphasis.

engages. Examining contemporary newspaper reports led to a search of the archives using original unpublished material. This research has produced photographs, correspondence, municipal minutes and archival material from three continents. Published and unpublished personal and official correspondence, minutes of meetings and specialist journals have revealed a narrative that has rarely been introduced into the discourse of wartime history.

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour was the most influential of the avenues in generating further such plantings. It is impossible to underestimate the significance of the Ballarat's major remembrance avenue on a state, national and even international level. In researching memorials, Ashton and Hamilton concluded: "[t]he majority of memorial studies, however, provide little historical context to the memorials themselves and how their meanings have changed over time".¹⁴

Such being the case with the majority of war memorials, the situation in relation to these arboreal memorials – avenues of honour – is far worse. Fundamentally, there have been no studies undertaken of these avenues using social history methodologies. They have never been adequately socially contextualised nor do they seem to have been assessed previously in order to understand any changes that have occurred over time, either in meaning or physicality. Archival material therefore has been an important factor in complementing newspaper searches as otherwise the history lacks support and balance.

The historical discourse relating to this thesis is broad as it needed to cover landscape, memory and identity, together with grief, loss and forms of memorialisation. Then there is the vastness of the subject of Great War without which none of these memorial plantings would have arisen. In terms of heritage, the history of Victoria on the home front has only been explored in any depth over the past decade. These plantings were memorials raised on the home front, but today some are recognised as having significant heritage value while others stand unrecognised.

In his introduction to Ware's work of the War Graves Commission, Edmund Blunden observed that in former times the soldier was regarded in mass terms and was assigned no name or details other than a common grave.¹⁵ Part of the legion of soldiery if anything, he was merely the means by which someone else pursued glory for their own name. Those who

14. Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton, "Places of the Heart: Memorials, Public History and the State in Australia Since 1960," *Public History Review* 15 (2008): 3.

15. Edmund Blunden, *The Immortal Heritage* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1937), 19–20.

fought and died in the Great War, however, were understood in terms of several and separate personalities, each in human measure and claiming individual understanding.¹⁶ In terms of service and death in the Great War, such an understanding was first demonstrated in Australia's avenues of honour during the conflict.

These avenues are special in their representation of the Australia of 1914–20 as they indicate an independence of spirit throughout the general populace. In demonstrating the needs and influences that brought the avenues about, this thesis highlights the independence of personalities and people generally. From civic organisations and local government to individuals, it demonstrates how they were determined to remember their service volunteer heroes despite the many other issues occurring on the home front. High-profile issues, such as the political conflicts, conscription campaigns and referenda, are often more visible historically than income tax, the great strike, the drought or even the rural depression at the time.

There is a significantly greater body of writing about the conscription issue than there is in relation to the story that “avenues of honour were planted in almost every town”.¹⁷ Of a country that sent only two in every five eligible males to war and voted against conscription, not once but twice, there appears to be little balanced domestic historical narrative of the time.¹⁸ The history of a nation of 4,500,000 people thousands of miles away from the war in an infant nation coming to terms with the fact that 330,000 of its citizens had left to fight for an empire debatably no longer wholly their own remains under-researched and inadequately told. Meanwhile, those who stayed behind were holding the fort and trying to nurture their nation through troubled times.

Australia, largely, has little written domestic history from 1914 to 1918 outside of politics, including union activism and conflicts, the Comforts Fund and similar war-related projects. While the planting of avenues of honour was certainly within war-related projects like the Comforts Fund, Australian Red Cross, or NSW Citizens' War Chest, and their related social events, they have failed to be part of the home-front history narrative. The Ballarat story in relation to one of its avenues of honour, to the almost total exclusion of a dozen other memorial avenues in the same town, highlights such imbalances.

16. Ibid, 20.

17. Mary Ellis, *People and Plants: A History of Gardening in Victoria* (Fish Creek, Vic: Mary Ellis, 2003), 98.

18. Charles Pearson, *Reviews and Critical Essays*, (1896): 216, cited in Carolyn Holbrook, *ANZAC, The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 48.

In the heritage debate, these avenues require a clear definition of their status at both state and national levels. Why should one avenue of honour be regarded as sacrosanct and as a legitimate memorial when another in the same city can be truncated, or destroyed altogether, by a bureaucracy that has been created in the interim? There seems to be little corporate memory and no close relationship with those of its citizens who have been brought into its influence decades later. While responsibility for the creation of the avenues and their initial maintenance rested with the community, that responsibility seems to have devolved to local government or a returned services organisation by 1930. In Australia the latter was usually the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA), since 1965 the Returned Services League, R.S.L.

Limitations

There are limitations to some primary, largely archival, source material. For example, the corporation of the City of Bradford records of the suspension of their proposed memorial avenue with name plates on trees could not be followed through. The council record ceases with the deaths of the prime movers for the case. In Australia, the example of contradictory records between Ballarat City correspondence, Shire of Donald minutes and newspaper reports highlight complexities in tracing the need to research for the veracity of conflicting records.

Issues regarding perceptions become apparent in major studies such as Inglis's, and this is considered as part of my argument. When accessing local history records at Donald in Victoria, it became apparent that the correspondence held in the Public Record Office was inconsistent with council and newspaper reports. Moreover, there have been changes in attitudes towards ecology, climate change and the cultural and physical landscape. These factors and social heritage battles all contribute to our difficulty in understanding the avenues of honour from the Great War and their legacy.

Chapter Outlines

The introduction has put forward the argument that the avenues of honour are legitimate war memorials and more. In outlining the chronology of the development of the argument and the avenues, it provides a picture of the social and political landscape of Australia at the outset of the Great War and throughout it.

Chapter One deals with the literature, which is the historiography not only of writing of the war but also of the society that created the avenues of honour to the Great War. It discusses

previous research and published work in relation to memorialisation. It examines previous researchers' understandings of heritage and the cultural landscape that have informed this thesis. It also examines and critiques earlier findings, some legends and assumptions as well as gaps in the research and the historiography of the period and politics of the decade following the outbreak of war.

In Chapter Two, the undercurrents and the coming together of events that brought about the move towards these First Great War arboreal memorials rather than built monuments in Australia are examined. These avenues, which had been planted to honour the heroes of local communities, are cultural landscapes that, in Australia, were unique for their time. This chapter also explores how the avenue of honour started as a minor form of memorialisation in rural areas of South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

The roles of education departments and other organisations and movements towards Arbor and Wattle days are developed. The leadership of individuals in education, such as Frank Tate in Victoria and Donald Fraser in New South Wales, and corporate managers such as Edward Price at Ballarat was most important. The strong community involvement flowing from these movements and the subsequent loss of this momentum is explored.

This chapter also draws on the symbolism contributing to this form of memorialisation and argues that vernacular societies need to mark their presence on the landscape. The spiritual dimension of landscape was then much greater when compared to today's post-Christian society. The influence of Indigenous people's reverence for nature on the European psyche can only briefly be surmised; however, there were religious and historical influences on the new settler communities in terms of general outlook and attitudes to landscape.

Chapter Three reviews the political influences within the Australian story. It examines political, industrial and social events and developments in the war years to understand the significance of these avenues at that time. It also examines who these Australians were and their Britishness, vis-à-vis their Australian-ness as seen from a century later. A proper understanding of the creation of the avenues of honour is contingent on this development.

Chapter Four examines why the move to plant avenues of honour proliferated in Australia. It follows this development around Australia. Taking Ballarat as a case study, this chapter then looks in depth at the Ballarat story, exploring the plethora of these avenues in the city then and now. In explaining the Ballarat story, it examines the influence of industry from mining to manufacturing on the landscape as well as the local politics that operated at the time. It

reviews the roles of local government and organisations such as the ANA, Ballarat Progress Association and Lucas's white-work manufacturers in the development of the avenues.

Chapter Five explores the role of Ballarat in taking the idea further afield and how the concept was disseminated throughout Australia and if this was intentional. Further to this, it examines the consequences for Ballarat, and whether this exported idea of memorialisation using avenues created any lasting links to Australia or to Ballarat. Apart from the story of its survival and its place in community identity, it is this influence and its wider implications that define the significance of today's Ballarat Avenue of Honour.

Chapter Six synthesises the concepts that had started to be expressed in the former Australian colonies and compares them to the ideas and the symbolism represented in memorialisation and arboreal memorials in Australian, European and American societies. In exploring similar projects to Australia's avenues of honour internationally, this chapter focuses on those overseas memorial avenues where there are links to the Australian examples, and/or acknowledgement of the influence of the Australian movement towards creating such avenues. These transnational links are not always direct, but in Australia, North America and England there are linkages that are revealed in the course of this research.

In the USA, the initiatives of the American Forestry Association and the endorsements of the American president promoted the move towards planting such living memorials as these avenues of honour. However, in the background there is always an oblique reference to Australia. Links and publicity to Australia's avenue of honour movement, particularly the influence of the major Ballarat avenue, are also discussed in relation to New Zealand's response to such avenues. Having drawn on these and proven those links, this thesis situates the Ballarat Avenue of Honour in a global context.

Chapter Seven explores the confusion today in how to recognise or deal with the original survivors of the Great War avenues of honour in Australia, with some reference to overseas examples. It examines the loss of so many of these memorial avenues physically as well as historically. In seeking to discover the reasons for them being supplanted by more significant memorials, this chapter reveals diverse results that range from vandalism to rejecting their lack of sophistication. The answer is developed from this chapter's examination of consequential events following World War I. This includes the Spanish flu pandemic, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression and World War II and its resultant post-war immigration.

In the conclusion I summarise the key arguments and objectives of the thesis in relation to the political, environmental, economic and social forces behind the early and seemingly coherent desire to commemorate the Great War throughout Victoria. Unconsciously and without defying government, people set about performing such rites as they felt necessary for honouring and remembering their loved ones. The forces that brought about this change to the social and geographical landscape and the outcomes for us today had their genesis in the nineteenth century with the introduction of European flocks. However, the *War Precautions Act 1914*, with its sweeping powers, established a series of regulations that people understood and did not question.

Australia, a sister Commonwealth dominion to Canada, had been planting avenues of honour since the Gallipoli campaign in 1915. As Australia adopted the Arbour Day concept from the USA, it could also be argued that, by extension, the memorial avenue was an American idea. However, in relation to the Great War avenues of honour, this thesis argues that Australia has the premier claim. To date, there has been little research undertaken into the relationship between nationalities regarding their avenues of honour; however, the spread of the memorial avenue concept from Australia in 1915 to Britain and then to Canada and the USA throughout the 1920s indicates that important communications occurred between the nationalities.

Conclusion

In arguing that the premier memorials to the Great War were the avenues of honour the thesis traces the relevant influences, demonstrating how this idea started, how it became a national movement, and how it then migrated to other parts of the British Empire and beyond. Regarding their future position in Australia's culture, the avenues of honour it argues that they will continue to have relevance. In considering the avenues at a transnational level, this introduction has presented a thesis that provides a new perspective into families and communities in relation to World War I and the immediate post-war years through a sound methodology outlining contexts and limitations within the study.

Chapter One

Historiography/Literature Review

Generations yet to come would thus have tangible reminders of what Australians and New Zealanders did when put to the highest test.
(“Anzac Day” *Queensland Times*, April, 25 1917)

1.1 Wartime Histories

The arguments and topics governing the development of this thesis, landscape, memory, identity, memorialisation and wartime, as opposed to war itself are broad but important. The relevant literature draws on war memories and memorialisation, with landscape and identity as ancillary threads. Debates continue today as to whether landscapes have been culturally constructed, and of how communities have identified strongly within those landscapes so that they have subsequently qualified as heritage. The arguments of heritage and whether or not some avenues were truly honouring those serving or an excuse to enhance landscape are ongoing. This chapter analyses and demonstrates how these threads and relationships have been developed in the relevant literature.

Until relatively recently, the wealth of military and political historical material available and drawn upon by earlier historians in portraying the war and its memorialisation from an Australian perspective has failed to give due regard to these arboreal memorials. Charles Bean, war correspondent and journalist, devoted his energy to the story of the Australian soldier, not the individual citizen in Australia and “recounted in amazing detail, the story of the AIF in action”.¹ Joan Beaumont writes of Bean that “[i]t is impossible to write a history of Australians during World War I without quoting this influential historian”.² She goes on to question the official orchestration of Anzac Day memorialisation but concludes that the day “resonated with individual citizens’ need for affirmation of their loss”.³

Beaumont’s opinion is accurate when dealing with political history and the acknowledgement of orchestration of the event. However, she has often overlooked that history from below which differentiates between the history of Australians during the Great War and official

1. Michael McKernan, *The Australian People and the Great War* (Sydney, NSW: Collins, 1980), 9.

2. Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation Australians in the Great War* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2013), xxiii.

3. *Ibid*, 181.

histories of Australia in or during that war. The period may have resonated with people's need for affirmation of their loss, but it was not always loss through death as intimated by the context. McKernan maintained that he wished to concentrate on the "[w]omen and children of Australia during the Great War". McKernan and others have written on how World War I impacted on those on the home front, but despite this they have not included the avenues or the activities that accompanied their creation and dedication.

The experiences of the returned servicemen, so different to those of the Australian civil population at the time, meant in most cases that they as a body could not see, and often could never see, the avenues of honour in the same way as those who planted them. In the population at home during the Great War, separation was a very real form of loss, which was exacerbated when coupled with the constant dread and fear of the possibility of total loss of loved ones: "Underlining it all, at all stages of the war, is a deep anxiety for the fate of those who have gone to the war and a profound hopefulness that each one will come home unscathed and unbowed".⁴

This observation could only be made from the vantage point of hindsight and from the civilian historian's viewpoint. After May 1916, when Anzac Day was still a new commemoration, returned servicemen and servicewomen often spoke at avenue ceremonies, but when World War I was over, a strong representative organisation began to take control of memorialisation matters. From that time onward, monuments deemed appropriate became the order of the day and these rarely included such apparent folk memorials as trees.

Bean and Scott, were also preoccupied with creating an official history of Australia at war.⁵ This goal became very much associated with political aspects of events and implications both at home and on the world stage.⁶ In this they are continuing mainstream national memorialisation by conflating memory and nationalism. Accepting this consolidation of the nationalism growing since the 1890s, this thesis reveals how it was manifested in domestic community memorial activities, specifically tree planting, in hundreds of communities that constitute a nation, as opposed to central government control with a national agenda.

4. Michael McKernan, *Victoria at War 1914–1918* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 4.

5. See Charles E. W. Bean, Ernest Scott, Henry S. Gullett, Seaforth S. Mackenzie and Arthur W. Jose, eds., *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*, 12 vols. (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1921–43).

6. See Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, vol. 11, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1921–43).

As war correspondent Bean was involved with the soldiers around him, he laid claim to a soldier bred from a society of independent, resourceful pioneers where such values were imbued. His history is a narrative designed to portray the heroic nature of Australian men – men who had an independent spirit and a strong sense of mateship. His view of Australia during the war was one with theirs, and it is this separation from the civilian experience which was significant. Bean determined “[i]t was on the 25th of April, 1915, that the consciousness of Australian nationhood was born”.⁷

In all Bean wrote, “[h]e was well aware of the significance of his writings, in many cases ‘the only records available’ of what happened”.⁸ In her assessment of Bean’s claims, Beaumont reminds us that “[l]ittle of this was empirically verifiable”.⁹ Australians wanted, in fact, needed to know what he had to tell them in his writings: “Embedded in them was the makings not only of the official history, but of the suffering and gallantry that laid the basis for the legend”.¹⁰

While Bean shaped the Anzac legend through his reporting, no one did the same for the silent majority of Australians who remained in Australia endeavouring to transform six former colonies into a nation only 13 years after Federation had occurred. This thesis touches on the different experiences at that time between civilians and servicemen and servicewomen, between those who had family in service and those who did not, and those like Marjorie Lydiard, who were very much “away from it all”.¹¹ A century later, such significant differences remain to be adequately researched and analysed.

As Australia had concentrated on the sacrifice and soldiery, the patriot on the home front “[g]ained no praise for taking up new burdens with little complaint”.¹² Such a focus on the actions of those from the battlefield against those at home continued post-war so that the

7. Charles E. W. Bean, “The Story of Anzac,” vol. 2, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1939), 910.

8. Donald Denoon, Philippa Mein-Smith and Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000), 274.

9. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 552.

10. *Ibid*, 274.

11. Richard Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid: A Social and Cultural History of Rural Australia* (Perth, WA: Curtin University Books, 2005), 197.

12. Michael McKernan, *Australians in Wartime: Commentary and Documents* (Melbourne, Vic: Nelson, 1980), 9.

avenues of honour have not been accepted as legitimate memorials as had those memorials legitimised by the RSL and official sources.

The avenues of honour also fed into the need for people and communities to have a focus outside the home, including an outlet for grief at forms of loss other than death. In 2015, however, a new examination of the era highlighted the following:

For many people, perhaps even a majority, the war was neither a great personal tragedy nor an experience that shaped life for decades to come. For many – those who did not enlist, those who did not become involved, those whose family did not become involved, those whose immediate family did not enlist or did not return wounded, those whom the war passed by, those who actively opposed it – the war was not central to their lives or their collective history. These people have been largely overlooked in the war’s historiography, which remains seriously skewed towards the drama of conflict.¹³

The planting of the avenues of honour was one channel whereby this portion of the community and those more immediately affected by war losses and apprehensions could find a place of coming together. In a society that after 1916 was often conflicted due to wide differences and attitudes to Australia’s recruitment methods and involvement in the fighting, there was confusion as to how to express gratitude to those who had left to serve. Such differences were largely due to the political regimen and the bias of reporting brought on by government censorship.

Through all the conceptual arguments on memorials, history, identity and heritage, these are landscapes we pass through often unconsciously. Like David Lowenthal’s palaces and gardens, few who see the avenues of honour lining our roadways “are more than vaguely aware of their historical contexts and connotations”.¹⁴

1.2 Memory and Identity

In defining ‘memory’ for the purpose of this thesis, several strands are drawn together. First, the Annales school scholar Pierre Nora’s view in relation to France is that national memory is preserved in a range of memorial forms devised especially, and are encountered as places of memory in people’s individual daily and public rituals by state institutions. Epistemological debates in historical circles have long sought appropriate terminology to explicate the

13. John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule, *The War at Home* (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 2015), 228.

14. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 377.

relationship between history and memory. Similarly with the debates surrounding landscape as culturally constructed, where communities locate their identities within landscapes, and that all landscapes qualify as somebody's heritage. Cloke and Pawson have summed up the dynamic here in terms of treescape memories in that:

The ability of trees to carry significant memories of past events into the present involves myriad slippages and all kinds of untidiness: the settings in which memorial trees are asked to perform are subject to significant and often transformative cultural change; the trees themselves are active organic components in the changing co-constitution of place and place meanings; and tree places can afford emotional responses and serve as spaces of much more immediate and pre-reflexive practice and performance.¹⁵

In his 2016 chapter, Scates speaks of the intergenerational character of war memory.¹⁶ It is this very character that is overlooked and, in turn, undervalued when avenues of honour to the Great War are examined.

Despite the huge investment of emotional energy and memory from communities and families in between 1915 and 1917 into these memorials before returned service organisations existed or became involved, they have in most cases been devalued. The reason this occurred was that the families and communities who had planted and cared for the avenues were replaced by later political interests at a regional, state or national level.

Much has been written on war memorialisation. Examples of international research studies on World War I war memorialisation include those of Jay Winter and Paul Fussell.¹⁷ The bibliography in *The Cambridge History of the First World War* indicates what a vast and growing field of research such memorialisation is.¹⁸ The centenary of the Great War also

15. Paul Cloke and Eric Pawson, "Memorial Trees and Treescape Memories", *Environment and Planning Department: Society and Space*, 26, no. 1 (2008): 107.

16. Bruce Scates, "The Unquiet Grave: Exhuming and Reburying the Dead of Fromelles" in *Battlefield Events: Landscape, Commemoration and Heritage*, eds. Keir Reeves, Geoffrey Bird, Laura James, Birger Stichelbaut and Jean Bourgeois (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2016), 17.

17. Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Jay Winter, *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory* (London, UK: Oxford University Press, 1975).

18. Jay Winter, ed., *Cambridge History of the First World War*, 3 vols. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 644–695.

highlighted many articles that focused on the event and its legacy, both physically and emotionally, as well as from national and international perspectives.

Equally, the relationship between memory and history in the context of wartime remembrance is well documented. This thesis focuses on what is a specialist subsection of the literature of memorialisation: to those who fought a war; to those who were absent from “home”; or, in some instances, to those who were missing or had been killed in action. Other elements involved in analysing responses to the war and the psychology behind memory and identity in the responses of civilian communities have been dealt with through the work of Pierre Nora¹⁹ and Maurice Halbwachs and more recently by Andreas Huyssen, who has synthesised their ideas, raising, too, the issue of western culture being a “culture of amnesia”.²⁰

Nora argues that memory is an organic and holistic entity, whereas Halbwachs contends that the means by which memory is activated in the present relies on landmarks that engender recollections. Halbwachs sees collective memory as reconstructing the past “with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts and traditions left behind”.²¹ This thesis argues that the interplay between the collective and the individual in wartime memorialisation is really a marriage of these two streams of discourse. This becomes especially true in relation to avenues where individuals relate to specific trees; and, the avenue itself remains communal.

The disregard for traditional memorialisation is symptomatic of the malaise of postmodernism and materialism over recent decades. Added to this, the loss of identity in national communities today is being aided by the huge displacement of peoples and the conflicting philosophies surrounding their welfare in global societies. In twenty-first century Australia, this has brought about politically driven nationalism, where the focus on memory in the past 20 years has been most strongly demonstrated by the Anzac legend.²²

Huyssen brings Nora and Halbwachs into a new light when examining the events of 9/11, Berlin and post the Berlin Wall in terms of memory and memorialisation. Although writing of the Holocaust and our society, he raises the following question: “How, after all, are we to

19. Nora, *Realms of Memory: The Construction of the French Past*. 3 vols. Various.

20. Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London, UK: Routledge, 1995). Huyssen’s title refers to this loss of memory in western society as amnesia.

21. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 175.

22. Shanti Sumartojo, *Commemorative Atmospheres: Memorial Sites, Collective Events and the Experience of National Identity*, accessed November 23, 2017, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com>.

guarantee the survival of memory if our culture does not provide memorial spaces that help construct and nurture the collective memory spaces that help and construct the memory of the Shoah?”²³ Australian grassroots culture in 1917 provided such a construct for the struggle to preserve the memory of the era in the planting of these avenues and a space to nurture community memory.

It is across the intervening years that other interests and other cultural demands have circumvented the original memory and its cultural bedrock. Whole communities have been replaced by new communities who have migrated from elsewhere, often with little prior relationship to either place or each other in relation to their new home town. Huyssen goes on to incorporate his thesis from Halbwachs’ and Nora’s in that “[a] society’s memory is negotiated in the social body’s beliefs and values, rituals and institutions. In the case of modern societies in particular, it is shaped by such sites of memory as the museum, the memorial, and the monument”.²⁴

However, Huyssen continues to further qualify this by addressing the issue of forgetting just as John Dargavel has done in relation to avenues of honour as a form of memorial. Dargavel observes “[t]he ageing of the trees seems to parallel how memories of war change and how mourning eases with time and passes with the generations”. He qualifies this with “[w]here monuments remain and remind, fading avenues allow us to forget”.²⁵ Huyssen, in his survey through art and the holocaust, warns:

The more memory stored on in the data banks and image tracks, the less of our culture’s willingness and ability to engage in active remembrance, or so it seems. Remembrance shapes our links to the past, and the way we remember defines us in the present.²⁶

These avenues are memorial spaces and this is supported by the occasional family group gathered beside a tree, heads bowed or leaving flowers at its base. In such ways these small intimate groups are defined, and these avenues, in the living they share with each generation, engage those involved in active remembrance (see Figure 2).

23. Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*, 258.

24. *Ibid*, 250.

25. John Dargavel, “Trees Age and Memories Change in the Avenues of Honour and Remembrance,” in *Australia’s Ever Changing Forests IV, Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on Australian Forest History*, 1999, eds. John Dargavel and Brenda Libbis (Canberra, ACT: Australian National University, 1999), 38.

26. Huyssen, *Twilight Memories*, 249.



Figure 2. J P Smith Tree Ballarat Avenue of Honour, 2017.

Similarly, gatherings of groups for special reunions, when all that is left of their former home town is the avenue of honour – which is a memorial to a way of life and a community now past – testifies to this belief. Such a “back to” gathering occurred for the unveiling of plaques at Cowangie in Victoria’s Mallee district in 2015 to mark the avenues of honour at Danyo, Boinka, Cowangie and Tutye.

Bringing many of these points of view together, Nancy Wood highlights “the disjunction between knowledge and cognition”.²⁷ Following this, however, she reminds us that “[t]here is movement in public memory, a movement not towards resolution and even redemption, but towards acknowledgement and recognition”.²⁸ In her “vector of memory” hypothesis, Wood also realises that a vector of memory rallies a much smaller constituency and smaller identity claims than race or culture.²⁹ I believe these avenues of honour in their role in small communities are vectors of memory as defined by Wood. In this, they, too, are unstable and vulnerable, and this is demonstrated in their loss to memory as well as to their physical loss if such loss has occurred.

These avenues are not only important monuments but with the centenary of the Great War and that of the first avenues, they are significantly more than war memorials. Today, these

27. Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*, (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1999), 125.

28. *Ibid*, 146.

29. *Ibid*, 169.

avenues of honour are memorials to both those who went to war and to those who stayed behind and planted them, or, as posited in the previous paragraph, memorials to a way of life now past. They represent signposts to the strength of Australians at home during the Great War.

As historical signposts they have been disregarded in the deification of the Australian servicemen and servicewomen by a passionate war correspondent/historian, Charles Bean. Similarly, returned service associations and government were determined on land-marking the war effort and the actions of those who had served, often at the expense of the great majority who stayed and consolidated a new nation in a time of great stress and hardship.

Additional to this deification of the soldier over the civilian is the concept of memory and commemoration, which is usually constructed and directed by an authority as in the case of government and the RSL relating to Anzac Day “[t]ypically planned with intentions of affirming and reinforcing memories that provide a sense of heritage and identity”.³⁰ In terms of understanding commemorative events, Frost and Laing have continued to express such objectives; however, the plantings of the avenues of honour were important commemorative events as have been the rededication and centenary plantings over the 2014–17 period. In many cases, these avenues were planted to include beautification, a utilitarian exercise that combined “both a practical and symbolic purpose”.³¹ However, although governments or the RSL have not always been interested in perpetuating these memories and purposes to any significant degree, they have remained important to communities.

Even in recent years there remains a misreading of the scope of arboreal memorials created during and after the Great War. This is partly due to landscape and horticultural studies prevailing over social history in such areas of research and the taking up of older narratives by journalists. Jodi Panayotov still brought up the concept that these places represented an absent grave, which enabled families to mourn.³² In stating this, he is repeating views expressed by

30. Warwick Frost and Jenifer Laing, *Commemorative Events: Memories, Identities, Conflicts*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 1.

31. *Ibid.*, 147.

32. Jodi Panayotov, “Memorial Parks to Remember Anzacs,” *The Brisbane Times*, April 24, 2012, cited in Warwick Frost and Jenifer Laing, *Commemorative Events: Memories, Identities, Conflicts*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 148.

Inglis, Haddow and Bart Ziino that also create that impression which, while certainly significant, is only part of the story.³³

For all the memory analysis, in 1974, Ken Inglis turned the attention of Australians to memorial structures in the landscape and their meanings; however, he largely overlooked Australia's avenues of honour.³⁴ His attitude to the type of arboreal memorials with which this thesis deals, called for an in-depth appraisal of these apparent non-monuments, which were simply "[o]ne other novelty".³⁵ Since then, later historians have explored the symbolism, construction and form of memorials and looked at the politics and cultural context in the construction of memorials. They have examined the meanings and influences of memorials in their initial years and in the revival of interest after a century, yet they, too, have overlooked avenues of honour.

While Inglis all but dismisses the avenues as memorials in his ground-breaking research into Australia's war memorials, the subsequent research into avenues of honour can be said to have developed as a result of his work. In 2004, Damian Powell posed this question: "[h]ow do we, as Australians, remember our wars?"³⁶ In the first instance, Australians remembered the Great War in the planting of avenues to honour those who went to serve. Individually, they are not national monuments but part of a regional legacy speaking to us today, a century after their being planted. They enable us to read the regional case in the larger context of a national – and now an international – culture of memory and its translation into these memorial sites. Collectively, they form part of the national heritage and, properly interpreted, a broad, in-depth study nation-wide, would help historians and Australians more generally, towards a better understanding of them and of their own identity just as Anzac Day and other forms of memorial do.

The differences in landscape study and social history are highlighted in Janine Haddow's thesis "Avenues of Honour in Victoria" through her summary of the vernacular, political,

33. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001); Haddow, "Avenues of Honour in Victoria" (Master's thesis, University of Melbourne, 1987); Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2007). In each of these studies the impression conveyed is that the grief and memorialisation predominantly arose as a result of the death of loved ones.

34. Ibid, 156. This is the only reference Inglis gives to an avenue of honour, that of Ballarat, with a general comment on their popularity in Victoria.

35. Ibid, 156.

36. Damian Powell, "Remembrance Day: Memories and Values in Australia since 1918," *Victorian Historical Journal* 75, no. 2 (2004): 165.

biographical and symbolic landscapes. Her thesis highlights the problems of language in landscape studies. In relation to this thesis, therefore, language is important and needs to be understood. The words “landscape”, “culture”, “memory” and even “heritage” need to be defined because today they have a strong nexus with politics, tourism and commercial interests. The Great War generated a new ritual of public commemoration in Australia, a country which previously had little collective, unified or truly national memory.

Haddow called into question whether communities regarded aesthetics and suitability. Both of these factors were taken into consideration in some communities and not by others. This thesis demonstrates that many more avenues of honour were of Australian native plantings than acknowledged in that early research. Nonetheless, Haddow acknowledges “[p]erhaps in 1918 oaks and elms were considered to be attractive trees, which would eventually mature to form a beautiful avenue, while the advantages and beauty of native trees were not generally appreciated”.³⁷

For today’s observer, one problem with native trees is that they are identified with a rural or a bushland environment, and their nature and form when growing as an avenue along a rural road is often not recognised. Also, as frequently happened, when they were used in urban avenues, some varieties – most often sugar gums (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*) – had to be removed due to their propensity to drop limbs.³⁸ In others, such as at Drummond, disease dictated that the eucalypts be removed and replaced with exotics. Barnett’s research into Michigan’s memorial roads attributes disease to the loss of some avenues.³⁹ Research for this thesis has revealed many of Victoria’s avenues of honour to the Great War, while not necessarily native to the locality in which they were planted, were in fact Australian species (see Appendix 1).

In clarifying language for the purpose of this thesis, Jackson’s definition of landscape stands:

Landscape is not scenery, it is not a political unit; it is no more than a collection, a system of man-made spaces on the face of the earth. Whatever its shape and size, it is

37. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 29.

38. Anthony N. Rodd, *The Ultimate Book of Trees and Shrubs for Australian Gardens*, Sydney, NSW: Random House, 1996), 204.

39. LeRoy Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane* (Detroit, MI: Priscilla Press, 2004), 146–147.

never simply a natural space, a feature of the natural environment; it is always artificial, always synthetic, always subject to sudden and unpredictable change .⁴⁰

An avenue of honour is a landscape shaped by the community, a landscape that in turn shaped the community into the future. It may have had a short-term or longer-term future, but it did shape communities as much as its creators shaped the avenue. As recently as 2015, Australian artist Immants Tilliers wrote of his design for the tapestry of the Avenue of Remembrance at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra:

We all know that an “avenue” is not only a regular planting of trees along a road but it is also more abstractly “a way to approach” something – to an idea or even a memory. My avenue of remembrance is, I hope, a way or means to remember not only those young men who died but also the profound loss and grief experienced by their mothers, their fathers, their brothers and sisters. By their friends, by their communities. By our nation.⁴¹

In John Dargavel’s two essays that discuss the significance of avenues of honour in the tension of life and death, the avenues are regarded as more than a metaphor and leave one with the proposition that “they permit of both remembering and forgetting”.⁴² The stories around the gradual loss of the significance of avenues of honour might lend substance to this, but the aggressive actions resulting in the destruction of trees at places such as Sunshine indicate other agendas. Here there was a rejection of this remembrance in the desperate need for small business to live in a new order and a new environment pitted between development and the Great Depression.⁴³

Dargavel and Haddow’s extensive research in the area of horticulture and landscape design used accepted scientific principles and methods. Sarah Cockerell’s symposium paper (2008) *Avenues of Honour: Location, Assessment and Management of War Memorial Tree Avenues*

40. John B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 156.

41. Australian War Memorial. Accessed October 20, 2015. <https://www.awm.gov.au>.

42. John Dargavel, “Trees Age and Memories Change in the Avenues of Honour and Remembrance,” in *Australia’s Ever Changing Forests IV, Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on Australian Forest History*, 1999, eds., John Dargavel and Brenda Libbis (Canberra, ACT: Australian National University, 1999), 37–52; “More to Grief Than Granite: Arboreal Remembrance in Australia,” *Journal of Australian Studies* 64 (2000): 187–195.

43. Relates the nocturnal cutting down of avenue trees at their base related in Chapter Seven.

in Australia followed their work and is ongoing.⁴⁴ In contrast to such horticulturally based methodology, *Victoria's Avenues of Honour Lost to the Landscape* (2006) was the first of its type to offer a valuable comparison using social history methodology to reach new and important conclusions.⁴⁵

Sue-Anne Ware's 2007 paper on anti-memorials touches on relevant issues in relation to these avenues. Ware states that avenues of honour are object-based memorials as opposed to recent, more individual family and community memorials.⁴⁶ However, such is the reality of many early avenues of honour planted to enlistees in the Great War in Victoria that the same claim can be made of both types of memorial. Places such as Piangue, Danyo and Cowangie in Victoria's remote Mallee region had tight close-knit isolated communities. The tree plantings and the nurturing that followed also acted as bonding agents in those remote and suffering communities.

The history of Australia's avenues of honour may well have been diminished by the politics and the pre-eminence of one avenue over another for marketing or tourism purposes, or just from a sense of competition. However, this does nothing to help understand the loss to memory and the landscape of many of these avenues. Presenting his *Localization of Memories*, Halbwachs places his subjects in a social milieu without which they would not have that collective memory.⁴⁷ In concluding, he reflects that traditions change, and that memory erasures and change are the result of a realisation of a present situation.⁴⁸

Such a view might be claimed at Ballarat where one avenue has been elevated to heritage status while others have been simply absorbed into the streetscape, their origins generally forgotten by public and governments alike. As far back as 1987, Haddow came to the conclusion: "The implication that the firm (E. Lucas) planted the avenue is a distortion

44. Sarah Cockerell, "Avenues of Honour: Location, Assessment and Management of War Memorial Tree Avenues in Australia." *Treenet Symposium 2008*. Accessed June 29, 2015. <https://www.treenet.org>.

45. Michael Taffe, *Victoria's Avenues of Honour to The Great War Lost to the Landscape*. Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 2006.

46. Sue-Anne Ware, "The Road-as-Shrine and Other Anti-Memorials in Australia," in *Roadside Memorials A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Jennifer Clark (Armidale, NSW: Emu Press, 2007), 70–81.

47. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 53.

48. *Ibid*, 183.

[which] suited the organisers”.⁴⁹ This statement also incorporates arguments such as Lowenthal’s that “marketing corrupts its purveyors along with the heritage”.⁵⁰

This argument could be taken even further because this avenue of honour has its own very significant mythology, with its rituals and historic moments that tell us of popular culture in Ballarat. The myth has been represented through the Lucas organisation and especially through the generations of “Lucas Girls”.⁵¹ Other communities have their stories, which will be further explained, but the Ballarat story is the nexus throughout and through which these threads can be traced and understood, especially in terms of the comprehensive drive to create plantations in the form of avenues of trees as memorials as being a movement.

Other areas of heritage and identity are interwoven, with Jay Winter claiming the underpinning problem was introduced by language. Winter states that “interdisciplinary discussion on landscape highlights problems of language and terminology”.⁵² Some definitions are therefore essential, as these major components have sharply divided ideas of the parts within the range of disciplines. Language is important in that it needs to be defined. What is meant by “landscape”, “culture”, “memory” and even “heritage”, which today has a strong nexus with politics, tourism and, as with Lucas’s a century ago, commercial interests?

Having defined memory, avenue and landscape for the purpose of this thesis, culture must also be examined. Culture is defined as “[t]he customs, arts, social institutions, etc. of a particular group or people”.⁵³ A web-based dictionary also gives a secondary definition of culture as being “a particular form or stage of civilization as that of certain nation or

49. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 42.

50. David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 100.

51. The “Lucas Girls” were the female workers from the Lucas white-work or lingerie factory at Ballarat. They formed themselves into a club or staff organisation for the purposes of solidarity and fundraising throughout the First World War. They started their efforts in 1915 and by the time of the campaign to organise work on the avenue of honour under the auspices of their company they had become known by this name across the region. These women continued to support Ballarat causes after the war and into a second and third generation up until the twenty-first century although by that time the Lucas Company no longer existed.

52. Edmund C. Penning-Rowell, “Themes, Speculation and an Agenda for Landscape Research,” in *Landscape Meanings and Values*, eds. Edmund C. Penning-Rowell and David Lowenthal (London, UK: Allen & Unwin, 1986), 119.

53. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1989), 291.

period”.⁵⁴ By extending this to include cultural objects, items, or in this case a landscape, one that is an integral part of the cultural psyche of a community, a satisfactory definition of culture that is applicable for the purpose of this thesis has been achieved.

Culture may be defined in dictionaries but the term war memorial was, until after the Great War, a new one. The avenues of honour may be war memorials and therefore something sacred, or perhaps, as Inglis contended, simply responses to government recruitment efforts and consequently what he terms “one other novelty”.⁵⁵ From this comment in relation to avenues of honour, he then goes on to claim that:

The first examples were planted during the war in response to official initiative, when the Victorian State Recruiting Committee wrote to all municipalities and shires in 1917 recommending that an assurance should be given to every intending recruit that “his name will be memorialised in an avenue of honour”.⁵⁶

Further to this, Inglis adds that “Ballarat responded to this initiative” when in fact Ballarat was ahead of the initiative – not responding to it – and the city already had several avenues of honour planted by September 1917. Ballarat and other centres had, in fact, been planning and planting such avenues for over two years by that time. Inglis, again, writes that “the authorities commended the practice to people in other states”.⁵⁷ While such was the case, the director of education in New South Wales had already been advocating such avenues for over a year. Several had already been planted in New South Wales and South Australia (see Appendix 2), and more than 40 avenues of honour had been planted across Victoria (see Appendix 1).

Apart from other symbolic references and commemoration, it was volunteerism that was being honoured and celebrated across Australia in the planting of these avenues of honour. Since the 1880s, arbour days, as exemplified in Ballarat, have been a significant community activity in the planting of avenues of honour.⁵⁸

54. *American Heritage® New Dictionary of Cultural Literacy*, 3rd ed, by Houghton Mifflin Company, accessed August 15, 2017. <http://www.dictionary.com>.

55. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 156

56. *Ibid*, 156

57. *Ibid*, 156.

58. Michael Taffe, *Growing a Garden City: Ballarat Horticultural Society 1859–2009* (Ballarat, Vic: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2014), 42.

Some avenues are cited today as memorial avenues when in fact they were school Arbour Day plantings, with what today would be called landcare values being their sole motivation. These were initiated both pre- and post-war by agencies, but such plantings were given a greater dimension with the onset of war so that they are second only to “[t]he first event commemorated – the call to arms”.⁵⁹ Winter develops this further, emphasising that “after 1914, commemoration was an act of citizenship”.⁶⁰ Nowhere was this more evident than in the planting of Australia’s avenues of honour. They were a form of commemoration that was an act of citizenship with an affirmation of community.

The vast majority of Victoria’s memorial avenues honouring those who had left for the Great War were planted before the end of the war. Another noticeable feature was that they were largely a product of regional Australia, yet only McQuilton includes them as being in any way worthy of mention by adding two avenues when concluding a paragraph on honour boards as “other memorial ventures”.⁶¹ However, the movement to create avenues of honour as a form of memorial had gained a momentum that continued into the 1920s, the time when built memorials were starting to be encouraged by governments. Inglis argues that:

[w]here people in most countries had chosen for their principal anniversary the day the killing stopped and the soldiers began to pack their kitbags for home, Australians and New Zealanders looked back to the beginning, the separation of soldier from civilian.⁶²

In the Australia of 1915 to 1918, these avenues were linked to the first loss – the separation from home – as much as to the permanent loss of family members going to war. Avenues of honour are now an historical artefact, a monument to the community’s heroes, where civilians became soldiers. These memorials were not a reconstruction of the past.⁶³ Today, it is generally accepted that as a feature of the landscape and as memorials, they do change through time and change more than any other form of memorialisation.

In the historiography of memorialisation, Maria Tumarkin’s *Traumascapes* comes closest to Winter’s “act of citizenship”. The modern sites of which she writes are a far better

59. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 80.

60. Ibid, 80.

61. John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 115.

62. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 241.

63. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 175.

comparison to the forces which initially drove the creation of the avenues of honour planted on the home front in Australia during the Great War. These avenues “shaped meanings and interpretations of the [traumatic] events inscribed in them”.⁶⁴ The separation and loss to loved ones and their close-knit communities of the early twentieth century was often traumatic.

More recently, however, Fengqi Qian states that memorials “invoke internal unity while also enlisting external sympathy”.⁶⁵ Set against Tumarkin’s memorialisation of sites of trauma, Logan and Reeves’ work demonstrates the development of memory in some of the same places from a different perspective and in greater depth. In his study, Yushi Utaka wrote on the process of transforming the legacy, memories and landscapes of Hiroshima. In following the contested histories surrounding the site of the 1945 atomic blast, he concluded that “our heritage and histories exist not only to recall our past but to also provide continuities into the future”.⁶⁶

The World War I avenues of honour also recall our past and provide continuity in their living. The Great War did create a traumatic experience for those who were, in the main, peaceful rural dwellers for whom such spaces of treed peace reflected their emotions and their reaching for the sublime. “Everything ... that spoke of the infinite, with a capital “I” that turned human beings into tiny ants, lost in a landscape could be experienced as sublime”.⁶⁷ To their planters, these trees did speak of the infinite, and the news from the front did confirm such an analogy, although Australians lacked the direct experience of the war and its scale to absorb the full sensation of such comparisons.

Apart from personal separation with loved ones, what they experienced as never before was the loss of many freedoms under the *War Precautions Act 1914*. In speaking of the effects of the regulations flowing from the War Precautions Act, Beaumont recalls that “[w]ith

64. Maria Tumarkin, *Traumascaples: The Power and Fate of Places Transformed by Tragedy* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2005), 86.

65. Qian Fengqi, “Let the dead be remembered: Interpretation of the Nanjing Massacre Memorial,” in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with “Difficult Heritage”*, eds. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), 29.

66. Yushi Utaka, “The Hiroshima ‘Peace Memorial’: Transforming Legacy, Memories and Landscapes,” in *Places of Pain and Shame: Dealing with “Difficult Heritage”*, eds. William Logan and Keir Reeves (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), 48.

67. *Ibid.*, 50.

remarkable detail, these regulations controlled the lives and political activities of Australians, reflecting the increasingly authoritarian nature of the Australian state at war”.⁶⁸

The response to the regulation controlling the expenditure and subsequently the erection of monuments was a prime example of this control.⁶⁹ However, the need remained for “[t]he public honouring of the dead and wounded, and the celebration of their achievements resonated with individual citizens’ need for affirmation of their loss”.⁷⁰

1.3 Contested Histories

In her master’s thesis *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, Haddow revealed the paucity of material or research on this topic. She states that “[i]n Australia, landscapes have been created by people, their needs and dreams and like avenues of honour these landscapes are products of social and cultural conditions.”⁷¹

She cited the wide geographical representation of these avenues throughout Victoria as evidence that communities were “[i]nfected with the idea of avenue planting”.⁷² This certainly describes the Victorian situation as does her summation:

Avenues more than other types of war memorials exhibit their populist and vernacular origins so that, while they are symbols of a national cause, visible signs of our political history and reminders of a collective purpose of goals, objectives and principles, they have been created by local communities and exhibit many local variations.⁷³

From her conclusions, Haddow advocated further areas of research, which, after three decades, have not been taken up to any marked extent by social historians. She summed up succinctly with “[t]hey are social and cultural records and represent a local and populist response to the Australian war effort. They are war memorials of the New Age”.⁷⁴

68. Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation Australians in the Great War* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 46.

69. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 120.

70. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 181.

71. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 84.

72. *Ibid*, 63.

73. *Ibid*, 44.

74. *Ibid*, 83.

While these avenues of honour may have been war memorials of the new age, they are now, even more than initially, sites of memory and identity. In support of this, Scates and Wheatley's 2014 essay on civil life during World War I speaks to such attributes, and in the 28 pages of the chapter, there are only three references to tree planting and avenues of honour.⁷⁵ It is impossible to look at memorialisation without at least acknowledging the proponents of these memorials and examining the influences on them and their motivations.

In the development of this thesis, the corporate memory of Ballarat is revealed to have been influenced by strong personalities and power plays that had been set against loss and identity. Such situations are described by Pierre Nora in that “[p]ersuasive communication has undoubtedly pervaded all walks of life, though taking many different forms. Nowadays, commercials and advertising have unfortunately taken over some of the functions which had been ascribed to education in the past”.⁷⁶

He goes on further to qualify this by adding: “In these institutions, social power was both exerted and represented. Thus mastering a verbal skill was considered a first step to power within established social roles”.⁷⁷ Without the argument revolving around power in this instance, Lowenthal illustrates that “[h]istory is continually being altered in our private interests or on behalf of our community or country”.⁷⁸

This continuous alteration has been demonstrated in Ballarat through the removal of plaques from one avenue and the respective names being added to another. Over the intervening years other interests have been involved, including service clubs and councils. Most recently, Ballarat has witnessed the creation of a suburb with street names honouring the Lucas connection, but there has been no recognition given to others like Inspector Alexander Nicholson from the police, who was the original proponent of this memorial avenue, nor to the organisation he represented in presenting the idea.

Not only was the suggestion put forward by Nicholson but he was also the first secretary for the avenue of honour control committee when it was established. Clearly, despite his son

75. Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley, “War Memorials,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 3: *Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 534, 545, 549.

76. Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory, The Construction of the French Past* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 2: 392.

77. *Ibid*, 392.

78. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 348.

serving in the New Zealand forces and being honoured with a tree that Nicholson planted, he was subservient to the wishes of Edward Price of Lucas's. This together with the dynamic of the Lucas combination of Price and his senior sales director, Tilly Thompson, further demonstrated that "[w]artime [thus] served to elevate the men over women in civic prestige – but only some types of men".⁷⁹

Winter would seem to support Inglis' earlier dismissal of the avenues as war memorials when he describes war memorials as "places where people grieved", and that the first phase of memorial creation was those raised during the war, including those "which drew on heroic images of war".⁸⁰ I argue further that these memorials, among other symbols, were planted for local heroes to volunteerism, with few images of war heroics or otherwise. While there is the rhetoric of the heroic actions of "our boys", it must be suggested that the avenues were more than simply war memorials created "to keep the experience of war at the front of people's minds".⁸¹ They were this, but much more; they were living and could be visited by those they honoured even before they died as well as in those instances where they returned from war, a tradition that was still maintained by many families a century later.

Such interconnections and the dynamics between trees and memorialisation are further explained by Cloke and Pawson and coined as "treescape memories".⁸² In their examination of three memorial tree sites in the city of Christchurch, New Zealand, they write of the trees as the "paintbox of memory".⁸³ In navigating the slippages and historical untidiness of which they write, such as confused reports on cultivars and personalities, one must concur with them in that "tree places can afford emotional responses and serve as spaces of much more immediate and pre-reflexive practice and performance. These dynamics suggest different connections between trees and memorialisation".⁸⁴

In Australia, debates into the significance of these avenues are confused by the fact that the extent, character, connectedness and dates of the avenues have not been researched in

79. Martin Crotty, "Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli," in *Turning Points in Australian History*, eds. Martin Crotty and David A. Roberts (Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2008), 108.

80. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 79.

81. Bate, *Life After Gold: Twentieth-Century Ballarat*, 1993, 106.

82. Paul Cloke and Eric Pawson, "Memorial Trees and Treescape Memories", *Environment and Planning Department: Society and Space*, 26, no. 1 (2008): 107.

83. *Ibid*, 107

84. *Ibid*, 107.

sufficient depth or detail. Research into the avenues of honour has been mainly in the area of garden history and horticulture as exemplified by Haddow and Cockerell, who relied largely on responses to questionnaires. Katie Holmes, Susan Martin and Kylie Mirmohamadi have moved this focus into the broader sphere of social history as “[t]hese trees of the avenues of honour are the most obvious public connection between planting and grieving in Australia: they have been a feature of the Australian roadscape since the early twentieth century”.⁸⁵

Taffe had already determined in 2006 that they were planted “to recognise those local volunteers who enlisted to fight ‘for King and country’ in World War I”.⁸⁶ The popular narrative that simply links grieving solely to death in relation to the avenues was again contested in 2012:

They are embodied in a life form (trees) that can be perpetuated so that the community has an everlasting focus for expressing solidarity, living, honour, love, and respect for those of its number, living or dead whom they regarded as heroes.⁸⁷

Both Haddow and Cockerell have defined avenues as parallel rows of trees that flank a road or path. Reading contemporary reports of the Australia between 1915 and 1919, it becomes clear that such was not necessarily the social concept of the day. However, for the purpose of her study, Haddow defined that “[a]ll avenues considered in this thesis consist of a double row of trees bordering a public road”.⁸⁸ Many of the avenues, such as Walwa in Victoria, were around ovals and elsewhere other than public roads (see Figure 24).

While it was the first such research into these Great War memorial avenues, and as such highly significant, Haddow did not include, or even list, the correct details of avenues such as Eurack, Warrion, Guildford or Tutye.⁸⁹ All of these and many others were, in fact, avenues of a single row of trees. Other avenues of honour such as Mortchup (also not included in previous studies) consisted of multiple rows planted out in parallel.

85. Katie Holmes, Susan Martin, and Kylie Mirmohamadi, *Reading the Garden: The Settlement of Australia* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 148.

86. Michael Taffe, “90th Anniversary of Our Avenues of Honour,” *Australian Garden History Journal* 17, no. 5 (2006): 24.

87. Michael Taffe, “A New Nation – A New Landscape: Victoria’s Great War Avenues of Honour” (paper presented at the Australian Garden Society’s 2012 Conference). https://www.gardenhistorysociety.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/130912_2012_Ballarat_Conference_PapersNPTj.pdf

88. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 33.

89. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 97–98. Here Eurack and Guildford are listed contrary to the researcher’s own “ideal avenue” definition, despite being single row avenues for WWI the latter being duplicated into a double row after WW2.

Sarah Cockerel in her essay of 2008 stated:

The idea of a straight, double row of evenly spaced trees is not complicated or counterintuitive. Man has been building roads since the invention of the wheel and lining a road with intentionally planted trees is an obvious progression.⁹⁰

In 1917, however, the contemporary scene saw many plantings, such as in Guildford, of a single row of trees with a memorial tablet on which is inscribed “Honour Row”, which, like the multiple rows at Mortchup, varied from the late twentieth century to the early twenty-first century ideals of the two researchers. Following World War II, the Guildford “row” was expanded to include a complementary row on the opposite side of the road, which thereby satisfied the ideal of double rows. More recently, the Navigators Avenue of Honour, planted in 2015 on the centenary of Anzac, is also a single-row avenue.

Except in McQuilton’s research and publications in relation to north-east Victoria, the regional and local legacies expressed in the avenues is a theme overlooked in general academic discussion, one that integrates all of the remembrances into a national process of memorialisation. Rosalie Triolo discusses arbour days and arboreal memorials in schools but necessarily only briefly.⁹¹ While detailing the efforts of particular schools she also provides an image from the *School Paper* in 1917 of those who planted the trees in Melbourne’s Domain.⁹²

1.4 Perspectives

Although examining Ballarat influences on the avenue of honour proliferation or movement in the Great War, this thesis aims to define the number of these avenues in Victoria and their planting dates. This thesis examines the political and social forces behind their creation, maintenance or otherwise, and their more recent claims to significance. This involves an examination of the national and international influences of Ballarat’s avenue plantings and going back to the archive for confirmation or otherwise of findings.

These avenues of honour and their associated activities often became the glue, essential at the time, for community cohesion and survival in rural and regional Australia. In Broken Hill, the

90. Sarah Cockerell, “Avenues of Honour: Location, Assessment and Management of War Memorial Tree Avenues in Australia.” *Treenet Symposium 2008*. Accessed June 29, 2015. <https://www.treenet.org>.

91. Rosalie Triolo, *Our Schools and the War* (Melbourne, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2012), 247–248.

92. *Ibid*, 248, citing the *School Paper* III & IV, July 1917.

miners' strike started and spread across the Commonwealth, ultimately involving 12,000 miners.⁹³ Joan Beaumont allows another domestic issue to have a loud voice in her narrative by devoting a chapter to the general strike of 1917, the "Great Strike".⁹⁴ In doing this, she brings together the confusion and coming together of civil issues such as "the war weariness and grievances ... the erosion of living standards, the increased cost of living, the 1916 uprising in Dublin, the anger at the abuse of executive government powers and the fury generated by the conscription campaign".⁹⁵

Beaumont presents a picture of a nation not solely preoccupied with war, but one which had other bread-and-butter issues to deal with. Ever since Bean, the discourse on Australian history regarding this period has been obsessed with Australia's war service and exploits, whereas there has been little wider exposition about community or the history of Australians at home. Paraphrasing former prime minister Paul Keating's 1993 speech at the entombment of the unknown warrior in Canberra, it was the "ordinary people" that were the heroes of the war. It was these people, the vast majority of Australians, who taught us "to endure hardship, to show courage, to be bold as well as resilient, to believe in ourselves, to stick together".⁹⁶

Keating may have had a different radical nationalist agenda that emphasised World War II. However, he might as well have been speaking of those on the home front in World War I – those who had fought for or against conscription, poor treatment of workers, of driving forward on the transcontinental railway and other national achievements sidelined by the preoccupation of historians with the war effort. Not only were Australians supporting their bereaved families and neighbours while dealing with personal loss but they were also still achieving and celebrating achievements great and small as well as dealing with issues like drought and mouse plagues.

Poorly documented also was the impact of the loss of labour on the family farm when young family members volunteered for service. In the cities, too, there were issues such as the effect of the strikes on access to work and services. The political haranguing of the Labor Party and the International Workers of the World (IWW) in opposition to the war: " 'War – What for?'

93. J. W. Harris, *The Bitter Fight: A Pictorial History of the Australian Labor Movement* (Brisbane, Qld: University of Queensland Press, 1970), 233.

94. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 329.

95. *Ibid*, 329–330.

96. Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 53.

asked the IWW's journal *Direct Action*".⁹⁷ Many were attracted to the IWW's vigorous campaign in opposition to the war confusion featured in Syd Nicholls' graphic cartoon as the frontispiece (see Figure 3).

Ethnographers write of the cultural or spatial turn, but if there is true concern for history, historians, too, must take account of place and environment in relation to that in which people lived and worked. This consideration given to the landscape, cultural and geographic is especially so in the case of arboreal memorials such as avenues of honour that are "[o]bservable human productions in the landscape".⁹⁸ Such regard is expressed by Kenneth Foote when he states:

The physical durability of landscape permits it to carry meaning into the future so as to help sustain memory and cultural traditions... Societies and cultures have many other ways to sustain memory... but landscape stands apart from these ... a visual representation.⁹⁹



Figure 3. Syd Nicholls, *Direct Action*, Sydney, August 10, 1914.

97. *Direct Action* (Sydney), 10 August 1914.

98. Ian Cook et al., *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns: Perspectives on Cultural Geography* (Edinburgh, UK: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), 30.

99. Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 33.

Also at that time, the new experience of inflation in both the city and the country was causing distress and confusion: “Within a year of the outbreak of war, the price of some staple goods had doubled. In Melbourne, bread was 50% more expensive in May 1915 than it had been in June 1914”.¹⁰⁰ Joan Beaumont also confronts the issue that “profiteering became an obsession of the radical left”.¹⁰¹ Despite this, at the same time in May 1915, gestures such as personal contributions of trees were being made for honour avenues.

The environment in Australia between 1914 and 1919 at the grassroots was not all about the war, or the war effort despite the latter being most vital and important. However, historians when writing of this period, always write about the relationship with the war front and largely exclude these other domestic events.

This thesis demonstrates that a proper context to this period in history would be to balance the politics – the wartime exploits of serving Australians taking account of other stories of those at home suffering loss and apprehension – against other local events and situations. If the war did define Australians, there are other layers of this country’s life that are no less important to the national identity. These layers have been denied to the Australian people by an often overwhelming preoccupation with the war and political expediency.

There were many celebrations and domestic achievements to highlight the fact that through all the wartime exigencies between 1914 and 1919, 80 per cent of Australians were not directly affected by the war in their everyday personal lives.¹⁰² These figures also ignore those families where more than one member had been enlisted. It is the remaining population – the vast majority of the Australian people – and the Australian story that is only recently starting to be explored despite the veil cast over it by contemporary censorship.

Censorship became a factor in how Australians saw the war and how they were permitted to discuss it, at least on paper. Connor, Stanley and Yule highlight that “[t]he implications of such restrictions on later scholarship have barely been explored”.¹⁰³

The implications of censorship throughout the Great War have rarely been taken into account in Australia’s understanding of it. Historians using newspaper resources need to constantly

100. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 40.

101. *Ibid*, 41.

102. Australian War Memorial, accessed 22 July 2016 [http:// www.awm.gov.au](http://www.awm.gov.au). 416,809 Australians served from a population of 4.9 million.

103. Connor, Stanley and Yule, *The War at Home*, 170.

remember that “[i]t was illegal to publish any material likely to discourage recruiting or undermine the Allied effort”.¹⁰⁴ In this, it is not only of the war, but also sensitive events on the home front that are suspect. Such a veiled, war-dominated view of Australian society at home was best articulated by Garran when asked “[w]ould it be an offence ... ?” answering yes without allowing the sentence to be finished.¹⁰⁵

1.5 Avenues of Honour as Heritage

Heritage is yet another element in this thesis, but unlike historical exactitude, the integrity of heritage “is sanctioned not by proof of origins but by present exploits”.¹⁰⁶ Lowenthal elucidates this later by observing that “heritage is not necessarily history, however,” and heritage “has always twisted the past for some present purpose”.¹⁰⁷ It is liable to manipulation by power elites, whether corporate, community lobby groups, consultants or academics. Despite all of the shortcomings of heritage, Lowenthal defines it also as a shared legacy and “to share a legacy is to belong to a family, a community, a race, a nation”.¹⁰⁸

Lowenthal maintains that heritage is intertwined with the memory debate and the two are brought together as part of the idea of stewardship in modern western societies.¹⁰⁹ More directly for the avenues of honour planted in commemoration of the heroes of the Great War is Foote’s observation that “[s]anctified places arise from battles”, which is followed with the qualification of places “that mark the traumas of nationhood and from events that have given shape to national identity”.¹¹⁰

This would seem to broaden the emphasis on these memorials than that expressed by Lowenthal. This again recalls Tumarkin’s reflections on sites of trauma, but with the

104. Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 21.

105. Robert R. Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1958), 222.

106. David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 127.

107. *Ibid.*, 101.

108. *Ibid.*, 2.

109. David Lowenthal, “Heritage and Its Interpreters,” in *Heritage Australia*, ed. National Trust Australia (Canberra, ACT: National Trust Australia, 1986), 42.

110. Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 10.

qualification that considers the avenues, given they are representative of sites arising from battles however remote, as sites marking a trauma in the development of nationhood.

Arguing a different point, Joy Damousi projects onto memorials the act of mourning following the emotion of grief. In doing so, she argues that “war memorials served a fundamental purpose in facilitating mourning and becoming a site of pilgrimage”.¹¹¹ This concentration on mourning the dead is too narrow a view of the purpose of war memorials, particularly in the form of avenues of honour. It disregards other legitimate forms of wartime separation – emotions such as fear and anxiety – that is trauma. A broader interpretation is not only far more inclusive for those seeking to hold memories of loved ones but also allows for a hope of life through it all.

Literally, figuratively and in the sense used by Halbwachs, the avenues of honour were deliberate acts of creating landmarks:

[w]e ask how recollections are to be located. And we answer: with the help of landmarks that we always carry within ourselves, for it suffices to look around ourselves, to think about others, and to locate ourselves within the social framework to retrieve them.¹¹²

These landmark avenues of honour are carried within ourselves, enabling recollections to be located, which is a phenomena that also applies to society. These memorial avenues often transformed previously unremarkable landscapes into symbolic spaces fixing collective remembering so that they also acted to reinforce shared identity. Scates and Wheatley, taking up this issue of shared identity, emphasise and qualify it when they state that “[s]paces are seldom empty; they are imbued with cultural and historical associations”.¹¹³

These avenues fill the vast, seemingly empty landscape beyond the towns and enhance streetscapes within them. They create a strong cultural and historical association with those “in the know”, and by separating the traveller from the seemingly empty space beyond, create an association, even if unconsciously, between the traveller and the avenue with the memorial.

111. Joy Damousi, “Mourning Practices”, in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 3, *Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 371.

112. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 175.

113. Scates and Wheatley, *War Memorials*. 545.

More recent studies have focused on reinterpreting memorials and the role of politics, national and global as in *Places of the Heart*.¹¹⁴ In this work, Ashton and Hamilton have explored memorials from 1960 but in it they claim that those of the Great War are:

[i]mportant to understanding Australia's early embrace of the memorial to stand in for the absence of bodies after World War I, a war fought elsewhere, out of sight of most who would do the mourning for loved ones whose remains lay in battlefields or foreign graves. Less well understood, however, are the reasons for the emergence of a large number of other kinds of memorials in more recent years.¹¹⁵

Avenues of honour acknowledging the Great War were only occasionally for those who lay in foreign fields. The cosmography, civil religion and inscription of tradition represented in the major Ballarat avenue have been redeemed and continued by the dedication of a committee with strong familial, military and civic links to those originally responsible for its implementation in 1917.¹¹⁶ Today's Ballarat Avenue of Honour and its imitators fulfil Jackson's criteria on the vernacular landscape expressed over three decades ago in that it would give "the landscape beauty and dignity and keep the collective memory alive".¹¹⁷

These landscapes convey a strong sense of political history at multiple levels in the memories they carry. This includes the forethought that created them and the causes of their preservation, even in many cases, their loss. This forgetting or loss is an essential element in the narrative of memorials such as the avenues and has been commented upon by Powell and Dargavel and more recently by Chris McConville.¹¹⁸

This examination of the avenue of honour as a form of war memorial to those Australian citizens who volunteered for service was the inspiration for many others. Ballarat was an early example that influenced the creation of avenues of honour to the Great War and was a catalyst for this form of memorial across Australia. This thesis argues that the origins and influences of World War I avenues of honour across Australia were inspired by people from all walks of

114. Ashton and Hamilton, *Places of the Heart*, 1–20.

115. *Ibid*, 2.

116. John Wadsley, *Conservation Management Plan – Ballarat Avenue of Honour and Arch of Victory*, prepared for the City of Ballarat (Hobart, Tas: John Wadsley Planning and Heritage Consultancy, 2014), 7.

117. John B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), 81.

118. Chris McConville "Anzac: Memory and Forgetting in Local Landscapes," in *Fighting Against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century*, eds., Phillip Deery and Julie Kimber, (Melbourne, Vic: Leftbank Press, 2015), 329.

society and not necessarily from power groups. Due to the avenues' popularity, similar projects were advanced in England, North America and elsewhere.

It was not until 1987 that the avenues of honour received any serious academic attention and then from a student in landscape architecture, Janine Haddow. Haddow's *Avenues of Honour in Victoria* opened up an awareness of the paucity of material or research in this topic. There is little discourse on this specific form of memorialisation either in Australia or elsewhere, especially in relation to the Great War. This is surprising given that memorial avenues had been planted throughout Australia, the United States of America, Britain, Canada and New Zealand.

Although Pierre Nora's thesis is very much embedded in the ancient evolution of the French people and state, following on from this, he adds with reference to established organisations such as city politics: "In these institutions, social power was both exerted and represented. Thus mastering a verbal skill was considered a first step to power within established social roles".¹¹⁹

Nora's statement is valid outside the French experience and is demonstrated in the role of leaders such as Edward Price at Ballarat. If the rostrum was the place where this power of language was exercised, Price certainly knew how to exercise such power. He was a major corporate director and representative on national executives. He was always a strong advocate, not only for his own corporate interests but also in advancing the interests of the City of Ballarat. As elucidated by Lowenthal: "History is continually being altered in our private interests or on behalf of our community or country".¹²⁰

It is impossible to look at memory and memorialisation without acknowledging the proponents for memorialising using this form of avenue plantings and examining their motivations. Outside of Australia the work of Dr LeRoy Barnett in Michigan, USA, and others reveals many other influences in avenues in that country. Despite this, some overseas examples do hark back to Ballarat, at least indirectly, as this thesis demonstrates.

The study incorporates the historiography of memory, landscape and history in the context of the theory of power structures in the community; in the context of this thesis, the pulpit, the

119. Ibid, 329.

120. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 348.

rostrum and the bar were those structures, each of which had its own representations.¹²¹ Memory links the Ballarat Arch of Victory and the Avenue of Honour, and the events that surrounded them. These events and memories were perpetuated by the “Lucas Girls” and local media. The avenue has its own mythology, with its rituals and historic moments, which tells us of the popular culture in Ballarat at the time and how that has been represented through the Lucas organisation and particularly through the generations of Lucas Girls.

Nora conceives of memory as an organic and holistic entity, whereas Halbwachs’ concept is that the means by which memory is activated in the present relies on landmarks that engender recollections, thereby prompting present action. He sees collective memory as reconstructing the past “with the aid of the material traces, rites, texts and traditions left behind”.¹²²

Such a point of view presupposes that contemporary memorials to historical events are a reconstruction of the past.¹²³ These avenues are not a reconstruction, although some that were planted as replacements or for the first time in 2015 to commemorate WW1 at the time of centenary may be classified as such.

While Nora and Halbwachs define their theses on memory in these ways, the first work to focus on Australia’s war memorials was Ken Inglis. In *Sacred Places*, Inglis completely ignores the concept of memory in the terms used by Nora whose thesis is embedded in the Gallic experience. By way of contrast, Inglis assumes the etymological nexus between memory and memorial as primary, with the Australian representation of memory in the admonition “Lest we Forget”.

In 1998, Inglis led a renaissance into Australia’s war memorial discourse with his *Sacred Places* work, which brings the memorials into a sharper focus. As it is a seminal piece of work, his interpretations and the new awareness he has precipitated has raised even more questions. However, he failed to include avenues of honour as memorials when he established that “[m]emorials would have been still more numerous in Australia had the federal government not controlled their construction”.¹²⁴

121. Ibid, 392–441.

122. Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 175.

123. Iain Robertson and Tim Hall, “Memory, Identity and the Memorialization of Conflicts in the Scottish Highlands,” in *Heritage, Memory and the Politics of Identity: New Perspectives on the Cultural Landscape*, eds. Niamh Moore and Yvonne Whelan, (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2007), 21.

124. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 120.

He concluded that there were “forty or more memorials”.¹²⁵ Such conclusions were made in the light of his dismissal of the avenues as memorials. Had these avenues been accepted as memorials, he would have found that many hundreds of memorials existed across Australia by the end of 1917. This thesis challenges, examines and re-constructs such a view that dismisses these avenues as war memorials.

A quarter of a century on from Inglis’s ground-breaking work, this form of memorialisation remains under-researched despite all the revisiting of Great War history over the centenary events and their recent inclusion in Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley’s references in the *Cambridge History of the First World War*. What their work affirms, however, is that “memory also has a shelf life”.¹²⁶

Inglis also stated that Australian Indigenous people “raised no legible monuments”.¹²⁷ This seems to highlight an attitude to the type of arboreal memorials with which this thesis deals, highlighting the need to re-examine these apparent “non-monuments”. As Australia’s Indigenous people had sacred trees, by the end of the Great War so, too, did the European inhabitants and their descendants who now called Australia home. These memorial trees, which are sacred to the memory of those who served, are also viewed as sacred by their proponents, the surviving families of those honoured, and their respective communities. Despite this, many like Inglis dismiss these avenues, these “sacred trees”, as “novelties”.¹²⁸

Inglis, like most Australians of European descent, knew little of birthing trees and other similar Indigenous sacred trees in the landscape. Consequently, he failed to recognise these Indigenous “monuments”, and they, therefore, were missing from his view of the landscape. Considering this, it is significant that whether seen or unseen, “[m]onuments missing from the landscape can be as significant as those erected”.¹²⁹ This misunderstanding of what absence is, whether real or imagined, stands in contrast to Schama’s understanding that an absence can in fact, “become a presence”.¹³⁰

125. Ibid, 120

126. Scates and Wheatley, *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, 554.

127. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 21.

128. Ibid, 156.

129. Ibid, 21.

130. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1996), 25.

All of this calls into question the basis of knowledge that is claimed 100 years after the original plantings. As Wood says: “What does ‘knowing’ mean? At what level? One could very well be in possession of knowledge and not assimilate it ... There is a clear disjunction between knowledge and cognition”.¹³¹ Such a disjunction is asserted in the conclusions and methodologies of researchers into the story of the avenues of honour to date.

Many of the reasons put forward to try to explain these memorial avenues are challenged by this thesis. The research methodology used by some authors has led to incomplete and erroneous conclusions, which will be highlighted.

These memorial avenues are someone’s heritage as well as often being the heritage of an entire community and all that remains of its entire infrastructure. In all the discussions of heritage evaluations, Davison touches on social value and relationships between people and their attachment to places. When examining the avenues of honour from the Great War, however, such evaluations often fail. Davison, relating Peter Read’s *Returning to Nothing* about residents at Yallourn and Sydney, whose homes were demolished for other works, reminds us that “[t]hese places may not ‘make the grade’ for heritage registration but ... they are indeed someone’s heritage; it is only the outsiders who fail to see it”.¹³²

There is often a total disconnection between the twenty-first-century community and that which dwelt in the locality a century earlier. Often the modern community has little or no relationship with that of the one between 1914 and 1919. In such cases, today’s communities are, in this sense, outsiders. Cowangie North and Piangue, which no longer exist, and Eldorado and Tangambalanga, which had lost the connection to their memorial avenues of the Great War through social drift and demographic change over the generations, are examples.

In terms of scholarship into activities on the home front, there has been no body of work that includes these avenues, the reasons for their creation, importance, place in community or any social aspect of their purposes and effects over time. The exception to this failure to examine social history of the avenues is Ballarat in Victoria. Even the Ballarat story is skewed to the one avenue and the Lucas role in the story, which disregards the story relating to its non-

131. Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, 124.

132. Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History*, 128.

Lucas origins or the role of others in that endeavour. Yet here was a form of remembrance and memorialisation that was represented “in almost every town”.¹³³

In *The Labour of Loss*, Damousi does not examine the reality of the sense of loss when a child enlists and leaves home for reasons of wartime demands. However, she unconsciously qualifies this omission in writing: “On the home front, war had extinguished any certainty and replaced it with absence as a way of life”.¹³⁴

Nevertheless this absence, this form of loss, can be included in the parameters she has used. It does not, however, really address the aspect of living in a harsh environment, such as when loved ones and those who buttress them against hardships are no longer there and may never return except in terms of uncertainty. I would suggest that the creation of a living avenue for many people was a bulwark against their being overwhelmed by both the miasma of uncertainty across society and any fear of final loss. In *Australians at Home: World War I*, Michael McKernan cites the pacifist Methodist minister at Hay and the resignation of a church official as a warning: “Against assuming a widespread acceptance for the pro-war sentiments of the official church spokesmen”.¹³⁵

In this work, as in so many others on the home front, there is no mention of the many activities surrounding the drive for memorial trees and avenues, or on many of the historically significant activities unrelated to the war effort. While McKernan does expound on the urban–rural divide and commonalities in relation to the great strike of 1917, even this is framed in its relationship to recruitment and patriotism. Others that venture into home front activities do so only in a very measured sense, although, like McKernan, Beaumont does venture into events surrounding the great strike if in more personal terms.¹³⁶

The historiography of landscape, memory and identity have been dealt with by Schama, Halbwachs, Norah and Lowenthal, with Australian excursions by Reeves, Ziino, Damousi and others.¹³⁷ Other arboreal forms such as forests and groves, feature in Schama’s work

133. Mary Ellis, *People and Plants: A History of Gardening in Victoria* (Fish Creek, Vic: Mary Ellis, 2003), 98.

134. Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*, 18.

135. McKernan, *Australians at Home*, 30.

136. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 329.

137. Schama, *Landscape and Memory*; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*; Nora, *Realms of Memory*; Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*; Reeves, *Battlefield Events*; Ziino, *A Distant Grief*; Damousi, *The Labour of Loss*.

especially in reference to the German wilderness. George Mosse also explores the German appropriation of nature in relation to World War I.¹³⁸ However, neither of these researchers have looked to the link where avenues represent a taming of landscape. Groves were often planted as memorials and in Germany as, “[b]y ‘creating heroes’ ... the native village truly honoured its fallen”.¹³⁹ The renaissance concept of avenues symbolising civilization is not evident in Germany in the planting of such memorial avenues.

Often this has been explored with particular reference to war. The chief exponent of wartime remembrance and loss, Winter, also explores the wider issues of landscape, memory and identity. Wood too does her best to qualify Nora’s *Les Lieux de Memoire* in a postmodern world, characterising the present as a “memorial culture”.¹⁴⁰ In terms of memory, these avenues are a link between history and memory and could well represent a “new historiography serving as a vector of memory”.¹⁴¹

Winter claims that “[t]he search for the ‘meaning’ of the Great War began as soon as the war itself”.¹⁴² Australia’s avenues of honour, which began with the nation’s first great trial in that war, were an essential expression of that early search for meaning. The memorial avenues planted in Australia from 1915 onwards are a response and a material expression of that search for meaning. They found expression not necessarily immediately but in the great avenue planted at Ballarat between 1917 and 1918.

Language is important and is one of the issues involved with the significance, meaning and interpretation of these avenues. Lowenthal noted that “problems are introduced by language itself”.¹⁴³ As is demonstrated in this thesis, one of the great problems in the research approaches to the stories and significance of Australia’s avenues of honour is the issue of language, which has arisen largely as a result of different philosophies and methodologies. This is demonstrated when Hadow grapples with Jackson’s delineations of landscape

138. George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the memory of the World Wars*, (New York, Oxford University Press, 1990), 109.

139. *Ibid*, 110.

140. Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, 32.

141. *Ibid*, 169.

142. Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning*, 78.

143. Penning-Rowsell and Lowenthal, *Landscape Meanings and Values*, 119.

between popular landscape, ordinary landscape and his definition resting on vernacular landscape.¹⁴⁴

Further to this, there are other factors of language, which is evolving, as is the view of history as enunciated by Lowenthal: “The tangible past is in continual flux, altering, ageing, renewing and always interacting with the present”.¹⁴⁵ In this Lowenthal is supported by human geographer, Judith Tsouvalis who explores what she terms as “socialised nature” where in exploring English forests she considers how, “particular, socially defined reality formations come into being and change over time and space”.¹⁴⁶ Such an observation firmly recognises these memorials as socially defined but selectivity calls into question the fate of those once-sanctified places when so many had been bypassed by the time of the centenary of the Great War.

These trees are evidence of a terrible grief as well as a loss of high hopes and high ideals. The loss of fathers, sons and loved ones to another land beyond the home environment was incomprehensible. It was a land unseen and unimagined, where the only reports are those of utter loss for families across local communities. This was not, in the first instance, the grief of death, but it was coupled with the fear and anxiety of the possibility of death; when will it be our turn? Tumarkin touches on the need for preserving the avenues in the twenty-first century when she states: “The preservation of historical relics and material traces has become one of the central ways of managing and making sense of the past”.¹⁴⁷

How did one make sense of the past in Australia when right up to the anniversary commemorations of the Great War, these memorials that had been planted in so many Victorian towns had been misunderstood, unnoticed, or even ignored? The social story on the home front has been appropriated by the returned service personnel and organisations to the loss of the home-front memorials raised and planted by communities in their absence: “They are particularly local responses to the war, and they are populist and vernacular in their expression”.¹⁴⁸

144. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 30.

145. Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country*, 248.

146. Judith Souvalis, “Socialized Nature,” in *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns: Perspectives on Cultural Geography*, eds. Ian Cook et al. (Edinburgh, UK: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), 288.

147. Tumarkin, *Traumascapes*, 201.

148. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 44.

Those returnees who chose to honour their fallen comrades did so in an official way. The social story of a home-based, torn and traumatised populace still remains to be adequately revealed. These avenues of honour provide the material traces that assist Australians to make sense of the past as well as provide the understanding necessary for managing those traces.

With this in mind, the 2015 replacement avenue for the former Ballarat orphanage responded to a need of those former residents of an extinct institution to have a locus for their sense of home and loss for a home that had long since gone. They identified with the former residents who were names on an honour board. That honour board had been part of their childhood and remained as a physical trace. Like themselves, those inscribed on the board had been unrepresented in the memory of Ballarat. In the main, they had not been commemorated in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.¹⁴⁹

In the domain of public memory in Victoria, if not Australia, there has been a reawakening to the significance of these arboreal memorials that line so many of our roadways. Those on the home front contended with new stresses, particularly women without partners or sons, which included issues other than their part in the war effort. Like those away fighting, these people changed, too. Such issues and confusion surrounding public remembrance need further clarification and qualification. Whether or not such active remembrance is possible today when our culture has been shown to lack the desire or even the ability to undertake it remains to be seen over the long term.

As the avenues were created largely by local people, wide variations in style, form, plantings, timings and social contexts occurred or, as Haddow observed: “They have been created by local communities and exhibit many interesting local variations”.¹⁵⁰ Many researchers have failed to acknowledge the nexus between the political and social forces that brought this form of memorial about.¹⁵¹ Halbwachs’ concept is reinforced in that “historical memory is in the service of present political needs”.¹⁵²

149. Lynne Sheedy, *Arthur Kenny Avenue of Honour Re-creation* (Ballarat, Vic: Children and Family Services, 2015), 4

150. Haddow, *Avenues of Honour in Victoria*, 32.

151. Haddow on page 30 of her thesis cites a 1966 article in Melbourne’s *The Herald*: “These trees were planted by the people of Brighton”. This is her evidence for this being a populist, non-political memorial. This is not necessarily the case as the souvenir booklet issued by the City of Caulfield and Town of Brighton demonstrates with articles by Ernest Scott of Melbourne University and the respective mayors, together with the Governor of Victoria. Unlike the Lucas-driven avenue at Ballarat, the events leading up to the planting of this particular avenue were very much driven by local government and politics.

152. Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, 178.

It was these needs, whether at a local political level or from below, that raised these living memorials – memorials that have nurtured historical memory until the present. That memory is now being tested as to whether it serves either twenty-first century social or community needs. The efforts from governments to commemorate the centenary of the Great War did indicate that at some level these avenues do serve current political needs. The avenues that remain are silent witnesses to a concept and belief system that is now diminishing in the west as well as being testament to the influence of a smaller nation serving present needs in the wider world.

Commemoration today is putting a different focus on these avenues of honour. They are no longer simply war memorials or community memorials; they are Australia's only nationwide World War I heritage sites that have come to be "tangible reminders of what Australians and New Zealanders did when put to the highest test".¹⁵³

1.6 Conclusion

In support of the key argument that the avenues of honour were the premier memorials to the Great War and that Ballarat was pivotal to their popularity and transmission this chapter has explored the wealth of historical material produced over the past century on the Great War and its memorialisation. This literature expands each year and while some is now out of favour, the work of major contributors such as Kenneth Inglis, and in recent years historians Joan Beaumont and Bruce Scates, has been examined. This literature has set benchmarks and continues to contribute insights into these war years and memorialisation.

There has also been a gradual growth in interest for avenues of honour in the past decade with findings published in books, academic papers, magazine articles, and documentaries on memorials. Historians such as Katie Holmes and Kylie Mirmohanda are opening up this history in relation to landscape and heritage. By investigating the story of these avenues, their role and dissemination, this thesis adds to the discourse not only of the avenues in terms of memory, landscape history and heritage, but on memorialisation relating to the Great War by placing avenues of honour in the lexicon of war memorials.

153. "Anzac Day," *Queensland Times*, April 25, 1917.

Chapter Two

Avenues of Life

*All ye who tread this Avenue of Life,
Remember those who bowed beneath the strife,
Each leaf a laurel, crowns with deathless fame,
And every tree reveals a Hero's name.*
(H. Brew, Inscribed on the Arch of Victory Ballarat)¹

2.1 Introduction

In arguing that the avenues of honour were the premier memorials to the Great War this chapter examines those aspects which brought about or contributed significantly to avenues as a form of memorial in preference to built or sculpted memorials. Key aspects examined in this chapter are that they were a living object and therefore symbolised life. Further to this they tapped into religious sensitivities Christian classical and even albeit unconsciously, those of first nations. In the first instance they were affordable, could be accessed with relative ease and avoided official government constraints and scrutiny. In the second instance they tapped into the familiar process of Arbor Day, which had been struggling prior to the war. Thirdly, the shock of the news of Gallipoli motivated ordinary citizens to demonstrate solidarity with absent members and honour their volunteerism while at the same time appealing to local government faced with a deteriorating civic landscape due to wartime preoccupations including labour and financial shortages.

A stand-out feature of these avenues was that in the first year of World War I their creation commenced in Australia, a young nation far from the European war fronts. For that time, this was a unique form of memorialisation. Also these memorial avenues were being created not specifically for those killed in the Great War but in most cases for those who had served and those who had volunteered from their respective communities. Today, these memorial trees are the sole surviving living witnesses to what happened in Australia during the Great War.

2.2 Statues or Trees?

Looking at war memorials internationally, Scates and Wheatley address the notion of fictive kin, noting that “[w]hen the war ended, they turned to the task of commemoration”. They continue to focus on the memorials for those who died and the dynamic of those forms as they

1. Henry Brew, as frontispiece to *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men*, Ballarat, Lucas & Co, 1919. Brew's verse is also on the memorial at the Maffra Avenue of Honour that was dedicated in October 1918.

relate to funerals. They examine the various forms of cross raised around Europe: “Whatever form it took, to raise a cross was an act of devotion”.² Exploration continues into other forms such as the sword, the obelisk, pillar, column and ultimately the cenotaph.

While Scates and Wheatley’s essay on war memorials is a general overview, avenues of honour with their personalised plaques are not critically examined as war memorials. This can possibly be on account of such early commemoration, coupled with their overwhelming inclusion of all who served, not emphasising the funereal nature of the memorial.

The optimism of Australians before the war and following its outbreak, even after the news of Gallipoli, was no longer in evidence by 1916 and 1917. Prior to the war, in the reflected glow of 1890s’ nationalism and Federation celebrations, Australians enjoyed prosperity and freedom. Art and literature expressed Australian values and insights, and invention flourished. The war did not destroy this flowering as May Gibbs’, Douglas Mawson’s and Norman Lindsay’s great works developed or published in this period testify.³ Sculpture, however, was a far more expensive exercise that relied at that time on public commissions from those who were prosecuting the Great War.

Money from such sources was therefore unavailable to so much as contemplate such creations even had the war precautions regulations not precluded it:

Australian citizens ... were set on honouring every Australian who went into battle ... and a legal way of doing this was found in planting avenues of honour ... Long avenues of trees would not contravene the embargo on expenditure for war memorials.⁴

While most of Australia’s major painters and illustrators were called on to serve as war artists, they still extended creativity, like Dyson, in trying to illustrate the “quality he had noticed in the Anzac veterans ... a certain independence of spirit”.⁵ Even artist Ellis Rowan travelled on a painting trip to New Guinea in 1916 and returned in 1918 regardless of the war.⁶ The early

2. Ibid, 535.

3. May Gibbs created *Gumnut Babies* in 1916 and *Snugglepoot and Cuddlepoot* in 1918, selling 17,000 copies; Douglas Mawson produced *The Home of the Blizzard*; and Norman Lindsay *The Magic Pudding*.

4. Michael Taffe, “Keeping Memory Green,” *Historic Gardens Review* 32 (2015): 18.

5. Betty Churcher, *The Art of War* (Melbourne, Vic: The Miegunyah Press, 2004), 7.

6. Mary Ellis, *People and Plants: A History of Gardening in Victoria* (Fish Creek, Vic: Mary Ellis, 2003), 41.

preoccupation of the visual artists with the Australian landscape was also reflected in the vision of trees in the landscape as part of the psyche of the Australian people.

2.3 Symbolism

What the avenues do not seem to offer in any discernible way is a cohesive symbolism in the choice of trees employed. Many opening or planting dedications pay homage to the ancient Greeks by providing laurel wreaths for heroes, or to God, with prayerfulness or arboreal cathedrals. Old-world or ancient symbols of specific cultivars representing death or mourning appear in classical avenue dedications. In the Hecuba of Euripides, pine and cypress are and Virgil also refer to the pine betokening death in houses.⁷ Trees have been used as symbols in cultures globally since time immemorial: “Until comparatively recently, the relationship between people and trees was intimate and productive, reflected in customs”.⁸ Mosse reiterated that, “[n]ature symbolized the genuine sadness and resurrection but always an immortality that could be shared by the soldier and that legitimized wartime sacrifice”.⁹

Indigenous peoples have always had a great respect for the environment and natural forms. This is reflected in the practices of the Indigenous people in North America and Australia. In Canada, the totem is a powerful representation that calls on memory, while Australian Indigenous people have many sacred sites, some of which are trees. The extent to which such practices were absorbed by later settlers will be debated for many years to come; however, in Australia there is growing research into such cross-pollination of attitudes.

The first generation of European Australians, commonly termed “currency lads and lasses”, were strongly influenced by their Indigenous mentors. “Many of the street orphans lived and played with the Aboriginal children and learned from them”.¹⁰ Only a decade before the Great War, Constance Petrie wrote of her father:

From early childhood (my father) “Tom” was often with the blacks, and since there was no school to go to, and hardly a white child to play with, he naturally chummed in

7. “Funereal Emblems,” *Historic Environment* 2, no. 4 (1982): 43, accessed July 24, 2017, <http://www.australia.icomos.org>.

8. P. McNaughton, “Trees,” in *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture*, eds. Stephan Harrison, Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, (London, UK: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2004), 232.

9. George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 109.

10. Mal Garvin, *Us Aussies: The Fascinating History They Didn’t Teach Us at School* (Sydney, NSW: Hayzon through Fusion Australia, 1991), 26.

with all the little dark children. ... (They said) you learned our tongue, our ways and secrets.¹¹

Europeans had, in fact, “expanded their explanations of the origins of the Australian culture to include the Indigenous influence”.¹²

In reviewing the evolution of the cultural landscape, Jeans and Spearritt observed that:

A second aspect of the Aboriginal’s natural landscape was its absorption into their culture, so that humans and the landscape were at least seen as parts of a living community ... Every significant natural feature was associated with religion, ancestors and the dreamtime. This landscape of the mind, in which cultural values are attributed to landscape elements, has been slow to find its equivalent among white Australians.¹³

One of these customs has been the use of trees in the form of avenues as memorials to the individual and the community. Vernacular societies and their need to mark their presence on the landscape is a process Nora developed into his historical timeline of four stages of memory:¹⁴ first, is the creation of a spatial framework; second, is the creation of myths and legends around this framework; third, is the creation of ceremonies that identify history with memory; and fourth, the final stage, is when the original structure – in Nora’s thesis, Rheims Cathedral – continues to embody memory, history and images through books and schools.¹⁵

The spiritual dimension of landscape in Indigenous and colonial Christian society compared to today’s post-Christian society makes it difficult for us to grasp. Even Victoria’s Irish population revered St Brigid of Kildare and understood the symbolism inherent in the name Kildare or Cill Dara – Church of the Oak – which takes its name from the sacred oak that Brigid held so dear.¹⁶ In German the oak due to its strength was considered as the ‘German tree’. There too, the concept of trees as living memorials had a strong resonance and they

11. Constance Petrie, *Tom Petrie’s Reminiscences of Early Queensland* (Brisbane, Qld: Watson Ferguson & Co, 1904) cited in Mal Garvin, *Us Aussies: The Fascinating History They Didn’t Teach Us at School* (Sydney, NSW: Hayzon through Fusion Australia, 1991), 25.

12. Richard Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid: A Social and Cultural History of Rural Australia* (Perth, WA: Curtin University Books, 2005), 272.

13. Dennis N. Jeans and Peter Spearritt, *The Open Air Museum: The cultural landscape of New South Wales* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 1980), 1.

14. Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 3: 195.

15. Ibid, 195.

16. The legend is that having performed a miracle, St Brigid was given land at Cill Dara, “Church of the Oak”, from which Kildare takes its name.

were seen as being, “symbolic of individual and communal strength”.¹⁷ Schama listed a great many sacred connections with trees and groves such as those that take form as “[a] sacro bosco, or ‘holy grove’, ... a carefully untended area on the fringe of the garden. The imprecise boundary between rough country and smooth would be marked by guardian hermes [*sic*]”.¹⁸

Such a description can be aligned with the 22-kilometre-long Ballarat Avenue of Honour that, before the urban expansion of the late twentieth century, stretched into the rural landscape for most of that distance. It, too, formed just such a boundary between the rural surrounds and the highway, a symbol of civilisation that linked the major centres of that civilisation. Societies throughout history have worshiped or mythologised trees, a practice known as dendrolatry. Trees have played an important role in many of the world’s mythologies and religions, and they have brought about deep and sacred meanings throughout the ages.

The life cycle of trees, the elasticity of their branches, the annual decay and the revival of their foliage ensure they continue to be powerful symbols of growth, decay and resurrection that have transformative power: “The symbolic power of trees comes from the fact that they are good substitutes for humans”.¹⁹ Laura Rival noted that “[a]ll over the world, rituals marking the life cycle make extensive use of trees”.²⁰

The avenues of honour are a representation of this transformative power, and by recalling the claims of past civilisations, the generation that experienced World War I and its immediate impact on their lives sought to cement, in their turn, a new age for humanity. Avenues were a metaphor for civilisation in much the way Nora illustrated with Rheims Cathedral.²¹ It was during the ancient Greek and Roman civilisations that the avenue came to be a major metaphor for order and civilisation in western culture. The straight roads created for military expediency became something more than utilitarian. When these avenues were lined with statues or trees, they came to represent civilisation and humanity’s triumph over nature.

17. George Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 87.

18. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1996), 534.

19. Maurice Bloch, “Why Trees, Too, Are Good to Think With: Towards an Anthropology of Life,” in *The Social Life of Trees: Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism*, ed. Laura Rival (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1998), 40.

20. Laura Rival, “Trees, from Symbols of Life and Regeneration to Political Artefacts,” in *The Social Life of Trees: Anthropological Perspectives on Tree Symbolism*, ed. Laura Rival (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1998), 7.

21. Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 3:194.

Other great symbols of the Renaissance were taming the wilderness and of artistic merit being an expression of civilisation. In this, the *allée*, or formal avenue, was the symbol of nature tamed. This concept was further developed in the formal gardens of Italy, France and England from the sixteenth century through to the eighteenth century, with André Le Notre's work being the most notable. These gardens were also seen as works of art and signs of civilisation. Nora left the Tuileries Palace gardens on record and Le Notre completed the image before creating the Avenue de Champs-Élysées, the grand axis of Paris.²²

Those dedicating memorial avenues repeatedly referred back to the classical era and this worldwide rhetoric was voiced at the opening the 1917 Sunshine Avenue of Honour in Victoria, Australia: "The Governor-General likened the cypress-planted avenue to the Appian Way. Each of the 152 trees carried a plate bearing the name of an employee who had formerly resided in Sunshine, but was now fighting at the front".²³

However, the avenue of honour is more than a simple metaphor; it had become a sacred grove, a cathedral, a place to reflect and meditate on what might have been. At Ballarat in 1917, laurel wreaths were placed beneath each tree for Christmas to honour those represented in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour following Tilly Thompson's appeal to the Lucas workers: "To honour each absent hero with a laurel wreath as had been bestowed on Greek heroes of old".²⁴

The Saskatoon Memorial Avenue in Canada was described at its opening as, "a beautiful avenue of trees which is a more fitting symbol than the traditional stone monument. It symbolizes the eternal victory of life over death".²⁵ In advocating for the planting of these memorial avenues, the *Canadian Municipal Journal*, as early as 1922, could remind its readers that "[f]uture generations of Canadians will be reminded of the part that Canada played in the world's fight for democracy ... not in ornate stone but in nature's noblest gift to her people – the gift of trees".²⁶

22. David Joyce, ed., *Garden Styles: An Illustrated History of Design and Tradition* (London, UK: Pyramid Books, 1989), 47.

23. "Horticulture," *Weekly Times*, June 1, 1917.

24. E Lucas & Co., *Avenue of Honour Scrapbook*, Ref: 84.670, (Ballarat, Vic: Gold Museum Collection, Sovereign Hill Museums Association)

25. CBC News, citing *The Daily Phoenix* 1923. Accessed July 13, 2015. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatoon/saskatoon-living-memorial>.

26. Dane Lancken, "The Last Living War Memorial," *Canadian Geographic* 7, no. 6 (1997), 51.

This sentiment was still being reflected 70 years later when the Woodlawn Memorial Avenue at Saskatoon was declared a Canadian national historical site in 1991. Included in the citation was the following:

A tree is a living memorial often more enduring than marble or bronze; a tree is a thing of beauty and of inspiration ... a living token of the wonder and glory of nature ... a symbol of service ... for the life of a tree is a life of service.²⁷

Speaking at the planting ceremony of the Golden Point Memorial Avenue, where 85 soldiers and one nurse had enlisted from the church and the school, the Rev Thomas Indian professed that “[i]t was a sorrowful thing that so many had fallen”.²⁸ The report continued: “A row of cypress were [*sic*] planted in memoriam of the 19 who went forth to fight for freedom, but will not return again”.²⁹

The symbolism of trees in Methodism is reflected not only in the avenues but also on the 1891 foundation stone of Ballarat’s Pleasant Street Wesleyan Hall, now Uniting Church hall, praying in stone “[t]hat our sons may be as plants grown up in their youth”.³⁰ At the time of the Great War, Australia was not alone in this psychic need to represent life through living symbols such as trees.

In planting the original avenue at Gundagai in 1916 for the first anniversary of Anzac Day, a symbol of Judeo-Christianity was invoked:

Gundagai is going to pursue the old Mosaic custom of tree planting. An avenue of glorious Australian gums is to be set out to remind future generations of the fighting worth of the men who fell to keep them in freedom.³¹

At the opening of the Brighton–Caulfield Avenue of Honour, where Professor Scott made the reference to the sacredness of trees and the old pagan religions, W. H. Edgar calling on nationalism, stated at that same ceremony that:

May these stalwart memorials, whose spreading boughs proudly defying every wind that blows, be even to us a symbol of courage, enduring and victorious – resisting

27. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Agenda Paper, accessed June 15, 2017, <http://www.saskatoon.ca> Woodlawn Cemetery History.

28. “Memorial Avenue: Golden Point Celebration,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 29, 1918.

29. *Ibid.*

30. This inscription on the foundation stone is from the Old Testament of the Bible, Psalm 144:12.

31. *The Gundagai Independent and Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Advocate*, April 17, 1916.

stern and triumphant every evil that may threaten the safety and fair name of our beloved land.³²

Edgar not only brought to mind the Druidic oak, yew and alder but the Irish in his audience would have recalled the legend of St Brigid and the oak.³³ Considered sacred by just about every culture that has known it, the oak was held in particular esteem by the Norse and the Celts.³⁴ More generally Frazer observed that, “[t]he worship of the oak tree or the oak god seems to have been common to all the Aryans of Europe”.³⁵ Moving into the Christian era, Schama observed the arboreal sacred symbols in churches noting the form of architectural features in “the Celtic Yew, which still decorates the Devonian churchyards as an emblem of immortality”.³⁶

Examining the memorial trees of the Great War that survive in whole or part as cultural landscapes, when planted they were extolled in terms of the sacred over cold stone. On the first anniversary of the dedication of the Eurack Avenue of Honour in 1917, Rev Hailey, speaking of those who were honoured by the trees, added that “[n]o memorial was so significant. They were not dead. It was not of granite, but was of something living”.³⁷

This chapter examines the undercurrents and confluence of events that brought about the move towards these arboreal memorials in Australia in preference to built monuments. In Inglis’ first essay into Australia’s war memorials as sacred sites, he observed that “[i]n churches and cemeteries, memorials honoured particular men who had settled in a colony after serving in a war, or who had come in one of the British regiments which garrisoned the colonies”.³⁸ He defined such objects not as war memorials but as mortuary tributes to individuals who happened to be soldiers.³⁹

32. City of Caulfield and Town of Brighton, *Avenues of Honour: Public Demonstration* souvenir booklet, 7.

33. The legend is that having performed a miracle, St Brigid was given land at Cill Dara, “Church of the Oak,” from which Kildare takes its name.

34. James MacKillop, “Oak,” in *A Dictionary of Celtic Mythology*, ed. James MacKillop (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2004). <http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780198609674.001.0001/acref-9780198609674-e-3311>.

35. James. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 358.

36. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1996), 217.

37. “Impressive Gathering: Honouring the Brave,” *Colac Reformer*, July 10, 1917.

38. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 15.

The single most influential background factor in the Australian psyche up to Federation was the convict stain. Statuary and a culture of honouring dignitaries was limited in the Australian colonies, which had been receiving convicts up until 1868, only 46 years before the war. Inglis again addresses this fact in the context of the Boer War: “The disgrace of Botany Bay was being washed out in the waters of the Nile ... In an outpost of empire whose seamy origins were still uncomfortably recent”.⁴⁰

Most Australian colonies still had convicts, emancipists and/or their children living at the time of Federation and at the outbreak of the Great War. Added to this were Irish resentments from the same class of settlers. Spread throughout the mass of the Australian people of all but the minority ruling class, the culture and psyche of these people was not one of erecting monuments to authority figures and the military.

The Australian legend had grown already into one that identified as a trait the defying of authority. These new Australians created folk heroes out of those who did defy authority. Prior to 1914, Australia had no great culture of monumentality; such monuments as there were mainly honoured the monarch, explorers and writers. Mrs Macquarie’s Chair at Sydney was a hewn rock. There was one war memorial in Hobart for the 99th Regiment of Foot who died in the Maori wars and that at Ballarat in Victoria for the Eureka Stockaders.⁴¹ Another for the leader of the miners, Peter Lalor, is of the order of monuments of old – that is, for leaders as heroes.

By 1900 there were possibly not many more statues in the Australian colonies than those to:

Twenty to thirty people ... all males except the Queen. Sydney had eight, Melbourne five, Hobart two, Adelaide one, Brisbane and Perth none. In the largest provincial cities Ballarat had five and Newcastle one. They embodied a colonial culture.⁴²

Such figures indicated a huge gulf between the upper middle class and the small settlers – both convict and free – of first and second generation British colonials across Australia. These were monuments and statues raised by free settlers of a type, either official or government

39. Ibid, 15.

40. Ibid, 18.

41. Ibid, 12, 19.

42. Ibid, 26.

inspired, of men who had made good and sought to make a contribution to civilisation. Inglis inadvertently signals the reality for the small settler and the masses when he observes in relation to the Eureka site that “Ballarat’s lethargic response to an appeal for a granite obelisk at the battle site ... suggests that local posterity cared little about Eureka”.⁴³

Contrary to this, the response, or lack of it, testifies to an Australian sense of egalitarianism in that monuments were for the establishment. The Eureka veterans and the older locals did not seek memorials in a built, monumental form. Their memorials were in freedoms gained and the right to a fair go; freedom to grow and hold firm to the soil as expressed in nature and the tree. These old-timers sought and obtained a reserve to be their monument. It was of equal importance to those at the time for “[t]he enclosure [is] to be further ornamented by the planting of trees and shrubs”.⁴⁴

The Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour was planted to honour, among others, descendants of those who fought at Eureka and had served in the war. Other trees in that avenue were for General Birdwood and the serving sons of those on the Eureka Stockade Memorial Committee. As Figure 4 illustrates, these trees were planted too closely together and eventually needed removing so that today only one remains.



43. Ibid, 19.

44. William B. Withers, *History of Ballarat*, (Ballarat, Vic: Niven, 1887), 157.

Figure 4. Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour, *Eureka: Official Souvenir*.
Ballarat, Eureka Stockade Committee, 1954.

Valuable in establishing the genealogy of statues and monuments in Australia, Inglis again demonstrates a disregard for avenues of honour as a memorial form in claiming that “the statue was second only to the obelisk in popularity”.⁴⁵ The list of places where there were never statues but avenues, such as Cowangie, Dobie or Danyo, are disregarded. Then there are a host of others where statues or other forms later superseded the earlier avenues. The vast number of such examples indicates that the avenue was the first form of memorial to the Great War in Australia.

The practice of visiting dignitaries, usually regal and vice-regal visitors planting trees in public parks, was well established in Australia by the time of the Great War. The regional Victorian town of Horsham had pioneered the memorial avenue concept following the Boer War.⁴⁶ Again Inglis cites the statues unveiled by visiting dignitaries without reference to the many trees planted on such occasions. The multitude of such celebratory and memorial plantings contests the superiority of the built memorial in Australia. In assessing the sites of inter-tribal clashes between Indigenous Australians before 1788, he observes that they “[l]eft no marks on the land, or none that the new occupants could recognize”.⁴⁷

Inglis’s work is without peer, even in relation to the centenary of the Great War, yet this same observation of invisibility can be made of the arboreal citizens’ memorials created by the European settlers. Complete or incomplete, Australians today still pass through the avenues of honour, often being unable to recognise them for what they are. Avenues of honour have taken on invisibility, especially those that are eucalypts, which often blend in with the landscape.

In 1915, however, Australian horticulturalists were working towards street trees in the towns. Ballarat has already been mentioned in this regard but the directors of the major botanical gardens in Australia, apart from their transnational networks, were in constant communication

45. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 52.

46. *Horsham Times*, August 27, 1901.

47. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 21.

in working towards this ideal: “All of these men were interested in fostering an appreciation of trees and were instrumental in initiating Arbour Day programmes in public schools”.⁴⁸

The first non-arboreal memorial raised to the Great War was on Arbour Day in Adelaide four months later on 7 September 1915.⁴⁹ This was celebrated with the unveiling of an obelisk in the parkland and the wearing of sprigs of wattle by the people across the whole city. While the memorial was a masonry one, the commemoration encapsulated the wattle theme as at Gundagai in New South Wales the following year. However, neighbouring towns did not necessarily emulate each other. Despite the Gundagai response, no spark could be found in nearby Young whereby such an effort would be emulated.⁵⁰

Not everyone embraced the concept of avenues, as the example of the people at Donald in Chapter Five explains. Similarly at Lilydale, the proposal for an honour avenue was put forward in October 1917 and despite many proposals and objections, it was quashed in favour of a more significant memorial the following year.⁵¹ At nearby towns such as Yarra Glen and Coldstream, however, avenues proceeded.

Across in South Australia, Renmark had already planted an avenue on 11 September 1915, a remnant of which survives (see Figure 5).⁵² At the gathering Major Roley of the Salvation Army, Rev Heath and the local Roman Catholic priest, Fr McCabe addressed the crowds. During his speech, Fr McCabe, mentioned the justice and injustice of war, reminding those present that:

[i]t was right and fitting that something should be done to keep fresh in their memories the sacrifices of the brave men who were leaving their midst to fight for their king and country.⁵³

48. Jodi Frawley, “Campaigning for Street Trees, Sydney Botanic Gardens, 1890s–1920s,” *Environment and History* 15 (2009): 303.

49. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 79.

50. “Will Young Follow?,” *Young Witness*, June 2, 1916.

51. “Lilydale Honour Avenue Abandoned,” *Ringwood and Croydon Chronicle*, July 19, 1918.

52. Google Maps – Renmark, accessed 16 August 2017. <https://www.google.com.au/maps/@-34.1739871,140.7506412,3a,47.6y,102.64h,94.8t/data=!3m6!1e1!3m4!1sj0WKRX505JM6wdxtHrDO5w!2e0!7i13312!8i6656?dcr=0>

53. “Renmark’s Arbour Day,” *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, September 16, 1915.



Figure 5. Remnant 1915 Avenue Palms, Renmark, South Australia. (Google Maps 2015)

This event incorporated all that a small rural community could offer in terms of civic responsibility, community celebration and the involvement of the local churches. Even at this early stage in the history of Australia's memorial avenues to the Great War, the air of celebration was palpable:

Renmark was en fete on Saturday when Arbour Day, combined with the aiding of the French Red Cross Fund, was celebrated. ... Throughout the day ladies and lasses thronged the streets offering for sale flags, buttons and other tricolor [*sic*] favours.⁵⁴

On the same day at Lobethal, in the predominantly German settled area of South Australia, not only had an avenue of 250 pine trees been planted but also “[a] special grove was planted in honour of the soldiers who had left the township”.⁵⁵

After June 1917, the rate of planting of avenues of honour and memorial trees to those who served in the Great War increased exponentially in Australia, particularly in Victoria. This occurred when news started being reported around the country of the 500 trees being planted

54. Ibid.

55. “The Country,” *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), September 15, 1915.

to form the Ballarat Avenue of Honour. By the time a second planting took place in August of that year, Ballarat and the surrounding areas could boast of many such avenues and news of them spread across the country. From Albany and Perth through to the arid areas like Kalgoorlie, and from Townsville, Cairns and the Atherton Tableland in North Queensland down to Hobart, reports of Ballarat's memorial plantings were featured in the newspapers.

By late 1918 when dedicating the Honour Roll at Thompson's Foundry Castlemaine in 1918, the Victorian premier, H. S. W. Lawson reminded those present that the honour roll:

Primarily served as a tribute of respect, regard and admiration for the men who had gone to fight for us, and testified to the motive and the spirit which inspired them in their enterprise.⁵⁶

Such a tribute, however, appeared to fall short of an enduring memorial to the service of those who volunteered to fight as the premier went on to add:

They should honour their memory by erecting an enduring memorial of their service and sacrifice ... In other municipalities avenues of honour were being established, particularly referring to Ballarat and Macedon and he thought that a similar movement might well be initiated in Castlemaine.⁵⁷

While nothing came of this suggestion at Castlemaine, the idea was further promoted and other towns in the vicinity planted avenues along the lines suggested. Through such sentiments as those expressed by the premier, the idea of avenues as a legitimate form of memorial had become accepted among the general populace. Another thought expressed by the premier lifting the profile of those at home as against those serving, is the sentiment of this thesis in that "[e]very man who did his work faithfully and well, and put his conscience into his work, was doing some public service".⁵⁸

A catalyst in this proliferation of avenues of honour under whatever names they might have variously been called was certainly the letter sent to all councils in the state by the Victorian Recruitment Committee in 1917.⁵⁹ This letter, published in newspapers across the state, cited

56. "Thompson and Co., Pty. Ltd. Employees' Honour Roll Unveiling Ceremony," *Castlemaine Mail*, September 9, 1918.

57. *Ibid.*

58. *Ibid.*

59. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 156.

the Ballarat example among others. This action accelerated efforts in Victoria in the final 10 months of the war as detailed in Chapter Three.

Multiple listings appeared regularly in the country news columns of major metropolitan papers such as Melbourne's *The Age*.⁶⁰ The first acknowledgement of the avenues of honour in terms of a movement seems to have come from the Melbourne *Argus* in 1918.⁶¹ This major reporting of avenue projects helped create a roll-on effect. The Shire of Ararat was receiving a flow of letters requesting permission to plant avenues of honour from towns across the shire.⁶²

While not so loud, there was a voice from returned soldiers and their families and supporters. In north-eastern Victoria, the Strathbogie District Ladies' Returned Soldiers' Association was proposing:

[t]o honour every soldier from this district who voluntarily stepped between us and danger, and we consider it utterly impossible to allow those brave lads to return to their native places and remain, certainly some months and possible years without one word or sign from us of our deep debt.⁶³

Not having a tradition or precedent of statuary or sculptured hero worship in Australia, such expressions needed time to bear fruit. Despite other memorial forms supplanting the Great War avenues across Australia and elsewhere, it was these original arboreal tributes with their individual memorial plaques that "were helping society to remember and better understand its sense of heritage and have a greater sense of its identity".⁶⁴

The endeavours of returned servicemen of the calibre of Monash saw determined efforts by those with a sense of Empire and of the martial debt owed by the community at home to those who had gone to war. These determined efforts resulted in the creation of Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance and the demise of that city's earlier avenue planting in the Domain.

60. "In the Country," *The Age*, August 5, 1918. The "In the Country" page regularly featured country avenue events. On page 7 of this edition there are details of avenues of honour at Caulfield-Brighton, Beaufort, Daylesford, Benalla and interstate in Hobart. The 19 August edition on page 6 listed the plantings at Avoca, Ballarat, Tallangatta and Wycheproof.

61. "Ballarat Avenue of Honour Movement," *The Argus*, July 22, 1918, 3.

62. Shire of Ararat Minute Books, PROV, VPRS 12991/P1 Unit 13. The Minutes of 7 May 1918, 4 June 1918, 2 July 1918 detail the Lake Bolac, Maroona and Tatyoon avenue applications for avenue plantings respectively, with similar requests from across the shire continuing over several months.

63. "To the Editor: Honouring Returned Soldiers," *Euroa Gazette*, May 22, 1917.

64. Warwick Frost and Jenifer Laing, *Commemorative Events: Memories, Identities, Conflicts*, (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012), 1.

Many communities worked towards creating avenues, but with the end of the war, turned to more traditional memorials. The Ballarat South Progress Association, after looking into memorial options, chose to support the avenue of honour that was to be planted in Hill Street.⁶⁵ Egerton, another township near Ballarat, raised the money but seems to have proceeded no further than to purchase its honour board from Ballarat manufacturer Tunbridge and Sons.

Today, the avenue of honour is accepted as an Australian national cultural form of memorialisation. In terms of the past, Inga Clendinnen wrote that “in human affairs there is never a single narrative”.⁶⁶ One of the secondary aims of this thesis has been to raise the question of the legitimacy of Australia’s avenues of honour, and their importance as a landscape, memorial and cultural record of a post-colonial society. It also tests this legitimacy against what has been set to one side by military historians, social historians and politicians.

This is a story of the people left behind to battle a severe rural depression while their political masters were scoring points over loyalty or disloyalty regarding an imperial war that was fundamentally occurring on the other side of the globe. It raises the question of those who escaped another form of war – economic war. Many stayed to counter economic hardship and loss to their families while being labelled cowards by politicians and others committed to another course. In 1914, it was not so much for Australia that many answered the call but for the Empire. The connectedness to Britain, an emotional and psychological home, has been drawn upon in describing Tate, Bean and others.⁶⁷

The factors leading to the creation of our avenues of honour were complex and interconnected. There were five key factors that brought Australia to the creation of avenues of honour: Federation, Arbour Day, Gallipoli, roadway/street beautification and distance.

2.4 Federation

The first of these was the federation of the six former Australian colonies into the Commonwealth of Australia. Despite years of coming together, the actual event in 1901 created a heightened sense of united purpose and identity. However, even with the catalyst of

65. *Evening Echo*, August 3, 1918.

66. Inga Clendinnen, “The History Question: Who Owns the Past?” *Quarterly Essay* 23 (2006): 3.

67. This is confirmed in contemporary media reports cited in this thesis and confirmed in the mentions of birthplaces in Britain by McKernan and Inglis. Inglis again refers to C.E.W Bean as one of “the best of Britons”.

war, this sense of oneness took many years to coalesce as the experience of colonial and later national Boer War memorialisation attests.⁶⁸

While the people throughout the Australian colonies had referred to themselves generally as Australians from the early years of settlement a century before Federation, the actual events of 1 January 1901 started a true realignment of identity. By the time the Great War was upon this infant nation, the people were still proudly British citizens, with colonial identities not yet totally divested.

This sense of Britishness was maintained in diminishing degrees for 50 years through such celebrations as Empire Day. The sense of colonial identity is further demonstrated by the nomenclature ascribed in Victoria to the National Gallery and, for a long time, Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, which, as reported in *The Age* in 1928, was known as the National War Memorial.⁶⁹

Universal satisfaction was expressed with the selected design for the national war memorial. ... the memorial would fittingly commemorate the part played by Australia in the world war. "What is it that makes a country?" asked the Premier, when interviewed yesterday. And before a reply was forthcoming, he remarked: "It is sentiment; tradition ... that is the soul of a country".⁷⁰

It would take two world wars and the resultant influx of refugees and migrants from diverse cultures before obvious cracks started appearing in the Australian psyche, whereby people no longer clung to their status as colonials and British subjects.

Earlier history was very much applied to colonial ascendancy, especially between rival colonies New South Wales and Victoria. Even colonial South Australia had to deal with issues at an international level.⁷¹

In August 1876, negotiations were commenced with Japan for the governmentally controlled immigration of Japanese people on a large scale.

68. Carolyn Holbrook, *ANZAC, The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 27.

69. "National War Memorial," *The Age*, December 21, 1928.

70. "National War Memorial," *The Age*, January 18, 1924; December 21, 1928.

71. *Northern Territory Times and Gazette*, September 16, 1876. In 1876, Wilton Hack, as representative of the South Australian Government, managed to broker a deal leasing large tracts in the Northern Territory to Japan. While this was reported in this newspaper, it was also reported in other newspapers throughout South Australia.

The immigrants were to go to the Northern Territory as free settlers and not as indentured labourers ... the Japanese were to be peasant proprietors ... The cabinet of the South Australian Government drafted a special land clause for the prospective new settlers.⁷²

Such matters which would have embroiled the later federated nation in controversy went almost unremarked in newspapers outside South Australia and its northern territory. Federation changed the dynamic irrevocably; such matters were now the concern of everyone throughout the nation.

Even in the 1890s, each colony was independently supporting Britain and the Empire in South Africa. However, as a federated unit, Holbrook notes that the public in these former colonies “simply lost interest”.⁷³ The colonial interests and rivalries meant that even after 1900, the New South Wales Mounted Rifles, the Tasmanian Regiment, the Victorian Mounted Rifles, and the Royal New South Wales Lancers are recorded among the contingents from Australia.⁷⁴

Scates and Wheatley most recently reminded us that “nationalism was no doubt a powerful frame of reference”.⁷⁵ This may be the case with major memorials, but the majority of these avenues were, and remain, vernacular memorials or folk memorials that are regarded with a degree of disdain by those who see themselves as more sophisticated. In the kindest circumstances, they were often regarded as temporary until a “proper” memorial could be constructed. While such was sometimes the case, it is a gross misjudgement of the sentiments of the people between 1915 and 1920 to generalise in this way.

Nationalism, however, was inherent in one colonial organisation founded in 1871 with a major policy to promote the cause of federation; it was the Australian Natives Association (ANA). Having successfully supported that cause, after 1901 the ANA then went on to lobby for other national goals, one of which was to promote re-forestation through education. This

72. Frank Berkery, *East Goes West* (Melbourne, Vic: Fraser & Jenkinson, 1944), 119–120.

73. Carolyn Holbrook, *ANZAC, The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 31.

74. “Boer War Units,” Australian War Memorial, accessed 2 August 2016, <http://www.awm.gov.au>.

75. Scates and Wheatley, *War Memorials*, 529.

led to the ANA's strong advocacy for Arbour Day and the later creation of Wattle Day in 1910.⁷⁶

2.5 Arbour Day

The second influence which led to the move to plant avenues of honour was the Arbour Day movement. This was mainly embedded in the practice of holding these arbour days when communities of various types came together and planted trees. The modern concept of Arbour Day was created when over one million trees were planted in Nebraska, USA, on 10 April 1872.⁷⁷

The Arbour Day practice was introduced to Australia following on from Stephen Cureton's testimony before the Victorian Royal Commission into Vegetable Products in 1886.⁷⁸ Cureton was the agent and deputy for the Chaffey brothers "Australian irrigation colonies". In his testimony Cureton spoke of the impact of such days in Michigan, concluding that "it is customary in the States to plant trees".⁷⁹ Following on from this, arbour days were introduced into Australia – initially in South Australia and Victoria, which were the two colonies that had been most immediately influenced by the Chaffey irrigation projects and settlements; from these two states, they spread throughout Australia.⁸⁰

Most of Ballarat's state schools, ANA branches and progress associations were enthusiastic proponents of the Arbour Day program and planted trees and plantations across the urban areas. They were also supportive of the programs pursued by their respective municipalities and institutions. In plans for planting further avenues of honour at Ballarat East in 1917, the

76. Adam Bede, "Wattle Day," in *The Oxford Companion to Australian Gardens*, eds., Richard Aitken and Michael Looker (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 2002), 632.

77. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th ed. s. v. "Arbor Day"; *Micropedia*, vol. 1, A, 479, 480. Also ref: Victoria, *Royal Commission into Vegetable Products: First Progress Report Together with the Minutes of Evidence*, Victorian Government, 1886-1894. Testimony of Stephen Cureton following which Arbour Day practices were introduced into Victoria and South Australia, 1:103.

78. Victorian Government, *Victorian Royal Commission into Vegetable Products: First Progress Report together with the Minutes of Evidence, 1886-1894*, (Melbourne, Vic: Victorian Government, 1890), 1:158.

79. *Ibid*, 158.

80. Michael Taffe, *Growing a Garden City: Ballarat Horticultural Society 1859–2009* (Ballarat, Vic: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2014), 36. This text relates the story of the first Arbour Day held at Ballarat on 24 May 1890 and how it followed on from Adelaide's Arbour Day the previous year in 1889.

Ballarat East branch of ANA moved that “Australian trees be planted instead of imported trees where practicable”.⁸¹

Here was no celebration of victory or even a monument to a lost battle; this was a celebration of the volunteer, the common man. The examples of avenues at Normanville and Victor Harbor later in this chapter demonstrated independent voices in their communities; however, since Federation the state school systems across the Australian states had held great influence. In Victoria, Frank Tate, who had been the director of the education Department since 1902, was a great advocate of re-forestation and school gardening. Tate introduced the school paper as a tool for education beyond the classroom. Triolo notes that this meant, “The Department, therefore, had powerful access to private homes and local communities and did not shy from the fact”.⁸²

The first major project of the ANA was the Arbour Day program, which was also enthusiastically taken up by the education departments in the various states. While there are significant examples of school arbour days in late nineteenth-century Victoria, such as at Inverleigh, the official record is that they were implemented throughout Victorian schools in 1902: “Victorian teachers took up the Arbour Day movement when it was introduced into this state twelve years ago”.⁸³ Most avenues planted to honour the Great War in Australia and later elsewhere were planted on designated arbour days.

Prior to the war, the Arbour Day movement was increasingly promoted through the ANA, the progress associations and the state schools. The Wattle Day program, which started later, was similarly supported and in many ways connected with it, too, being supported by the ANA and the various education departments of the states. Wattle Day became a growing popular public event for many Australians after the adoption of the wattle as the national floral emblem by the ANA in 1912.⁸⁴ Adelaide celebrated its first Wattle Day in 1911.⁸⁵ By the following year, it was celebrated at Ballarat in Victoria.

81. “Minutes of the ANA, Ballarat East Branch,” July 3, 1917, 401. Sebastopol Historical Society collection.

82. Rosalie Triolo, *Our Schools and the War* (Melbourne, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2012), xvi.

83. Victorian Government, *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, May 25, 1914, 205.

84. Bede, *Wattle Day*, 632.

85. *The Register* (Adelaide), January 1, 1912.

Following the outbreak of World War I, the idea of planting memorial avenues of significant trees that would, among other things, symbolise long life was married with the Arbour Day movement. Wattles, it was resolved, had too short a life span for the purpose of memorialisation. Joseph Maiden, the New South Wales Government botanist and the director of the Sydney Botanic Gardens advised against using wattles as memorial plantings because they were “unsuited to street planting as they matured too quickly”.⁸⁶

The Victorian Education Department at the time encouraged schools to plant native trees to memorialise those who fell at Gallipoli.⁸⁷ Wattle, as Maiden had warned, is a very short lived tree, which was not a good symbol for life in terms of uniting with loved ones far away on the battlefield, let alone as a lasting memorial to those who died. Overlooking the argument of the lifespan of wattles, R. B. Orchard, New South Wales Minister for Recruiting, eulogised the avenue of honour at Bathurst:

An avenue of wattle trees extends for fully two miles, and some of the trees are now looking very well. In a few years’ time the drive will present a beautiful appearance, particularly in wattle time, with a gorgeous wealth of golden bloom. On each tree guard, there is a brass plate, giving the name, rank, and corps of the soldier or sailor whose memory it is intended to perpetuate.⁸⁸

The claim that these avenues of honour were uniquely Australian, certainly in the initial stages, was justified. Arbour days in Australia, as in the USA and Canada, saw plantings of shrubs, be they wattle or other cultivars, and this extended into the avenue plantings. The Arbor Day program had declined alarmingly by 1912.⁸⁹ It could be argued that with the war and the renewed promotion by the education departments, its revival brought about a high point leading to its merging into the movement for avenues of honour.

Reports of the state schools’ Arbour Day of 1916 across Victoria reveal that there was a mixture of plantings, as previously, but a new motive had evolved to memorialise the Anzacs. Those occasions still included tree and shrub plantings as well as the cultivation of flower beds and vegetable gardens. Here, too, the influence of Donald Fraser in New South Wales

86. Joseph. H. Maiden, “Tree Planting for Shade and Ornament in New South Wales,” 301, cited in Sarah Johnson, *Trees*, (Cambridge, UK: White Horse Press, 2015), 132. With special reference to municipal requirements.

87. Victorian Government, *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, May 18, 1916, 112

88. *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, July 6, 1918.

89. Victorian Government, *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, May 25, 1914, 205.

was evident and his ideals were picked up and transmitted through the Victorian Education Department's *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid* by Frank Tate, another ardent advocate for Arbour Day, who said:

The valuable suggestion has been made by Mr Donald Fraser, an inspector of schools in New South Wales, to commemorate the landing of the Australian and New Zealand soldiers at Gallipoli, avenues of native trees should be planted on the coming Arbour Day.⁹⁰

As usual, many were promoted simply as arbour days; several, while still celebrating Arbour Day, specifically planted honour avenues. Eurack State School in Victoria followed this trend with both its original avenue of shrubs planted in the school grounds by the schoolchildren and followed up with an avenue of honour along the road shortly afterwards.

Local progress associations, state school authorities and municipal bodies came together as at Goornong, where instead of trees being planted in the school grounds as previously, "[t]he tree planting took place in the streets".⁹¹ On that occasion trees were also planted by "Private McKinstry, a returned soldier ... in memory of his dead comrades".⁹² At Smeaton, near Ballarat, the state school students celebrated Arbour Day 1916 by planting an Anzac Avenue of acacias and flowering red gums in the street leading to the school, one flowering red gum was planted to memorialise the recently killed Lord Kitchener.⁹³

The *Bendigo Advertiser* in June of 1916 reported that the newly established Bendigo East State School committee moved that its Arbour Day be celebrated with an "Anzac avenue in honour of the Anzac heroes".⁹⁴ All mentions of this planting, however, give it as an Arbour Day tree planting with the Anzac reference secondary. In the same region, Myers Creek State School's Arbour Day witnessed the planting of an honour avenue "[i]n the school ground on

90. Victorian Government, "Arbour Day 1916: Anzac Avenues," *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid*, May 18, 1916. 112.

91. "At Goornong," *The Bendigo Independent*, June 16, 1917.

92. *Ibid.*

93 "Smeaton: Arbor Day," *Creswick Advertiser*, 16 June, 1916.

94. *Bendigo Advertiser*, June 8, 1916.

Friday [16 June 1916]”.⁹⁵ The year 1916 proved to be a very busy one in the Bendigo district as the school at Raywood was also planting an “Anzac Avenue”.⁹⁶

Arbour days also meant that many individual tree plantings were undertaken and after the war these included the ubiquitous “lone pine” and other memorial trees such as those in botanical gardens and in groves. At Bright in Victoria, a small memorial grove was planted in the town centre.⁹⁷



Figure 6. Warrion Avenue of Honour 1915–1919.

As early as 1915, the small school at Warrion near Colac celebrated its Arbour Day with the planting of a tree in honour of Pte E. C. Ilett who died at Gallipoli. The ensuing arbour days throughout the Great War saw this single tree develop into a small avenue, which was possibly one of the most poignant messages carried by such incremental avenues, given the creeping nature of anxiety and grief that befell across many rural communities over the war years (Figure 6).

95. *Bendigo Advertiser*, June 21, 1916.

96. *Bendigo Advertiser*, June 19, 1916.

97. “Commemorating Fallen Soldiers: Tree Planting at Bright,” *Alpine Observer*, June 1, 1916.

In this way the traditional Arbour Day, which often meant that schoolchildren planted trees and shrubs in the school grounds or close by, gradually developed into a wider community program. Similarly, Arbour Day became the day on which communities and schools planted a memorial avenue to their serving members instead of other forms of parkland plantations.

The avenue at Benalla was planted on 3 August 1918, with the trepidation of the war drawing to an end and a commitment by Council to plant Australian trees for Australian soldiers: “The silky oak, *Grevillea robusta*, a native of New South Wales, had been selected as fitting to the memory of the Australian soldier”.⁹⁸ While not necessarily native to the location in which they were planted, this desire for Australian trees saw many eucalypts planted on roadsides across the country, especially in Victoria. The desire for natives was later rationalised as many eucalypts proved unsuitable and were either removed altogether over time or were replaced with exotics; even so: “Sorrento completed the planting of a memorial avenue on Back Beach road. Over 40 native sheoaks were planted and enclosed with guards”.⁹⁹

In the case of the children’s avenue at Eurack, the shrubs were never replaced, or as at Drummond, where elms and oaks replaced the original mahogany gums, which had succumbed to a canker. The sugar gums, *Eucalyptus cladocalyx*, at Eldorado were gradually removed for practical reasons of safety as they had become increasingly dangerous with age due to their habit of dropping their limbs. In the closer suburbs at Brighton–Caulfield, “[t]he trees selected for the Avenue are the white, rosea and pink flowering gums”.¹⁰⁰

A minor factor that fell under the Arbour Day banner in influencing the move towards such arboreal memorials emanated from the *War Precautions Act 1914*, which placed restrictions on the expenditure and the processes involved in creating war memorials.¹⁰¹ The Act brought about many new regulations. It introduced the first national income tax system in Australia and was very general in its scope. Possibly the most contested regulations and series of legislative moves arising from this Act were those surrounding the conscription issue.

For all the focus on such regulations and actions, little regard had been given to those regulations in 1916 whereby no war memorials costing in excess of £25 were allowed to be

98. *The Independent* (Benalla), August 9, 1918.

99. *The Courier* (Ballarat), September 7, 1917.

100. “Our Boys: Avenues of Honour,” *Sandringham Southern Cross*, July 6, 1918.

101. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 120. This restriction was in fact enacted under the State War Council’s legislation as such powers were still vested in the states.

erected, and then only with government permission.¹⁰² Total control of funds was invested in the state war councils: “Power is also given to the council to regulate and control collections or contributions to any war fund”.¹⁰³ A corollary to these factors lies in the independent spirit of post-colonial Australians. Avenues of honour, and indeed all memorial plantings, were often being undertaken as Arbour Day events, thereby circumventing any strictures of the War Precautions Act and regulations.

2.6 Gallipoli

The third influence on the avenue movement was the shock news from Gallipoli. Following the first anniversary of the assault on Gallipoli, memorial avenues began to be proposed in the same two states – Victoria and South Australia – again starting first in South Australia. This would indicate that another motivation for the avenues was a desperation on the part of the civilian population in Australia to create a physical living link with their far-distant absent members. South Australians responded immediately by planting memorial avenues with individual plaques on trees dedicated to those honoured.

Normanville in South Australia planted its avenue even before news broke of the full degree of the disaster at Gallipoli: “Each volunteer has had planted in his honour a Moreton Bay fig tree, which is intended to serve as a living monument to his gallantry”.¹⁰⁴ Each of these trees had a marker with the details of the volunteer honoured.

Across towards the Victorian border at Tantanoola, in July 1915, the showgrounds were favoured for that town’s avenue of trees where “[a] space has been set aside for the planting of some suitable trees to commemorate the actions of those who have gone to the front. A tree will be planted for each one who has enlisted from here”.¹⁰⁵

Another early example, exhibited at Renmark in 1915, highlights this need to mark the story of their serving men, even in the early stages of the Great War, which thereby created a tangible link to them: “An Arbour Day in connection with the public schools, and an avenue

102. Ibid, 120.

103. “State War Council: Control of Funds,” *The Argus*, October 6, 1916.

104. “A Living Roll of Honour,” *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), May 19, 1915.

105. “Tantanoola,” *The South Eastern Times* (Millicent), July 20, 1915.

of trees in honour of the men from Renmark who have volunteered for service at the Front".¹⁰⁶

On 11 September 1915, the town was described as "en fete":

Throughout the day ladies and lasses thronged the streets offering for sale flags, buttons and other tricolour favours. The first part of the formal proceedings; that of planting palms along the riverbank, was carried out by the schoolchildren under the supervision of the leading men of the town and settlement.¹⁰⁷

These plantings foreshadowed those that occurred at Ballarat two years later by commencing with the firing of a gun and ended in the same manner. Four months later, still in South Australia, Robert Cameron in January 1916 suggested a memorial avenue be planted in Victor Harbor: "The suggestion is that the Town Council be approached and asked to allow, under their supervision, ground to be prepared for ornamental trees ... This avenue could then be known as 'Our Soldiers' avenue".¹⁰⁸

In Victoria the small settlement at Warrion also started planting in June of 1915.¹⁰⁹ Planting avenues of honour commenced in May 1915, with over 40 avenues planted by August of 1917 (see Appendix 1). Writing on the avenue of honour reported planted at Lal Lal in 1915, arguably the earliest avenue in the Ballarat district, Chris McConville relates:

The avenues took shape slowly as young trees grew. For townsfolk these trees connected familiar streets and homes to men serving overseas, to neighbours in the town, and to hopes not yet extinguished rather than to death and reflection on the past.¹¹⁰

In October 1916, regulations controlling and restricting expenditure on memorials were published by the Victorian State War Council under the provision of the "War Council Act".¹¹¹ By the time all states had introduced similar regulations, several minor built memorials had already been erected, as well as at least a dozen avenues having been

106. "Tree Planting Programme," *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, July 22, 1915.

107. "In Memory of Boys at the Front," *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record*, September 16, 1915.

108. "Honour the Brave," *Victor Harbor Times and Encounter Bay and Lower Murray Pilot*, January 28, 1916.

109. "Warrion," *The Colac Herald*, June 25, 1915.

110. Chris McConville "Anzac: Memory and Forgetting in Local Landscapes," in *Fighting Against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century*, eds., Phillip Deery and Julie Kimber (Melbourne, Vic: Leftbank Press, 2015), 320.

111. "State War Council: Control of Funds," *The Argus*, October 6, 1916.

commenced. Among these were the avenues at Renmark, Wattle Grove, Mt Lofty, Victor Harbor and St Peters in South Australia.¹¹²

Warrion, Eurack and Sassafras in Victoria and Laurieton and Gundagai in New South Wales had plantings in place in 1916. Many proponents sought expert advice such as at the town of Murwillumbah in 1918:

Mr J. H. Maiden, director of the Sydney Botanical Gardens has been written to on the subject, and his advice will be awaited with interest. The selection of trees is a most important matter, for on this rests to a very large extent the success of the avenue.¹¹³

Following the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landings, Gundagai planted its Anzac Avenue in May 1916.¹¹⁴ The local council for Anzac Day the following year made the call: “The public are asked to bring flowers and evergreens to be placed beneath the trees dedicated to the fallen heroes”.¹¹⁵

In Australia after 1917, the publicity emanating from Ballarat and Victoria spread around the country, and was the impetus for avenues, as opposed to other styles of memorials or plantings. This became an important goal and a focus of communities across the nation. It was this preoccupation that for a time set Australia apart from other countries and why Australians saw their avenues of honour as unique. Despite the spread of this style of memorial across the nation and beyond, Victoria was unique in that it had an avenue of honour “in almost every town”.¹¹⁶

The idea for arbour days was adopted throughout the Victorian state education system, assiduously promoted by the director of education in that colony, now state, Frank Tate. Tate must be given credit for promoting school arbour days of which state school plantings of avenues became prominent across Victoria. Not only through internal journals but also through the school paper, he aimed “to reinforce his messages in the homes”.¹¹⁷

112. *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), August 17, 1916; September 8, 1916; October 18, 1916.

113. “Memorial Avenue,” *Tweed Daily* (Murwillumbah), April 20, 1918.

114. “Anzac Day, Avenue of Trees to be Planted,” *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, May 30, 1916.

115. “Anzac Day Anniversary,” *The Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, April 20, 1917.

116. Ellis, *People and Plants*, 98.

117. Michael McKernan, *Victoria at War 1914–1918* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 78.

Since the *Victorian Education Act 1872*, schools in the state had been built in even the smallest hamlet to ensure that all children could access free, compulsory, secular education. Under section 13 Clause (iii) of the Act, the provision of an acceptable reason for non-compliance in attending school for a statutory period of 60 days each half year included: “That there is no state school which the child can attend within a distance of two miles, measured according to the nearest road from the residence of such child”.¹¹⁸

In the late-nineteenth century, Kooroocheang State School, near Smeaton in Victoria, planted an avenue of turkey oaks in 1887 to celebrate Queen Victoria’s golden jubilee. Several of these now magnificent trees still stand proudly at 30 metres high. At Inverleigh, west of Geelong, another avenue – this time of cypress, *Cupressus macrocarpa* – was planted in 1887 also as a celebration of Queen Victoria’s jubilee.¹¹⁹ This planting followed the Arbour Day plantings in the school ground the previous year. No avenue of honour to the Great War was ever planted at Inverleigh.

Most schools, however, took up the challenge following South Australia’s lead. *The Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid* further notes that “On Anzac Day, an ‘Anzac Avenue’ was established in the Domain, Melbourne,” concluding that “there is no reason why every school should not have its leafy memorial in honour of the brave dead”.¹²⁰

Donald Fraser’s advocacy for Anzac avenues of Australian trees to be planted was also put to the South Australian House of Assembly: “A living memorial, appropriate, enduring, inexpensive, and altogether lovely. I would further suggest that every village, town, city, parish, shire, and county plant at least one Anzac avenue of Australian trees and care for the trees”.¹²¹

However, as mentioned, other plantings had been started in 1915, a year earlier than the suggestion from the House of Assembly. It would seem to have been almost a natural consequence of years of advocacy for planting trees by the state education departments and

118. Leslie J. Blake, ed., *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, (Melbourne, Vic: Victorian Government, 1973), 1:204.

119. *Geelong Advertiser*, December 6, 1918.

120. Victorian Government, *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, May 18, 1916, 112.

121. “Suggested Anzac Arbour Day,” *The Register* (Adelaide), April 14, 1916.

the ANA through their respective Arbour Day programs. In 1914, before the outbreak of war, the Victorian Education Department was concerned at the declining enthusiasm for the schools' Arbour Day plantings:¹²² Following the initiative suggested by Fraser and pursued by the state education departments, this slackening-off was countered and the momentum shifted to memorial avenues or Anzac avenues. By May 1916, it was being reported:

That State schools are being encouraged to plant trees on Arbour Day in schools on our roads or reserves as "leafy memorials" in honour of the brave and dead. That the Education Department suggests that each area planted should be called Anzac Avenue.¹²³

After the Ballarat celebrations and publicity, many of these Anzac avenues in Australia became commonly referred to as avenues of honour.

Warrion, near Colac, almost certainly has a claim of beginning the first state school Arbour Day planting of an avenue of honour in Victoria. This occurred when the first tree, an oak (variously reported as a Portuguese and an English oak), was planted on 29 June 1915 to honour Pte E. C. Ilett, who had died some weeks earlier at Gallipoli.¹²⁴ The Warrion avenue honoured those who died in service, and it was not completed until 12 July 1919 when the final two trees were planted in honour of privates Les Ray and Arthur Neale.

The deaths of these two men highlighted the tragedy of war in terms of the trauma on the home front and a rural home front at that.¹²⁵ Ray had survived the Gallipoli campaign and two years on the western front, only to be killed shortly before the armistice was signed. After four years of fighting, also in France and at Gallipoli, Neale never made it home to Eurack because he contracted the Spanish flu on the voyage home. He died at the Military Sanatorium Macleod after arriving in Melbourne in 1919.¹²⁶

By 1916, the idea of Arbour Day plantings was familiar across Victoria, and as it had first been engendered by the ANA, branches were still promoting tree planting as honour avenues in 1916. As early as February that year, the Seymour ANA proposed:

122. Victorian Government, *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid*, May 25, 1914, 205.

123. *Birchip Advertiser and Watchem Sentinel*, May 24, 1916.

124. "Arbour Day at Warrion," *Colac Reformer*, July 1, 1915. [Tree reported as an English oak].

125. *Camperdown Chronicle*, August 2, 1919. [Trees reported as Portuguese oaks].

126. *Ibid.*

Something apart from the ordinary Honour Roll be carried out ... an avenue of suitable trees be planted along the Trawco road, the avenue to be called Anzac Avenue, and that each tree have a name and number of one of our brave men associated with it.¹²⁷

It is noticeable that there is no emphasis put on this planting as being a memorial, thereby avoiding any conflict with the provisions of expenditure on memorials under the regulations flowing from the War Precautions Act. The Eurack Avenue of Honour planting was most probably the earliest complete school Arbor Day avenue planting and such school plantings went on to be repeated at Eurack, Addington, Newlyn, Buchan South, Minyip, Ballarat and elsewhere across the state in the ensuing years. The plantings at Wandiligong State School in north-eastern Victoria in June 1918 even left space for additions.¹²⁸ The children at Eurack had planted the first avenue of native shrubs at the state school in June 1916 a week before the surviving avenue, but these did not survive the school. The *Colac Reporter* advised that:

During the afternoon each child present planted a tree in the school ground. Twelve trees were received from the state school nursery, the remainder being supplied by Mr Maher. An avenue of shrubs planted in the school ground was named in honour and memory of the late Trooper Arthur Fyffe, who was a member of the ill-fated 8th Light Horse.¹²⁹

Two weeks later, however, head teacher G. L. Pentreath planted today's surviving avenue of honour, which stands testimony to time and a dedicated community. Pentreath planted the biggest of the trees in honour of Lord Kitchener whose death had occurred a few days earlier.¹³⁰ As with many of the avenues, the addition of name plates, while often intended from the outset, took some time to be mounted and, with the changing demographics and exigencies in rural areas, sometimes failed to be done.

Following Pentreath's departure to the Australian Imperial Force (AIF) a month later, the school was closed until a replacement head teacher could be obtained; the children in the meantime were sent to Beac 10.5 kilometres away. It was not until November 1918 that the plaques were added to this second, more permanent avenue at Eurack when "[a]n impressive

127. "Anzac Avenue," *Seymour Express and Goulbourn Valley, Avenel, Graytown, Nagambie, Tallarook and Yea Advertiser*, February 9, 1917.

128. John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 115.

129. "Eurack," *Colac Reformer*, July 6, 1916.

130. C. M. Pentreath, "Avenue of Honour," letter to the editor, *The Age*, April 30, 1918.

ceremony took place at the Eurack State School on November 26th when the name plates on the elm trees in the first honour avenue planted in Victoria (probably in Australia) were unveiled”.¹³¹

At that time the trees each carried the name plates on wooden crosses, which were replaced with the existing cement crosses in the 1950s. The reference to the belief in the avenue’s place as the first such avenue can be found repeated and reinforced elsewhere across the nation. This claim was contested in the aggressive Lucas campaign of refutation coming out of Ballarat.¹³²

This further exemplifies one of the realities not only of “spin” in 1914–19, but to the impact of distance, as neither the Ballarat nor Eurack stories appears to be entirely correct in the light of modern academic scrutiny. Such latitude must be expected in reports of these events across the country; however, the fine detail of exactitude is not of paramount importance but the sociological and emotional significance of the events to the communities of the day is.

By September 1916, even the remote newspaper from Egerton featured a letter that related:

A letter from Ferntree Gully district tells me of a noble avenue they are creating there says: “I was very glad to hear of this, as we have planted a double row of trees along a new deviation in main road from the Gully to Olinda and Sassafra, to be called Anzac Avenue. Each tree has a tree guard, and the name of the soldier on a neat copper plate is attached to it. There are about sixty trees in all. As far as possible one for every soldier brought up in the district or resident in it for some time. The matter was enthusiastically supported by the majority of the residents and the parents, and the trees were planted on August 12, in many cases by feminine relatives of the soldiers ... and it is hoped the example will be followed in many centres.”¹³³

2.7 Roads and Beautification

The fourth factor aiding in the encouragement of planting the avenues on the roadside was the nature of those roads and their changing purpose. As outlined in Chapter One, since the arrival of the Europeans, routes had been carved out across the landscape to accommodate explorers, stock and bullock teams carrying the wool clip before catering to the needs of the gold seekers with their supply chains of wagons. A geographical feature of the Australian

131. *Geelong Advertiser*, December 6, 1918.

132. E. Lucas & Co., *Avenue of Honour Scrapbook*, Ref: 84.670.

133. *Gordon, Ballan Egerton Advertiser*, September 8, 1916.

landscape that developed from this time was the array of three-chain stock routes stretching throughout the former colonies.¹³⁴

At the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, a new phenomenon had started to replace the horses and drays using these wide arteries. Motorised transport was being used in closer settled areas for moving both stock and people. A decade before the war, George Chirnside was carrying the wool clip from Carranballac to Ballarat.¹³⁵ By 1914, some people were travelling by motor car over large distances for leisure as well as business.¹³⁶



Figure 7. The Sydney Road, Benalla, 1914.

Figure 7 illustrates the state of a rural section of the Melbourne to Sydney road in this period. This change in road transport usage was further reflected in the establishment and activities of

134. Following the tracks forged by the pioneering flocks of the 1830s, surveyors had marked out these stock routes 3-chain wide (90 metres), with some 5 chain or 10 chain in width, across the country.

135. Susan Priestley, *The Victorians: Making Their Mark* (Sydney, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1984), 170.

136. Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, accessed November 9, 2015, <http://www.racv.com.au>. The RACV Touring department was established in 1914 to cope with an expanding interest in roads and touring.

the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) that by 1915 had a strong touring department and was hosting outings.¹³⁷

Rural towns had dusty streets, with macadamised surfaces still in the future. Civic beautification was in the minds of both citizens and councils, all of whom were increasingly aware and proud of their burgeoning Australian civic identity. This sense of pride was reinforced by the stories coming out of the war and of family members who had volunteered to serve. The resultant upsurge in Arbor Day and memorial tree planting was not therefore solely about conflict as described many times in editions across the nation. Beautification was also a valid argument. At Cowra in New South Wales: “An avenue of 400 trees would beautify the town and it could be known as ‘The Soldier’s Avenue’ ”.¹³⁸ Even at Seymour in Victoria, with the army based nearby, roadside beautification was not far from the minds of the proponents:

An avenue of trees would be of historic value, and would be there for all time to speak for those who had enlisted ... In addition to showing their appreciation of the sacrifices of our soldiers, it would also be an ornament to the town; and help to minimise the dust nuisance in summer.¹³⁹

In 1917 the environment was often put forward as a cause as in the above quote, but it was nearly always conflated with beautification. Victoria’s Country Roads Board was established in 1913 to deal with roads and environmental issues may have had some import.¹⁴⁰ An example of this nexus was expressed when, on 5 June 1917, the *Ballarat Courier* editorial posed the following question:

Why is it that so many roads, three-chain wide in the state of Victoria, are absolutely destitute of such trees and of trees that ought be for ornamental purposes? There is any amount of room for them. The old practice of keeping the roadside bare for pasture purposes is gone and almost done with.¹⁴¹

137. Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, accessed November 22, 2017, <https://www.racv.com.au/about-racv/our-business/our-heritage.html>.

138. “Our Fallen Heroes,” *Cowra Free Press*, June 13, 1917.

139. “Anzac Avenue to Perpetuate Memory of Seymour Volunteers,” *Seymour Express and Goulburn Valley, Avenel, Graytown, Nagambie, Tallarook and Yea Advertiser*, May 4, 1917.

140. Brian Carroll, “Country Roads Board,” in *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne* Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain, eds., (Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 176.

141. *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 5, 1917.

The roads are only one factor in this foreign country called the past as Robert Garran reminded us:

It is hard for Australians who did not know the pre-federation days to realise how separate the six colonies then were. “Australia” was a geographic expression, like Europe, with no political entity behind it. ... In England, Spofforth and Murdoch were Australians; but back at home they were “New South Wales”, both as men and as cricketers.¹⁴²

Even during the war this colonial attitude was still in evidence, especially in the rural areas, where the situation at the front was put into state terms in newspaper reports such as that in Queensland on war progress in the *Northern Chronicle* as late as 1918. The paper divided the story of the Australians into Part I – New South Wales and Part 2 – Victoria when it outlined the actions and the battalions concerned.¹⁴³

Billy Hughes, when he became prime minister in 1915, appointed Robert Garran to the position of solicitor-general: “Vesting in me practically all the powers of the Attorney-General, which under the War Precautions Regulations were almost unlimited”.¹⁴⁴ Garran best illustrated the breadth of control brought about by the War Precautions Act when he responded the following unfinished question from Sir Thomas Bavin: “Would it be an offence against the War Precautions Regulations...” by interjecting “Yes”.¹⁴⁵

While the drift to the larger centres and metropolitan cities had already started in the decades before the war, the initial rush to enlist exacerbated the population decline in regional and rural Australia. Coupled with the recruitment drives throughout regional and rural Australia, the situation there stood out against that of metropolitan centres. Davison reminds us: “Many [of these] local leaders were actually sojourners ... until promotion to higher office and the needs of their children’s education recalled them to the metropolis”.¹⁴⁶

By virtue of its past and it being the location of the national parliament at the time, Victoria had a strong sense of nationhood over and above the other federated colonies’ new sense of

142. Robert R. Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth* (Sydney, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1958), 101–102.

143. “Our Boys in France,” *Chronicle and North Coast Advertiser*, April 5, 1918.

144. Garran, *Prosper the Commonwealth*, 221.

145. *Ibid*, 222.

146. Graeme Davison, “Country Life: The Rise and Decline of an Australian Ideal,” in *Struggle Country: The Rural Ideal in Twentieth Century Australia*, eds., Graeme Davison and Marc Brodie (Melbourne, Vic: Monash University ePress, 2005), 01.3.

unified statehood. The closeness of the central government, in terms of departments and personalities, gave Victorians a very personal sense of ownership of the bureaucracy and the politicians, all of whom were based in their state.¹⁴⁷ After the passing of the *War Precautions Act 1914*, regulations slowly came into being which defined the fiscal responsibility of the legislature, which was very much a Victorian legislature both geographically and socially.

2.8 Distance

Finally, distance from the battlefield, from separation, from the death and maiming of loved ones, combined with the other four forces mentioned, ushered Australia into the era of roadside memorials. This was 60 years before individual grief and loss created the populist anti-memorial movement of today. Much has been written of grief and loss in relation to war; however another factor less obvious but certainly real was the exacerbation of this grief and loss caused by distance. Grief, aggravated by separation and distance, was a tyranny not ventured into by Geoffrey Blainey in his ground-breaking 1966 study.¹⁴⁸

In relating how Australians sought to make connections with their loved ones lost in overseas battles, Bart Ziino concluded that “[d]istance conditioned the way in which Australians would try to make [those] connections”.¹⁴⁹ Similarly with loss generally, although the war was reported in the newspapers as never had been the case before, it was conducted in another world, one very much out of sight. Blainey’s *Tyranny of Distance* was as relevant when applied to the Great War as to any other context. Distance from those serving, living and dead, by Australians at home demanded private and public expressions of solidarity.

This sentiment applied just as much to the memorials created during and after the Great War because “distance from the graves of the dead insisted that private mourning had public expression”.¹⁵⁰ In the debates that occurred in the Victorian town of Donald regarding whether to have an avenue of honour or a memorial hall, it was expressed that “[i]f this were carried out, the relatives and friends of the fallen could almost regard these sacred spots as

147. No start was made on accommodating departments or parliamentarians in Canberra until the 1920s.

148. Geoffrey Blainey, *The Tyranny of Distance* (Melbourne, Vic: Sun Books, 1966). Blainey deals with the First World War in terms of distance, fighting, shipping and manufacturing but not the effect of separation and distance between loved ones and grief.

149. Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 187.

150. *Ibid*, 73.

actual graves, and when they saw each one's name thereon, it would bring them back to memory".¹⁵¹

However, it was not only for the dead that the avenues were planted; in the majority of cases, it was for all who served. Birger Stichelbaut, as recently as 2016, referred to remembrance in terms of "acknowledging sacrifice".¹⁵² This acknowledgement was made graphically in the concept of these avenues of honour. Possibly the 250 palms at Yelta settlement in the north-western corner of Victoria in 1919 represented the ultimate in that "[t]he Honour Avenue at Merbein West is the first in the Commonwealth to be planted by soldiers on a soldier settlement to the memory of fallen comrades".¹⁵³

Another aspect of the remoteness of the reality of war to Australians was the elevation of volunteers to hero status. At the outset of the Great War, the very act of voluntary enlistment was regarded as an act of self-sacrifice for the "common-weal" in the old sense of chivalry and was therefore considered the action of a hero. It was in this context that the avenues were planted to "our heroes", and if some interpret this as recruitment, McKernan expresses it more generously when he wrote: "By treating volunteers as heroes and by elaborately farewelling each contingent ... rather than seeing this as a conscious recruiting device, it should be regarded ... as a spontaneous demonstration of loyalty and goodwill".¹⁵⁴

Such observations on loyalty and goodwill are better demonstrated when distanced from conflict, whether personal or national. As the federal government applied pressure to meet its own ends, whether through recruiting, financial laws, restrictions on butchering, or later through the conscription campaigns, so these attributes gradually faded into the background in communities. Often at the planting of the trees in rural Victoria's avenues, the celebration was held in conjunction with a farewell to a local hero as occurred at the first of Eurack's two avenues planted on 30 June 1916. This planting was followed by a social evening when "[d]uring the evening, occasion was taken by his many friends to bid farewell to Private O. Gainger who was then home on 'final' ".¹⁵⁵

151. "Soldiers' Memorial: Public Meeting," *Donald Times*, December 17, 1918.

152. Birger Stichelbaut and David Cowley, eds., *Conflict Landscapes and Archaeology from Above* (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing Ltd, 2016), 3.

153. "Planting an Honour Avenue," *Mildura Cultivator*, October 25, 1919.

154. Michael McKernan, *Australians at Home: World War I* (Melbourne, Vic: Five Mile Press, 2014), 183.

155. "Eurack," *Colac Reformer*, July 6, 1916.

While other issues also dominated the attention of communities in 1916, the *Alpine Observer* reported: “If the Germans are wrecking parts of Europe... as indeed they are...the capitalist is wrecking an unlimited number of farmers in Australia”.¹⁵⁶ By 1918 in Victoria’s north east, there were obvious cracks appearing in any earlier sense of community cohesion. There were complaints regarding the costs of memorial activities and discrepancies in honour rolls being condemned and argued over.¹⁵⁷

In all of this, however, was a desperate need to establish a sense of place for a people remote from their European connections now bitterly at odds with each other. In Australia, the avenues of honour are a form of remembrance helping to manage their: “[l]egacy of conflict – in acknowledging sacrifice, in hoping to learn from the past for the future, and in passing memory and knowledge to future generations”.¹⁵⁸

As if by way of meeting immediate emotional needs, the planting at the Mt Lofty Avenue of Honour commenced in 1915 at about the same time as the first tree was being planted at Warrion near Colac in Victoria. The Ballarat North Progress Association lobbied Ballarat City Council for an avenue of maple trees in Beaufort Avenue for an Arbour Day planting in 1916.¹⁵⁹ Although such actions indicated the enthusiasm for tree planting at the time, Council did not approve the request. A year later, however, Council did approve the planting of the avenue as an avenue of honour. This planting, however, was postponed due to the Lucas-sponsored Ballarat Avenue of Honour being planted on 4 June 2017.

As early as 17 May 1915, while Australians were only just starting to absorb the news of those killed and wounded in the Gallipoli landings, a privately sponsored avenue of trees was planted in the main street at Normanville, South Australia:

Mr R. B. Clark has hit upon a novel and decidedly pretty means of honouring the many young men who, in answer to the call of Empire, have hastened to face the foe. Each volunteer has had planted in his honour a Moreton Bay fig tree which is intended to serve as a living monument to his gallantry.¹⁶⁰

156. McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War*, 112. Citing the *Alpine Observer*, April 21, 1916.

157. *Ibid*, 115.

158. Stichelbaut and Cowley, *Conflict Landscapes and Archaeology from Above*, 3.

159. Letter from Ballarat North Progress Association to the City of Ballarat, May 11, 1916. PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/ Unit 110.

160. “A Living Roll of Honour,” *The Express and Telegraph* (Adelaide), May 19, 1915.

The labels with each man's details are no longer there and the avenue today has been reduced to seven or eight of the original trees. The original planting was carried out only days after the news of the first casualty reports was published.

Even as late as 13 May 1915 reports were still being received that “[f]urther casualty lists bring the total number of Australians killed in the Dardanelles operations to 59 ... The list of men killed is not yet available”.¹⁶¹ The first list published in Melbourne's *The Age* of 3 May 1915 reported that a total of 18 had been killed, 13 of whom were Victorians.¹⁶² Three weeks later, the newspapers were still complaining of “[a]n ominous silence (says the *Sun*) about the men killed in action in Gallipoli”.¹⁶³

Finally at the end of May the reality was before even the smallest country districts:

The second list of casualties issued from the Defence Department on Monday brings the total Australian numbers announced to date as being 3283 officers and men killed, wounded and missing. This figure, however, does not include cases of illness or death from illness reported from time to time by the authorities.¹⁶⁴

From a figure of perhaps 18 or 59 to over 3000 was a differentiation communities across the nation had trouble in processing, let alone the families involved. In August 1915, the Tatiara Soldiers' National Park was planted out. While not an avenue, this was certainly another early example of using trees as memorials and therefore was closely linked to the infant avenue movement. It was understood as “[t]he planting of trees to commemorate those young men who had gone from the district to do battle for liberty and justice, not knowing whether they would come back again”.¹⁶⁵

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter argued that these avenues of honour carried symbolism not found contributed significantly to avenues as a form of memorial. It demonstrated that the avenues grew from the people, the first being financed and planted by a concerned individual and then accepted and rejuvenated by his fellow citizens. It draws on this people power and the importance of

161. “The War,” *The Scrutineer and Berrima District Press*, May 5, 1915.

162. “Careers of Killed and Wounded,” *The Age*, May 3, 1915.

163. “How Our Men Fell,” *Clarence and Richmond Examiner* (Grafton), May 29, 1915.

164. “Remember the Heroes Who Died,” *Chiltern and Howlong Times and Ovens Register*, May 28, 1915.

165. *Border Chronicle* (Bordertown, SA: 1908–1950), August 27, 1915.

landscape also at the artistic level in the community and the need for people to draw on life forces. The influence of Frank Tate especially through his advocacy of planting memorial trees in the *Education Gazette and Teachers' Aid* is reflected in the involvement of school communities in the avenue plantings and his vision to influence the wider community through programs such as Arbor Day. The shock of the events at Gallipoli and the immediate need to do something is also demonstrated by the urgency in the planting of the first avenue tree at Warrion to a local boy killed on 25th April 1915. In drawing on these events at home and abroad the chapter has demonstrated the applicability of a micro-historical approach in this research field. This is continued in the next chapter where a closer examination of the Australian experience as a new political entity is undertaken.

Chapter Three

A New Nation

*Our memories die with us. Do they die?
Or are they cherished in some storing cell
Of the world's mind, unseen, illegible,
Yet living, had we skill to unlock them?*
(Lawrence Binyon 1919).¹

3.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that at the outset of the Great War Australia in many ways was clinging to its British links as opposed to the nationalism expressed 25 years earlier. It reviews and analyses the social and political landscape of Australia at the outset of the Great War examining pre-war attitudes and the basic statistics of a society and the changes that occurred throughout the war. It draws on social relationships with Australia's avenues of honour, arguing that while difficult to separate those wholly bound up in war anxieties and commitments from those less so, there was a difference. Few historians or social commentators have adequately allowed for contemporary government restrictions on freedom of speech in examining Avenues this aspect of the era. This chapter deals with the two-thirds of eligible Australians at home who sustained the emerging nation. The activities surrounding the planting of avenues of honour, is partly expressive in this, as they were often celebratory and connected indelibly to the continuation of the peacetime Arbor Day movement.

At the outbreak of World War I, Australia was the second-largest producer of gold in the world, the largest producer of wool and was, financially, very well endowed. Tariff protection and Australia's place as a British producer and supplier helped in creating this favourable situation. However, with the coming of war, and more definitely by the time of the Australian landings at Gallipoli in 1915, crop failures, mouse plagues, financial and manpower re-directions to war purposes, and a downturn in gold production revealed a very different situation.

Australia's avenues of honour planted during and immediately following the Great War were a new form of memorial, one that "demonstrates egalitarianism".² As the term "war

1. Lawrence Binyon poem to accompany woodcut 'Damme' by Yoshijiro Urushibara in Frank Brangwyn, *Bruges*, (London, Moreland Press 1919).

2. Janine Haddow, "Avenues of Honour in Victoria" (Master's thesis, University of Melbourne, 1987), 73.

memorial” did not come into use until sometime after the Great War, that appellation was lacking at the outset. This now commonplace term took a long period of evolution, just as the lead-in to the creation of this new form of arboreal commemoration did. The major elements which allowed for the development of this form of memorial in Australia commenced with Federation in 1901.

The start of the twentieth century saw the Australasian colonies become two separate countries, Australia and New Zealand, the former encapsulating six colonies as federated states. Without the settlement of the transcontinental railway agreement, Western Australia may very well have gone the way of New Zealand. Despite the Tasman dichotomy, the relationship between the two new national entities resulted in close cooperation between both nations.

During the Great War, however, one major difference between the two countries was the policy of conscription that was adopted in New Zealand and rejected in Australia.³ Another less noticeable difference was that Australia planted these avenues throughout the war, whereas those planted in New Zealand, Britain and elsewhere followed afterwards. Lacking the resources of Australia: “New Zealand grew closer to Britain out of loyalty because it was too small to build its own navy and, above all, because it needed an imperial navy for its protection”.⁴ Despite this, more pragmatic reasons for the lack of memorial avenues in New Zealand may be attributed to the different demography and landscape in the two countries.

While both governments sought conscription in 1916, New Zealand introduced it while Australia’s government put the issue to a referendum and, failing to accept the result, forced a second referendum. The subsequent political, social and sectarian divisions have been researched by historians ever since. Regardless of the debates surrounding this event, the results cannot be accepted as the reason one nation chose to plant avenues while the other did not. Avenue proposals and planting in three states of Australia had already been proposed and planted by that time.

In January 1901, the new nation of Australia appeared on the international political scene. Australia started with a “whimper not a bang”, which is important in understanding that Australians did not favour military service even before the war. The then prime minister,

3. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 120.

4. Donald Denoon, Philippa Mein-Smith and Marivic Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishers Ltd, 2000), 255.

Alfred Deakin, first proposed compulsory military training in 1908 and his proposals dragged on in controversy until 1911. The Commonwealth finally introduced compulsory military training under the Defence Act of 1910, and it was even then set in the future so as to commence after January 1911, only three years before the outbreak of war. “The new Defence Act, [which] is to come into operation on a day in 1911 to be fixed by proclamation”.⁵

Despite the efforts to enforce the militia and cadet components of this system, even that proved difficult. Australians generally were not in favour of such a system of enforced military service. However, despite many prosecutions, by 1914 the new military service system was proving satisfactory to the political will of the government. This is not to discount the fact that by that time “[t]here had been over 27,000 prosecutions in military courts and over 5000 boys and young men had been imprisoned”.⁶

With the declaration of war there was a need for a greater involvement in international relations:

All political parties were inexperienced in the conduct of foreign affairs and comparatively ignorant of the play of international forces. ... Until 1914, Britain’s voice was decisive in shaping foreign policy. Isolated by geography from powerful and populous neighbours, sheltered by the might of the British navy, absorbed in the task of developing a continent, Australians, by a fortunate combination of circumstances, were able to afford the luxury of an almost exclusive concentration upon internal pursuits.⁷

Among these internal pursuits was the development of roads. In Victoria, the Country Roads Board had been established in 1913. As elsewhere across the nation, the main routes followed the paths of early explorers, and often before them, those of the Indigenous people. In many cases, these then served as stock routes as did other minor roads. With the gold rushes of the 1850s, they catered for the mass movement of people and supplies to the gold towns. Such movement left the roadways bare of trees by the early Commonwealth era. Consequently, there was a great opportunity for the greening of these roadsides, and the formation of avenues needed only a catalyst and a creative mind to initiate the idea.

5. “News of the Day,” *The Age*, January 3, 1910. The Act came into effect on 1 July 1911.

6. Edward M. Trudgeon and G. A. Johnston, *For King and Country, 1914–1918* (Melbourne, Vic: Longman Cheshire Pty Ltd, 1980), 45.

7. Gordon Greenwood, ed., *Australia: A Social and Political History* (Sydney, NSW: Angus and Robertson, 1969), 259.

In Victoria, the extension of the railway network from the 1880s onwards saw these steel arteries reaching into the remotest parts of the state. This extension created wheat and railway towns such as Piangue, towns which have since disappeared except in old directory entries. Piangue and similar service settlements often had avenues of honour which, unlike the built fabric of the town, have survived unrecognised into the present either in whole or part.

In Bean's monumental work, *Official History of Australia in the War*, Volume XI was written by Ernest Scott who wrote about Australia during the war.⁸ Despite the volume using this topic as the title, there is no history or analysis of Australians at home during the war in it. Scott's was almost certainly the best outline of the Australian political scene at the outbreak of the Great War. But neither there nor elsewhere in Bean's work is there any such story. Reading Australian social histories, the primary stories continue to revolve around the conscription issue, Hughes' invective against Daniel Mannix, the Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, and their respective points of view.

These issues are followed closely by recruitment, war-oriented activities such as fundraising for the various war-related causes, avenues of honour, the Red Cross, the Australian Comforts Fund (ACF) knitting or occasionally an event such as the great strike. In reviewing the literature, it appears that Australians did little else between 1914 and 1919. Many of the industrial issues had been simmering away before the war started, just as many of the developmental projects had commenced before the war.

The work of Bean in the establishment and the collections of the Australian War Memorial has contributed in a large measure to what has become the national memory in relation to Australians and the Great War. As outlined in the earlier historiographical section, that contribution consists largely of the exploits of Australians on the battlefield, both militarily and politically. With Melbourne as the federal capital during World War I, it followed that what happened in Victoria was of interest to the other states and this included the planting of Victoria's avenues of honour.

The *War Precautions Act of October 1914* introduced sweeping regulatory changes throughout the war years, such as censorship, taxation and other financial regulations including those restricting expenditure on memorials. The infant constitution still vested powers to the states, which took generations of High Court rulings to hone. Legislative

8. Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, Vol XI in C. E. Bean, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (Brisbane, Qld: University of Queensland, 1989).

mechanisms in 1914 were such that some federal rulings under the War Precautions Act had to be administered by the states. In this respect, the Victorian War Council Bill was passed in 1916 affirming the limitation of such expenditure in that state.⁹ Similar legislation was passed in the other states.

This explains in part why these memorial avenues tended to be celebrated as Arbour Day exercises, as previously, rather than as memorials. In dedication ceremonies, the shared emphases were on honouring volunteers and often in addition, beautifying the town. At Seymour, the ANA convened a meeting on 8 February 1917 that proposed the planting of a memorial avenue:

To be called the Anzac Avenue, and that each tree have a name and number of one of our brave men associated with it. The idea is that each tree would then perpetuate for all time one individual member of the Australian forces who enlisted and was resident in Seymour district. The effect when the trees have grown would be pleasing to the eye and a great beautifying element in that portion of the town.¹⁰

Although the planting ceremony didn't take place until 8 July 1917, preparations had been underway since the beginning of the year. When finalising details in May, the mayor again reminded all that the main emphasis was "[m]any of those who had gone to fight for them had lost their lives, while others had been maimed, therefore the least they could do was to perpetuate their memory in a fitting manner".¹¹ The avenues of honour were seen as enduring and as in a fitting manner, and they had become so popular throughout the war as a memorial form, that by 1918 they were, in relation to those serving, regarded as "[a]n enduring memorial of [their] service and sacrifice".¹²

With the formation of a new Labor government in September 1914, Australia's political landscape changed, albeit slightly given the unanimity held on war issues at the time.¹³ With

9. "Parliament of Victoria," *The Bendigo Independent*, November 22, 1916.

10. "Anzac Avenue," *Seymour Express and Goulburn Valley, Avenel, Graytown, Nagambie, Tallarook and Yea Advertiser*, February 9, 1917.

11. "Anzac Avenue: To Perpetuate Memory of Seymour Volunteers," *Seymour Express and Goulburn Valley, Avenel, Graytown, Nagambie, Tallarook and Yea Advertiser*, May 4, 1917.

12. "Thompson and Co., Pty. Ltd. Employees' Honour Roll Unveiling Ceremony," *Castlemaine Mail*, September 9, 1918.

13. The parliament was dissolved on 30 July 1914, and the election set for 5 September and the possibility of a European war involving the British Empire was being discussed in the major national newspapers.

the declaration of war in August 1914, Australia was caught in a political void, with no previous parliament having experienced a double dissolution followed by an election process:

The Constitution was still very young, not quite in its infancy, but not yet fully grown, and far from fully tested. Many sections had been tried out for the first time in the decade since the inauguration of the Commonwealth, on New Year's Day, 1901. Constitutional novelty was an unavoidable feature of the era. But section 57 was not just an untried provision. It was unprecedented, indeed unique, in the history of bicameral legislatures.¹⁴

This, in itself, is testimony to the new nation's ability to function despite international events of empires. Labor experienced a sweeping victory at the election, but a year later on 27 October 1915, Andrew Fisher resigned as prime minister and treasurer as well as from his seat. He took the post of high commissioner in London, while William Hughes in turn became prime minister as leader of the newly formed pro-war Nationalist Party. Although Australia was geographically remote from the reality of modern warfare in 1914–15, the events at Gallipoli had brought the grim reality of the scale of the conflict and the losses home to every Australian.

At the same time, the political machine was being tested to the limit and a further political rupture occurred in 1916. The transfer of the prime ministership from Andrew Fisher to William Hughes might have been expected but, politically, the walk out of William Hughes and his supporters from the Labor Party National Conference and the breakdown in the governing Labor Party the year following was a major upheaval. The issue was that of conscription and the referendum bill, and this was voted against by the political Labor League and the Trade Union Congress.

While Hughes' walkout was a major event, it did not rate the attention that it might have outside of wartime. The impact was somehow absorbed by the demands of an imperial and worldwide war. *The Sydney Morning Herald* devoted less than a column to Hughes' statement on the walkout, opening with: "The Prime Minister (Mr Hughes) made the following official statement late tonight regarding what had taken place during the day".¹⁵ The report then proceeded to quote Hughes' version of events and the no-confidence motion, again quoting Hughes' conclusion that "[t]here was no course left open to me but to withdraw from the

14. Helen Irving, *Pulling the Trigger: The 1914 Double Dissolution Election and Its Legacy*, accessed June 24, 2016, http://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Senate/Powers_practice_n_procedures/pops/pop63/c0.

15. "Mr Hughes Vacates Chair: Motion of No Confidence," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 15, 1916.

Chair and request those who supported me to follow me from the room”.¹⁶ The article finishes with another quote that relates how he walked from the room with his followers to form a new government.

This episode in Australian political and Labor history highlights the importance of events within Australia that were perceived to be forming Australia’s national character. This evolution was every bit as important as was the perception and subsequent legend of an Australian national character being born in Australian blood overseas. This, and other events discussed in this thesis, contributed to Australian history and a converse perception of an Australian character being formed on the home front. Any significance in this episode has been absorbed, with little attention given to it, which would not have been the case if war had not been demanding national attention.

Despite rupturing his own party and the huge outcry which saw union-organised stoppages and a mass stop work meeting of 50,000 on the banks of Melbourne’s Yarra River, Hughes proceeded. He was autocratic and manipulated events and people to suit his purposes. Despite vigorously advocating conscription in the early years of the century, he opposed it at the outset of the war, and then in 1916 not only advocated it but also insisted that “[t]he State has power to take away the liberty of those who break its laws ... it has power to take away life itself”.¹⁷

After the defeat of the referendum of 1916, Hughes assured Australians that he would never reintroduce the conscription issue to a second referendum, only to do so. He also pre-empted the result: “Implementing a partial call up under the Defence Act (which could require all Australian males between 18 and 60 to perform militia service within Australia)”.¹⁸ Hughes’ legacy of division continued until World War II. Similarly, the development of the avenues of honour across the nation proceeded quietly, with little apparent connectivity until late in 1917. Some centres, like Gundagai, planted an avenue (1916) while a neighbouring town such as Young chose not to. Such home-front events were subsumed in the story of the war and the legend of nationhood that the national leadership had in mind.

This legacy of “invisibility” is reflected in such details as the survey of memorials undertaken in 1920, and recorded by Haddow where only a fraction of the nation’s memorials were

16. Ibid.

17. Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 221.

18. Ibid, 236.

recorded and acknowledging only 92 avenues of honour in Victoria, even less than two-thirds of Victoria's avenues of honour.¹⁹ Similarly, the development of the avenues of honour across the nation proceeded quietly, with little apparent connectivity until late in 1917. Some centres, like Gundagai, planted an avenue (1916) while a neighbouring town such as Young chose not to. Such home-front events were subsumed in the story of the war and the legend of nationhood that the national leadership had in mind.

3.2 News from Home and Abroad

Australia barely noticed the assassination of the Crown Prince and his consort Sophia, of Austria, at Sarajevo in June 1914 but the stage had been set across Europe for a wider conflict. The *Ballarat Courier* of 30 June of that year featured a long article on page two of the personal tragedies of the Austrian Royal Family, with a detailed exposé of the social and dynastic family marriages of the Hapsburgs. The following page did feature the possible political repercussions for Europe but the story was inserted in a common column together with articles on international sport and the upcoming Shackleton expedition.²⁰

While major metropolitan papers paid some regard to the wider European and Empire implications, country newspapers simply mentioned the event in their columns together with local news. Following comment on the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his consort: "The Australian press moved back to covering the federal election and another remote crisis ... self-government, or home rule for Ireland".²¹ At the same time in Melbourne, which was the interim federal capital: "People in the streets had been going about their business with almost no expectation of the turmoil that would soon be created".²² There was in fact, even at cabinet level, "little sense of urgency or drama".²³ However, by the end of the year following the declaration of war, Australians had assimilated the realities confronting them.

In November 1914, long before the Dardanelles campaign, the Ballarat Horticultural Society had been advertising its spring exhibition with a flyer captioned "War with

19. "Survey of War Memorials 1920-21," quoted in Janine Haddow, "Avenues of Honour in Victoria," (Master's thesis, University of Melbourne, 1987), 46.

20. *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 30, 1914.

21. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 7.

22. Michael McKernan, *Victoria at War 1914-1918* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 11.

23. *Ibid*, 11.

Turkey” (Figure 8). This reflects the attitude and optimism of Australians who, only six months later started memorialising their soldiers in planting avenues of honour. Ballarat went from using the war as an advertising tool to the grim reality of memorialising its huge body of volunteers serving in its fourteen avenues of honour.



Figure 8. Ballarat Horticultural Society flyer, 1914

3.3 Of Loyalty and Avenues

Such domestic situations were being obfuscated during the war, with the emotional stress not only of lack of labour and market failures, but of sons and daughters being possible victims of the fighting. An avenue of honour was planted in 1917 at Bungaree near Ballarat, a predominantly Irish Roman Catholic area. Due to this situation and with so many sons already volunteered for service, a conscription meeting at the local hall had been blocked in 1916. Immediately following on at the same venue there was an anti-conscription meeting where:

The feeling was expressed that once conscription became part of the Constitution, it would be very difficult to have it removed. An appeal was made to the audience to poll every possible vote against conscription. A motion moved by Mr T. Torpy to the effect that the feeling of the meeting was averse to conscription was carried without a dissident. Subsequently a committee was formed to ensure the polling of every vote.²⁴

Apart from the fear of central control following the war, as expressed at the meeting, another factor that motivated these men was that of losing their children, who were also their labour force. Historians sometimes fail to make sufficient allowance for contemporary media prejudice, as well as the censorship regime in place in the period 1915-1919 that was coupled with contemporary political propaganda. While the Prime Minister enforced aggressive control on censorship, on the issue of conscription: “Press censors were also conscripted to Hughes’ political agenda, effectively the nation during the war”.²⁵ Anne Beggs-Sunter has indicated that such actions were combined with Victoria’s Irish Catholic leadership and events in Ireland.²⁶

The list of volunteers in the avenue of honour at Navigators, five kilometres from Ballarat, has only one enlistee who was not a Roman Catholic.²⁷ All these volunteers had enlisted by 1915 and, consequently, the local farmers had lost a significant portion of their labour force, a factor alluded to by Russel Ward decades ago.²⁸

Most Victorian children, as well as most Australian children, were raised to honour the Union Jack and pledge loyalty to Britain with “[a] year round emphasis on Empire loyalty and patriotism”.²⁹ This did not appear to be a problem for the Catholics of the wider district and their level of volunteers. Ballarat’s *The Courier*, reporting on the CYMS Honour Board dedicated at St Patrick’s Cathedral Hall Ballarat in 1916, observed that the senior member present was John Curtin:

24. “Conscription Campaign Meeting at Bungaree,” *Ballarat Star*, October 18, 1916.

25. John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule, *The War at Home* (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 2015), 171.

26. Anne Beggs-Sunter, “Ballarat’s Crusading Evening Echo: Fighting Militarism in World War 1,” in *Fighting Against War: Peace Activism in the Twentieth Century*, eds., Phillip Deery and Julie Kimber (Melbourne, Vic: Leftbank Press, 2015), 113.

27. *Navigators Community Avenue of Honour for Those Who Served WWI*, Souvenir Booklet, 2015.

28. Russel Ward, *A Nation for a Continent: The History of Australia 1901–1975* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1977), 116.

29. Rosalie Triolo, *Our Schools and the War* (Melbourne, Vic: Australian Scholarly Publishing Pty Ltd, 2012), 4.

The Rev Father Roper pointed out that the names on the board were only those who had been accepted for service, practically every member had volunteered. The list showed that their Catholic young men were taking their places with all the other young men of Australia to do their duty to their native land and to those ideals which Catholics as well as all others had set before them with regard to national life.³⁰

Far from any anti-British motive, several avenues of honour were planted at Bungaree, one of which was in front of the shire offices on the Melbourne Road.³¹ Following the development of the Melbourne–Ballarat freeway in the 1960s, only seven of the original trees remained in front of the former Bungaree shire offices, and these are still in situ. After the war, another avenue was planted in front of the Bullarook school on 14 August 1920.³² Other local Roman Catholics who fought and died have never been memorialised in avenues.

As recently as July 2016, local families have been trying to locate memorials to family members who had seemingly been overlooked for being honoured. Among these are men such as Herbert and Timothy Mulligan whose mother later had the Woolpack Hotel at Bungaree.³³ Like John Taafe, such men are now no longer honoured on any local memorials at Ballarat; often, like the Taafe tree at Ballarat North or the trees at the Eureka Stockade, any trees that had been planted to honour them have since been removed.³⁴

Censorship introduced rigorously at the outset of the war ensured that only news of the government's choosing dominated the newspapers. The ability of Prime Minister Hughes to affect the mood of a people was nowhere as marked as was his vitriol against Melbourne's Roman Catholic Bishop Daniel Mannix over his opposition to conscription. Popular perception is that Mannix constantly attacked conscription and the government, but according to Hughes' colleague William Holman, "Hughes made his fight definitely an anti-Mannix fight, as a matter of tactics".³⁵ This places Mannix as a target of Hughes for political capital, quite apart from any advocacy of the Irish cause for independence.

The six former colonies all had separate war councils, and it was through these that many Commonwealth issues had to be directed. Not only was there the question of loyalty to

30. "CYMS Honour Board Unveiling Ceremony," *The Courier* (Ballarat), August 16, 1916.

31. *Gordon, Egerton and Ballan Advertiser*, September 5, 1919.

32. "Bullarook," *Ballarat Star*, August 14, 1920.

33. Caleb Cluff, "Give Them Their Due," *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 30, 2016.

34. The City of Ballarat removed the Taafe family's memorial tree to John Taafe in Beaufort Crescent.

35. Herbert V. Evatt, *Australian Labour Leader* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1940), 410.

Empire over nation but also of state over nation, however slight or nebulous that appeared. While seemingly incidental, such details contributed to how people still saw themselves as following their state rulings and conceived of their state as an autonomous unit. While not a major issue in wartime exigencies, there was still a loyalty to the state over that to the Commonwealth of Australia

3.4 Australian Britons

The planting of an ANZAC avenue and a wattle grove at Gundagai for the first anniversary of the landings at Gallipoli in 1916 was celebrated as a great occasion. Due to inclement weather, the planting of this first Anzac Day memorial avenue was delayed until Saturday 27 May 1916. By that time Australians were more united in their attitudes than ever could have been imagined 15 years earlier. These Australian people were, first and foremost, British subjects. Most Australians had ties to Britain that were embedded and tangled into their being, even those with strong Irish sympathies as highlighted by Mark McKenna in citing John Gavan Duffy's speech at the outbreak of war that "Irishmen were willing to forget 'all the injustices of the past' in Britain's 'hour of need' ".³⁶

Speaking at the Anzac Day memorial avenue planting at Gundagai, the town's mayor voiced this sentiment: "Our loyalty to the Union Jack need never be doubted ... Anzac Day would lay the foundation stone of Australia as a nation".³⁷ Such sympathies did not rule out the strong influence of freedom as British subjects, which had permeated their psyche since the Australian universal franchise and "fair go" attitudes had taken hold.

Reinforcing bonds like these and family "back home" were projects such as "a pen-pals scheme, a popular and well organised activity encouraging letter writing between young people in Britain, the colonies and other countries".³⁸ Organisations such as the Victoria

36. Mark McKenna, *The Captive Republic: A History of Republicanism in Australia 1788–1998* (Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 211.

37. "In Honour of the Anzacs: Dedication of Anzac Avenue," *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, May 30, 1916.

38. Kathleen Flemming, *A Letter to Norah on the Death of an Anzac at Lone Pine* (Pearl Beach, NSW: Escutcheon Press, 1993), 1.

League were particularly strong amongst Ballarat's social elite, including Tilly Thompson and Eleanor Price. The league also ensured the maintenance of strong imperial bonds.³⁹

Such colonial bonds between Australia and Britain brought about one of those contradictions highlighted at federation and only recently has it been acknowledged for its true force: "The very nation that it [Australia] sought to distinguish itself from was the nation whose approval it craved".⁴⁰ In Victoria, the influence of Frank Tate from the 1890s onwards was important, especially after he became director of education in 1902. Tate, like many of his generation, believed: "That a land he had never seen was 'home'. A spiritual exile in Australia, his country, he identified people by their British birthplace".⁴¹

Tate held to and passed on this sentiment:

Not just the outward signs of Victorian England but much of its inner spirit, its social, political and cultural values. Britain's striking political and economic achievements and the cultural insularity which helped its citizens believe in the innate superiority of the British way of life.⁴²

Another reason for these strong bonds across Australia can be attributed to the common purpose of war and the reporting of events throughout the nation in a more homogenous way than previously. This did not occur during the Boer War, which still tended to be reported in terms of British actions against the Boers, with Australia being considered part of the British offensive. In most instances, local reports refer to New South Wales riflemen or the Victorian and other state contingents. The British commander-in-chief, on commending the work of the colonial troops, added that they "[a]ll vied with one another".⁴³

Such was the case only 13 years before the Great War in a nation that had not, at that stage, elected its first parliament.⁴⁴ However, that same nation was a world away from those nations formed through centuries of war and rivalries; Australia was a remote nation and one that consisted of:

39. "The Victoria League Branch formed in Ballarat," *The Courier* (Ballarat), November 24, 1909.

40. Carolyn Holbrook, *ANZAC, The Unauthorised Biography* (Sydney, NSW: NewSouth Publishing, 2014), 31.

41. Richard J. W. Selleck, *Frank Tate: A Biography* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1982), 98.

42. *Ibid*, 101.

43. "The Work of the Colonials," *Sunday Times* (Sydney), February 17, 1901.

44. Australia's first federal election took place on 29th and 30th March 1901 with the first parliament not convened until May.

[a] people whose government was evolved in peace, ... not attuned to the real significance of the fermentation which was at this time proceeding in Vienna, Berlin, St Petersburg, Paris, London, Brussels and Belgrade.⁴⁵

In 1909, following a visit from Miss Talbot, a relative of former Victorian governor Sir Reginald Talbot, Ballarat adopted the Victoria League, an organisation that was:

[n]on-political, non-sectarian, it embraced all classes and conditions of people within the Empire. It was formed with the object of bringing British subjects more in touch with one another and in bridging those gaps which distance, colour and class often place between the various people of the Empire.⁴⁶

Further to this, in her address Miss Talbot reminded those present: “The main line upon which the League worked was education, the teaching of adult and child all that would lead to give them a better and broader view of the Empire in which they lived”.⁴⁷

With such an organisation formed in Ballarat promoting the strength of Empire and embracing its loyal citizens in the aspiring middle-class level of society of the Ladies Art Association, and commercial and civic leaders, Ballarat’s loyalty to Empire was assured when war was declared less than five years later.

The rhetoric of the English governor of Victoria, Sir Arthur Stanley, highlighted the reality of how Australia and Australians were viewed, which was still very much as a cluster of colonies of Britain: “Citizens of the greatest and freest empire ever known”.⁴⁸ The acceptance of such terms by Australians highlights their psyche in 1914 as being “merely Australians”.⁴⁹ It was as members of the British Empire that they saw themselves and their psyche; their birth certificates and their passports reinforced this Britishness.

The Australian people in 1914 were also still British in nationality as well as in outlook and loyalty even if they had been born in one of the Australian colonies. The statistical records, while showing that the majority of Australians in 1911 were Australian born, do not reveal the

45. Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, vol. 11, *The Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918* (Brisbane, Qld: University of Queensland, 1989), 5.

46. “The Victoria League Branch formed in Ballarat,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), November 24, 1909.

47. *Ibid.*

48. “Patriotic Demonstration,” *Ballarat Star*, August 27, 1914.

49. *Ibid.*

whole picture, although “[w]eeks before ships became available, 20,000 men, three-quarters of them colonial born, were ready to sail”.⁵⁰

While most were colonial born, parents were often born in the British Isles and their extended families were there. The reality is best understood through the words of Banjo Patterson. While en route to the war as a war correspondent, he wrote of the first enlistees from Australia in November 1914:

The ranks are full of English ex-servicemen, wearing as many medals as prize bulls. These English ex-servicemen, by the way, volunteered to a man when war broke out, and the Australian ranks were full of Yorkshiremen, Cockneys, and Cousin Jacks.⁵¹

Prime Minister Hughes himself was regarded by many as a new Australian. After the war when Lloyd George lost patience with him, he called Hughes “[a] damned little Welshman”.⁵² In the closing weeks of the conflict, Australians could still proudly make such boasts as “[t]he grand old Union Jack flying proudly, high aloft on the flagstaff at the Maffra sugar factory, made people feel that they were an important part of the British Empire”.⁵³

Despite the romantic Australian nationalist image of men from the back blocks, the image was still something of a myth as the nation was changing and becoming more urbanised. The rural background was still very real and it was this image that Bean used in identifying the national character manifested on the battlefield.⁵⁴

50. Douglas Pike, *Australia: The Quiet Continent* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1966).162.

51. Andrew. B. “Banjo” Paterson, *Happy Dispatches* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1934), 179.

52. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 537. She cites Lloyd George’s outburst at the Paris Peace Conference.

53. “Opening of Soldiers’ Avenue,” *The Maffra Spectator*, October 7, 1918.

54. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, xxiv. Relates Bean’s interpretation of the Australian soldiers’ distinctive qualities including “the influence of the bush”.

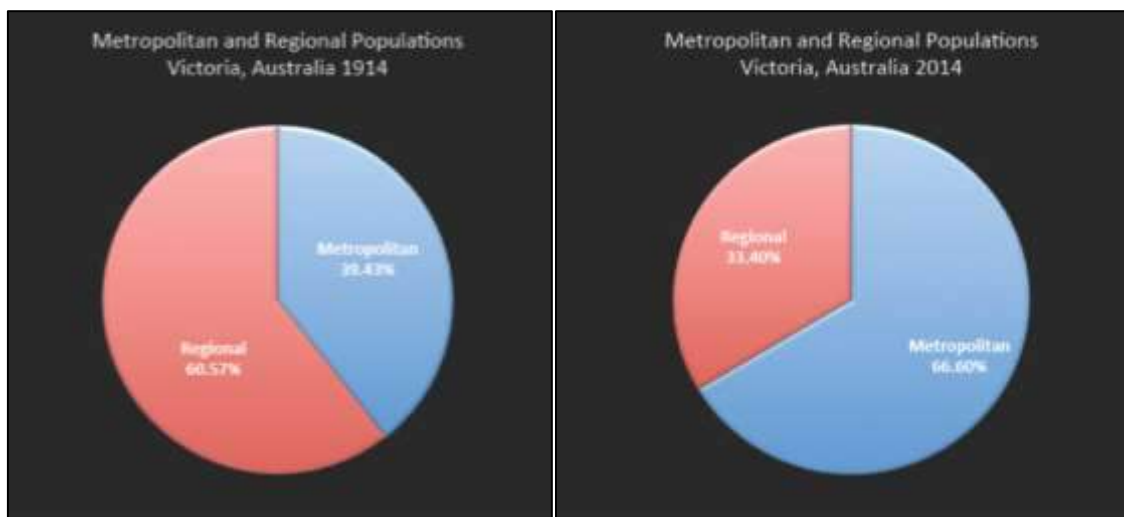


Figure 9. Population distributions for Victoria 1914 and 2014.

As indicated on the graph (see Figure 9), the census figures for Australia show the majority of the population in 1914 living in regional and rural Australia in comparison with the figures for 2014.⁵⁵ Wool and wheat production still provided Australia's major source of export income as highlighted by Pike.⁵⁶ This rural produce required a large seasonal labour force which is reflected in the population distribution. Regional centres such as Castlemaine, Ballarat, Geelong and Newcastle figured in manufacturing and with increases due to the Great War, manufacturing and metropolitan growth would change this balance. However these statistics are also reflected in the number of Australian avenues of honour planted outside metropolitan areas compared to those planted within them.

Such were the Australian people as they embraced the Great War. By the war's end, Hughes had trumpeted that over eight per cent of the Australian population had enlisted.⁵⁷ True though this may have been, it meant also that only two in five eligible males volunteered for service. With the majority of its men still at home and 3.5 of its 4.5 million residents were therefore, only indirectly connected to servicemen involved in the conflict, Australia was in a very different situation than the broad view history often portrays.

55. *The Australian Year Book 1916*. 114, accessed 11 December 2016.
[http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/CE8ADBEF73B673A8CA257AEE00161CE8/\\$File/13010_1901_1915_bk9.pdf](http://www.ausstats.abs.gov.au/ausstats/free.nsf/0/CE8ADBEF73B673A8CA257AEE00161CE8/$File/13010_1901_1915_bk9.pdf)

56. Pike, *Australia: The Quiet Continent*. 154.

57. "Australia and the War: Speech by Mr Hughes," *Belfast News-Letter*, June 26, 1918.

3.5 Projects, Progress and Celebrations

While acknowledging the newspapers with lists of dead and wounded, the experience of the war in rural Australia was expressed by Marjorie Lydiard at the time as “very much away from it all”.⁵⁸ Given the statistics, this was not an uncommon experience, even in the towns and cities. Of my own immediate forebears, only one member of the family left Australia, and except for him, all eligible males were in essential services. All of this is not to say these people were unaffected by the miasma of anxiety, grief or war weariness, which lay over the city. The anxieties and tensions were quite another factor and across Australian communities, people “[c]ould not ignore the names listed in the daily newspaper, mounting like the bodies in the trenches they represented”.⁵⁹

The development of the transcontinental railway held out new hope for the western part of the Australian continent. So, too, did the fiscal arrangements between the Commonwealth and the smaller states, which gave hope after a decade of federation. The mines at Kalgoorlie, Broken Hill, Mt Morgan and Mt Lyell were producing massive wealth for the nation, while the trade unions and the legacy of the Harvester Judgement had set Australian workers a wage that saw a sense for industrial justice spreading across the nation.

Being the greatest producer of wool in the world, with new cities burgeoning in South Australia and New South Wales, life in Australia still held promise in August 1914 despite the rural situation and drought. These states were not alone, as Alan Mayne wrote, “By 1914, Victoria had established major export industries based on agriculture and there were 100,000 farm units in the state”.⁶⁰

He went on to argue that these farms were not just surviving but prospering. The example Mayne gives is of Joseph Day, who adapted to wheat and sheep farming and to new technology. Day was still able to purchase new technology, seed drills in 1914–15, and a wool press in 1916.⁶¹ In November 1916, the British government purchased the entire Australian

58. Marjorie Lydiard, “Memoirs,” cited in Richard Waterhouse, *The Vision Splendid: A Social and Cultural History of Rural Australia* (Perth, WA: Curtin University Books, 2005), 197.

59. Joy Damousi, *The Labour of Loss: Mourning, Memory and Wartime Bereavement in Australia* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 32.

60. Alan Mayne, *Beyond the Black Stump: Histories of Outback Australia* (Adelaide, SA: Wakefield Press, 2008), 182.

61. *Ibid*, 201.

wool clip at prices 55 per cent above those of 1913–14.⁶² Also, in Victoria the brown coal production from the Morwell and Yallourn open-cut mines increased tenfold between 1916 and 1918.⁶³ All these positive advances were occurring at the same time as many avenues of honour were being planted for those fighting a world away.

At the national level, the first air mail between Melbourne and Sydney occurred in July 1914 and C. J. Dennis' *The Sentimental Bloke* was published. Industrial unrest and strikes continued to demand improved wages and conditions with the minimum wage case in New South Wales being played out. Australia was in a buoyant situation and while the cities were growing and there was a move away from the rural areas: "Optimism had returned to the nation ... immigrants poured in [from Britain] ... reminiscent of the boom years of the previous century".⁶⁴ All of this ensured that Australians, including these newcomers, were looking to a future not clouded by war. Not only did this ensure a romantic view of war when it came but it contributed to ensuring a spirit of generosity was maintained in Australia which was demonstrated throughout the war by those on the home front. It was also demonstrated in the avenue donations starting early in the war when Mr R.B. Clark donated the trees and covered the cost of planting and labelling the first avenue of honour only months after Australia went to war.⁶⁵

Prior to the Great War, the Australian states had pursued closer settlement schemes. In New South Wales, closer settlement schemes opened up millions of acres between 1904 and 1907.⁶⁶ In Victoria, the *Closer Settlement Act 1904* and that of 1906 introduced many small farmers into the former large grazing and cropping areas held by large squatting runs.⁶⁷ In Western Australia, closer settlement laws increased the area under conditional purchase.⁶⁸

62. Greenwood, *Australia: A Social and Political History*, 279.

63. Susan Priestley, *The Victorians: Making Their Mark* (Sydney, NSW: Fairfax, Syme & Weldon Associates, 1984), 217.

64. Geoffrey Blainey, *A Short History of Australia* (Sydney, NSW: Vintage Books, 2009), 166.

65. "A Living Roll of Honor", *The Express and Telegraph*, (Adelaide), May 19, 1915.

66. Malcolm H. Ellis, "New South Wales," in *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 6 (Sydney, NSW: Grolier Society of Australia, 1965), 290.

67. Geoffrey Blainey, "Victoria," in *The Australian Encyclopaedia*, vol. 9 (Sydney, NSW: Grolier Society of Australia, 1965), 124.

68. Pike, *Australia: The Quiet Continent*, 150.

While Mayne argues that by 1914 most of those who had lasted the distance were prospering, many small farmers were reliant on family to help work the farm. In Queensland, the sugar industry moved from Kanak labour to European labour throughout these years. This led to the situation where “Australia needed no sugar imports by 1920 and soon after became a big exporter”.⁶⁹

In the realm of the everyday, Australia generally maintained its horseracing industry and calendar, although the number of meetings across the country was reduced. The Melbourne and Caulfield cups were still paying out record prize money and had pre-war attendances in 1914.⁷⁰ Even at Melbourne’s Autumn Racing Carnival in 1915:

There was a splendid attendance, which was as good, if not better, than that on the corresponding day last year. His Excellency the Governor was included in the company.⁷¹

The profits from the Victorian Amateur Turf Club, as with most clubs throughout the Great War, went to the war effort.⁷² Over the duration of World War I, so many English racehorses were imported to Australia that the Caulfield Cup nominations for 1917 featured 50 English-bred horses.⁷³ This was a period when availability of shipping was very scarce. Over a year after the start of hostilities, even at the horse races at Ballarat, the local 1915 cup carnival was an outstanding success with uniforms “conspicuously in evidence” in a crowd described as a “moving mass of humanity”.⁷⁴

As Kipling opined to Banjo Paterson about Australians, “[y]ou think the Melbourne Cup is the most important thing in the world”.⁷⁵ By the end of that year, however, Australia had absorbed the shock of the Gallipoli losses. Despite that, there were still avenue plantings occurring in the country with a celebratory air as at Renmark, and this continued throughout the Great War. In the same vein, the war did not stifle the Melbourne Show, which boasted a record crowd for Show Day in 1917: “As the morning progressed, dense crowds poured into

69. Ibid, 158.

70. Maurice Cavanough, *The Caulfield Cup* (Sydney, NSW: Jack Pollard Pty Ltd, 1976), 142.

71. “Victoria Amateur Turf Club: Autumn Meeting,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, February 15, 1915.

72. Cavanough, *The Caulfield Cup*, 142.

73. Ibid, 154.

74. “Ballarat Turf Club Cup Meeting,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), December 2, 1915.

75. Denoon, Mein-Smith, and Wyndham, *A History of Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific*, 269.

the city from all directions, and notwithstanding the large number of ticket windows provided at the station, they proved inadequate to meet requirements”.⁷⁶

Despite the contraction of 10 per cent across the World War I years in the economy, Australians were better off than many elsewhere. Rural production, which had suffered in the drought of 1914–1915, was picking up by 1916. By then greasy wool had risen from 9.45d per lb to 11.86d per lb and beef exports to Britain had skyrocketed. Pike emphasises that “[p]rimary products provided nearly all the export income”.⁷⁷ Greatly increased cotton yields were being reported as “[c]otton growing [has] had a revival in Queensland as a consequence of the war”.⁷⁸ Even before this, the Sydney press reported of the northern districts: “Laurieton claims to be the first town in the Commonwealth to have planted trees in its streets as living memorials to the men who were at the front”.⁷⁹

Such was its importance to South Australia that two pages of the *Adelaide Observer* were devoted to the story of the laying of the foundation stone of the first lock, of a projected 35, on the river Murray at Blanchetown by the Governor.⁸⁰ This occurred only a month after the first avenue of honour was planted in that state where the system of locks was expected to expand the river transport opportunities and irrigation potential along “Australia’s Nile”.⁸¹ The Governor likened the spirit that brought this achievement about to that recently demonstrated at Gallipoli by Australia’s fighting men: “Today, we have only to look to the Dardanelles, where Australia’s manhood has covered itself with glory and renown, which will be imperishable”.⁸²

At the same time, in the three years prior to the war, Broken Hill Proprietary Ltd (BHP) developed its plant at Newcastle, commencing operations with its new steelworks there in 1915. This timely development was of national significance spurring related developments across several states:

76. “The Show Holiday,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), September 28, 1917.

77. Pike, *Australia: The Quiet Continent*. 154.

78. *Evening Echo* (Ballarat), August 3, 1918.

79. “Laurieton’s Tribute to Her Sons,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, November 2, 2017.

80. “An Historic Ceremony,” *Adelaide Observer*, June 12, 1915.

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Ibid.*

The enterprise of the company is truly federal in character. The iron ore is brought from South Australia. It is intended to bring much of the limestone for fluxing from Tasmania, and New South Wales will supply the fuel. Newcastle was chosen because of the unlimited supplies of coal.⁸³

Following this, developments for the wider district around Newcastle continued with the municipal council and progress association advocating tourist infrastructure improvements at Port Stephens. This was followed by further industrial projects, starting with a major brick works to produce firebricks at Port Stephens in 1916.⁸⁴

The promotion of towns across the nation was undertaken in the form of what later became popular “as back to” celebrations. In 1917, these often included avenues of honour plantings as at Eldorado, where after the plantings, all adjourned to the school. Former pupils had returned for the celebration, after which “[a]fternoon tea was handed around ... old pupils were present”.⁸⁵ After the ceremony and celebration of the planting of 46 trees, “[a] concert was held at night and was largely attended”.⁸⁶

Progress associations and committees across the nation were developing programs to attract visitors. Despite the war, tourism was being promoted as an industry. Both Ballarat and Bendigo in Victoria were pursuing “Homecoming Week” celebrations and supporting each other. Promoting these events, Ballarat’s *The Courier* submitted:

The Mayor of the City (Cr Hill), the Mayor of Ballarat East (Cr A. Levy), and the Mayor of Sebastopol (Cr J Jones) join our Committee in wishing Bendigo and its district every possible success in the back to Bendigo campaign, and that Easter Week may prove one of the most successful events in its history.⁸⁷

Also playing to the primary local audience, *The Courier* report continued:

You will be delighted to know that our “Homecoming Week” in connection with the Forward Ballarat movement is meeting with unanimous approval and support, and we will have Ballaratians and their wives from every state in the Commonwealth. We shall be pleased to receive your programme, and enclose our own, feeling sure that mutual good wishes and help will greatly strengthen the success of both cities.⁸⁸

83. “The Steel Industry,” *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, June, 2 1915.

84. *Ibid.*

85. “Patriotic Eldorado,” *Ovens and Murray Advertiser*, July 25, 1917.

86. *Ibid.*

87. *The Courier* (Ballarat), February 19, 1917.

88. *Ibid.*

Here, again, was a great cause for spreading the word to every corner of the Commonwealth that Ballarat was a city on the move. While often spread by editorial, much of this promotion was undertaken by loyal “Ballaratians” as indicated in the letters to the editor columns of newspapers across the country.⁸⁹ Following the enthusiasm generated by these events, news of the avenue plantings and the honouring of those who had volunteered spread nationwide through the newspapers:

From all parts of the continent, people are wending their way back to Ballarat to join in the celebrations. Ballarat, the historic city of the state will be the Mecca of their Easter pilgrimage. It is the enthusiasts that in every land and every age have given the people a national aspiration. In Ballarat, patriotic and enterprising men are seeking to quicken the spirit of civic pride, and to advance local interests.⁹⁰

All of this promotional activity with an eye to future industrial expansion was happening at the same time the Arbour Day committee was cobbling into place the plantings that would eventually create another enduring Ballarat legend, the Avenue of Honour. Despite the war efforts and preoccupation with patriotic funds and activities, Ballarat continued to have a full social calendar.⁹¹ Not only Ballarat, but also at other centres, social calendars were busy. The previous year, over Christmas 1915–16, Mulgoa in NSW was promoting itself aggressively:

Sportsmen, during the holidays, found an abundance of rabbits in the vicinity, occasional wallabies (which, by the way, should be “protected” for a considerable period in the Nepean District), and, now and again, a brace or two of wild ducks or teal rewarded the gun-majestic blue Nepean affords plenty of scope for the energies of the angler of the less ambitious order, (as bass, mullet, etc., abound in favoured reaches of the stream); and it (the river) is, of course, the swimmer’s paradise.⁹²

The result being: “[i]ts modern charms and graces – the joy-world, par excellence, alike of the jaded traveller and the eager pleasure seeker”.⁹³ The same newspaper was promoting the cause for further industrial expansion in the district despite:

The present “seething” atmosphere of warring tumult, distress, grief and disturbance evoked by the world-war, the gentler phases, both of civics as of social caste, seem to have been pro tem abolished or abrogated especially in the war zone, and in some

89. C. Barwick, letter to the editor: “Town Planning,” *Albany Advertiser*, June 15, 1918.

90. *The Courier* (Ballarat), April 4, 1917.

91. Ballarat Horticultural Society followed a full program of shows, as did the National Eisteddfod and many other events, which drew visitors and competitors from across Australia. Such “back to”, and “homecoming” celebrations were being held across the nation.

92. *Nepean Times*, January 8, 1916.

93. *Ibid.*

respects are being “tabooed” even in Australia (though we are some 4000 leagues distant from the seat of war), as being quite without the pale of the sinister preoccupation of the hour.⁹⁴

Reporting on the Ballarat celebration, newspapers across the nation promoted such efforts widely:

Old Ballarat residents in Brisbane are said to be much interested in Ballarat’s “Come Home Week” at Easter, when there will be a series of historical and other pageants, and a number of social and carnival attractions, to which Ballarat natives all over Australia have been invited. Amongst the old residents of that city now in Brisbane is Captain Barker, a veteran of over 80 years, who was present at the storming of the Eureka Stockade. It is expected that Brisbane will be well represented in the celebrations.⁹⁵

Elsewhere across the nation normal celebratory events such as the 80th anniversary of the founding of Adelaide were trumpeted. While it was to be expected in South Australia, from Queensland it was reported that in South Australia: “The eightieth birthday of the State was commemorated ... The Governor was present, and thousands of citizens, as usual on this occasion visited the State’s premier watering places”.⁹⁶

With all that was happening around Australia contributing to the development of the new nation, there was a “gradual abandonment of work in the federal capital territory”.⁹⁷ Despite the paranoia of the day, fed by politics and the media with accusations of disloyalty, cowardice or treason, much of this vibrant national community activity has been overlooked by historians and social commentators alike. Accusations were directed to strikers, conscientious objectors of different religious or political persuasions. The many strikes did not hamper the war effort in real terms and the Roman Catholic Church still provided 95 chaplains to the transports and the battle front.⁹⁸

94. Ibid.

95. “Ballarat’s Homecoming Week,” *The Brisbane Courier*, March 13, 1917.

96. “Eightieth Birthday Celebrated,” *The Daily Mail* (Adelaide), December 29, 1916.

97. E. Lea-Scarlett, *Queanbeyan District and People* (Queanbeyan, NSW: Queanbeyan Municipal Council, 1968), 178.

98. Tom Johnstone, *The Cross of Anzac: Australian Catholic Service Chaplains* (Virginia, Qld: Church Archivists Press, 2000), 338–340. Of the 95 chaplains, four were from Ballarat, one of whom was Fr. J. T. Heneghan, who while serving as a stretcher bearer was killed in action in 1918. In total, 11 Catholic chaplains were wounded, gassed or died on service.

In 2015, the National Museum of Australia conducted an exhibition with a small catalogue titled *The Home Front: Australia during the First World War*.⁹⁹ Among other issues, the exhibition drew attention to the fact that “[m]ost Australians experienced the war at home, far from the battlefields. Even the majority of men of serving age lived through the war in this country”.¹⁰⁰ There can never be a line between war and non-war community involvement, but with the hindsight of a century, the expenditure of money, focus and displays on war and its memorialisation to the exclusion of any but local acknowledgement of achievements outside the war, such as the opening of the trans-continental railway in 1917. Some of these celebratory events were included in the honouring of heroes in the planting of avenues.

Focussing on key personal stories of those in Australia, the exhibition highlighted aspects of life that contributed to building the new nation at home, such as the wartime development of the Myer Emporium, describing it as a “boom time” for Myer.¹⁰¹ Similar development was evidenced at Dimmey’s store in Melbourne that found “its sales scarcely affected by the war”.¹⁰² In addition to these developments electrification of that city’s suburban rail network contributed to new urban development on the home front.¹⁰³

The greatest loss for Australia was that of 60,000 potential leaders in the formative years ahead. The country suffered no rationing nor total loss of essentials as in Europe and despite a loss in purchasing power, wages rose from 55/3d to 74/11d for men and 27/6 to 37/1 for women.¹⁰⁴ Despite the strains placed on the young nation by Australia’s involvement in the war, “[t]he war years in Australia were, economically, more a major step forward than years of hardship and disaster”.¹⁰⁵ Through all of this, as at Normanville in 1915, many Australians

99. National Museum of Australia, *The Home Front: Australia During the First World War* (Canberra, ACT: National Museum of Australia Press, 2015),

100. Ibid, 3.

101. Ibid, 22.

102. Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 15.

103. Ibid, 52.

104. Margaret Jennings, *Australia in the Great War* (Melbourne, Vic: Hill of Content, 1969), 59–60.

105. Ibid, 59.

across the nation were financing memorial trees or tree guards at their own expense and volunteering labour.¹⁰⁶

3.6 Manufacturing and Memorials

Accepting that there was a lack of ships to transport goods from Australia and the loss of trade to Germany caused hardships, some manufacturing was doing well. In the first weeks of the war, Warrnambool's woollen mill was working to capacity meeting government orders for army blankets.¹⁰⁷ Geelong was boosted when "the Commonwealth Woollen Mills began production at North Geelong".¹⁰⁸ In Victoria's north-east, Shepparton opened its cannery in 1917, "hastened a little by the war".¹⁰⁹

In the working-class Melbourne suburb of Richmond, despite inflation and other wartime effects on the community, "[t]he knitting mills, textile and boot factories flourished under war contracts and ... the Burnley Progress Association argued in the autumn of 1916, war industry was to be applauded".¹¹⁰ "It was against such a background that the Richmond Avenue of Honour was planted along the Yarra Boulevard in 1918 for those who had died in the Great War.¹¹¹ These years were also a time of expansion in industrial manufacturing and of securing new overseas contracts: "In March 1916, the new company, Metal Manufacturers Ltd, began construction of a wire-drawing mill at Port Kembla".¹¹²

Despite the war, over 3500 were employed on the construction of the transcontinental railway line alone.¹¹³ The trans-continental railway, which had commenced construction in 1912, was completed and the arrival of the first train at Kalgoorlie was greeted by 5000 people with great fanfare on 23 October 1917.¹¹⁴ Apart from direct railway construction, which employed

106. *Mornington Standard* (Frankston), March 9, 1918; *Rupanyup Spectator and Lubeck, Banyena, Rich Avon and Lallat Advertiser* "Avenue of Honor" (Vic 1914–1918), August 1, 1918; *Berringa Herald* "Scarsdale Honour Avenue Committee," September 14, 1918

107. Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 20.

108. Priestley, *The Victorians*, 183.

109. *Ibid*, 188.

110. Janet McCalman, *Struggletown: Public and Private Life in Richmond 1900-1965* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1984), 89.

111. "The Governor-General Plants First Tree," *Richmond Guardian*, July 6, 1918

112. Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 54.

113. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, xv. "Among men aged 18-60, nearly 70 per cent did not enlist".

114. Patsy Adam Smith, *The Desert Railway* (Adelaide, SA: Rigby Ltd 1974), 100.

3500 men, the building of the railway saw Port Augusta grow from a small centre into a new boom town.¹¹⁵

In his portrayal of the laying of the transcontinental railway, Frank Berkery relates the experiences of a Victorian working in Western Australia and South Australia reflecting that “[t]here were good openings and opportunities”.¹¹⁶ Such enthusiasm would not have been an isolated example and would have been shared by others across Australia. Australia’s military performance in the Great War confirmed its nationhood in the eyes of politicians, wartime aficionados and historians. Some, however, considered that the opening of the transcontinental railway “[d]id more than Federation to bind the divided states into a nation”.¹¹⁷ It did not require the railway, however, to transport the idea and enthusiasm for avenues of honour to span the continent as a national concept.¹¹⁸



Figure 10. Platelayer at work on the transcontinental railway, c.1917.¹¹⁹

115. Ibid, 20.

116. Frank Berkery, *East Goes West* (Melbourne, Vic: Fraser & Jenkinson, 1944), 8.

117. Adam Smith, *The Desert Railway*, 97.

118. Letter from Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee to City of Ballarat, 20 August 1918. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/PO, Unit 114. This letter refers to the avenue of honour as a “national form of war memorial”.

119. Frank Berkery, *East Goes West*, Melbourne, Vic: Fraser & Jenkinson, 1944, 8.

Both the pharmaceutical industry through the Nicholas family's development of Aspro and the motor body-building industry, through Holden, were born at this time.¹²⁰ Smaller manufacturers like Ballarat's Lucas's and Adelaide's Barnet Glass Rubber Company, producer of Boomerang Tyres, also developed further throughout the war years. Apart from the Hughes work for the establishment of favourable arrangements with Britain to replace Zinc products formally dominated by German companies, "BHP was able to export products ... to Britain, France and South America as well as building up a dominant position in the Australian domestic market".¹²¹

From a nation that had been reliant on rural produce before the war, Australia had moved further into manufacturing during the war and this was highlighted "by the 1919 list of some 400 products that were manufactured in Australia for the first time during the war".¹²²

While many of these may have been minor balances that offset other falls in the production field, they were important when they occurred in regional centres hit hard with limited employment opportunities. Wiles of Ballarat won contracts for their field cookers throughout the war, and in 1916 installed new equipment enabling it to obtain still further military contracts.¹²³ That year the city held a Factory Day in the main street, Sturt Street, to promote local manufacturing, which featured machinery demonstrating modern advances. Over 500 exhibits were recorded and 15,000 visitors flocked to the city.¹²⁴

In considering the Ballarat attitude and lionisation of its grand memorial, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, the self-image cultivated by a settled self-determining society stands out. Weston Bate expressed this in that Ballarat was very much a city of the Empire and one that saw itself "on the world stage".¹²⁵ But as elsewhere, while war efforts and recruitment were major issues in communities, Australian life proceeded despite the war. While the war was a significant and even dominant feature in Australian life between 1914 and 1918, it was not the only significant feature and other local and periodic events dominated communities at times.

120. Berkery, *East Goes West*, 55.

121. *Ibid*, 52.

122. *Ibid*, 54.

123. Bate, *Life After Gold: Twentieth-Century Ballarat*. 56.

124. *Ibid*, 58.

125. *Ibid*, 9.

Even following the news from the Gallipoli landings, the City of Ballarat conducted a garden competition, which lasted the duration of the war, with 35 gardens competing. By the time the competition ended in November 1918, it, too, had helped attract many visitors to the city to visit the gardens. In summing up the results of this competition, *The Courier* reported the judges' comments: "It is questionable whether any city in the Commonwealth could show such magnificent results achieved by some of our working men of Ballarat".¹²⁶

Despite such local boosterism, Ballarat's efforts at surviving and overcoming loss of manpower and energy due to the war were repeated across the nation. Like Ballarat's Factory Day of 1916, Adelaide conducted a War Savings Day pageant in 1917 that promoted local manufacturers.¹²⁷ Already South Australia had led the way, celebrating Manufacturers' Week, and in Tasmania some were waiting for new shipbuilding to get under way:

We read and hear of the search being made for suitable vessels for the rapidly growing timber trade between this Coast and the mainland. ... There are sawmills at work everywhere on mainland orders, and their numbers and output would be doubled with shipping facilities available. Burnie and Ulverstone wharves are crowded with timber awaiting shipment, and Penguin had three mills at work which could keep several traders going regularly.¹²⁸

While these positive efforts to deal with industry were being undertaken in north-western Tasmania, the people of Devonport and Beaconsfield were planting their avenues of honour.¹²⁹

3.7 A Sense of Place

All of these activities were tied not only to commercial and developmental interests but were also central to a sense of place. In examining the distant grief of Australians in relation to their war dead, "[a] sense of place was crucial to imagining the grave and centring private memory of the dead".¹³⁰

This is a truism not only for those who suffered the loss of death of a loved one but for the wider community suffering the loss of the vitality of their young. Also, apart from death and

126. "Cottage Garden Competition," *The Courier* (Ballarat), December 11, 1918.

127. *The Mail* (Adelaide) December 8, 1917.

128. "Shipbuilding in Tasmania," *Daily Commercial News and Shipping List*, December 24, 1917.

129. *Daily Telegraph* (Launceston, Tas: 1883–1928), August 1, 1918, 4

130. Bart Ziino, *A Distant Grief: Australians, War Graves and the Great War* (Perth, WA: University of Western Australia Press, 2007), 21.

the apprehension of any possible news of communal loss, people still sought a sense of place. The avenues of honour helped embed a sense of belonging and a sense of place to those in remote rural areas and those still trying to cement their lives into this continent, where they were remote from their wider generational family and support structures.

At the outset of World War I, Ballarat was the fifth-largest city in the new nation, with industrial and mining contracts and contacts reaching out across Australia and political friends in the new parliament only 70 miles away in Melbourne. The premier of Victoria at that time was considered a local as he came from nearby Creswick, and other political, industry and business links were extensive.

By the time of war was declared, Australians were fully aware of events in Europe, even if not fully grasping the significance of their own part in them as an exporting entity. Despite being slow in their response, all political parties, and even the Irish nationalist groups, supported Australia's defence of the British Empire: "[T]hey were all Britons, and desired to stand by the Empire in its hour of need".¹³¹

In 1914, six separate municipal bodies governed urban Ballarat, each jealously protecting its own identity and independence. Two of these, the City of Ballaarat and the Town of Ballarat East, had fought for their identities since the eastern municipality had first burgeoned with the gold rush of the early 1850s. The western municipality, however, had the advantage of being planned out by a government surveyor and of being developed in a less haphazard manner before the large deep-lead mining companies took hold. With the coming of the Commonwealth era, the City of Ballaarat, occupying the high ground, boasted of having a well-developed industrial base that had been created by wealthy power elites who had weathered the financial debacle of the 1890s.

While Ballarat was one of several major provincial centres across Australia, its rivals included Bendigo, Toowoomba and Townsville in Queensland, and other coastal centres, such as Newcastle and Wollongong in New South Wales. These regional centres and the rural towns and areas with little beyond a hall and/or state school were representative of pre-war Australian communities and life. The metropolitan centres of the state capitals were just starting to show their appeal with significant demographic change occurring as indicated by the statistical returns.

131. Ibid, 24.

Despite the hard times brought on by the drought of 1914-15 and the onset of war which saw improvement in production and sales of their goods, Australians, if they weren't prospering greatly, were holding their own. This is not to say all was well, but despite commodity prices, unemployment, political and industrial issues, Australians at home did manage to continue forging their new nation at this time. The work of the state school systems and their publications helped ensure this. However, while doing this, the schools continued to do so in terms of the British Empire, whereas others emphasised their Australian-ness: "They were loyal and enthusiastic but much less concerned with Empire than with Australia".¹³²

By the end of the Great War, when a correspondent in "a letter to the editor" at Grafton wrote of the memorial tree plantings at Dubbo and compared the Dubbo Memorial Avenue to that at Ballarat, it exemplified this coming together as one nation.¹³³ Although Dubbo spread the word about the significance of these avenues to Grafton, it was another 31 years before Grafton created its own memorial avenue.¹³⁴

However, it was nonetheless the news of actions by Australians in Australia not as news of another colony of Britain that was of interest. In his work, Inglis details the sculptural work for the stone memorial at Dubbo, yet makes no mention of the memorial avenue created seven years earlier when the war was still in progress. He does, however, caption an image of the Dubbo war memorial obelisk, describing it as being "landscaped into a tree-lined avenue".¹³⁵ Avenues are often seen as ancillary products to a war memorial and not as memorials in themselves.

The interaction and cooperation of churches and municipalities across the Commonwealth in relation to sharing the ideals of creating avenues of honour also contribute to this sense of unity by 1918. The major denomination linked to the avenues appears to be the Wesleyan Methodist body is explored further in Chapter Seven.

Another movement across Australia that had been promoted by the various governments at this time was that of re-afforestation. Minister for Forests in Victoria was Mr Tom Livingston,

132. Michael McKernan, *Australians at Home: World War I* (Melbourne, Vic: Five Mile Press, 2014), 50.

133. "Memorial Avenue," *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), August 3, 1918.

134. "Grafton Memorial Avenue Dedicated," *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), June 14, 1949.

135. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 360.

who assiduously promoted this cause and who, through his department, donated both the avenue and trees that were planted on Ballarat's Mt Xavier reserve.¹³⁶

The subject of tree planting was mentioned at the Orphanage Committee last night by the president (Mayor Hill). He advocated a comprehensive scheme, and suggested that each child at the institution, each member of the committee and every subscriber should be invited to plant a tree. A sub-committee consisting of the executive was appointed to draw up a scheme for planting trees on the Mt Xavier reserve.¹³⁷

From this point it was but a short move to the planting of the Ballarat Orphanage Avenue of Honour (Kenny Avenue) at Mt Xavier in September of that year. An unusual feature of this avenue was the lookout or viewing platform at its highest point. This avenue eventually succumbed to the forestry plantation of *Pinus insignis* (now *Pinus radiata*), which, combined with arboreal harvesting practices, eventually overcame the cypress trees forming the avenue.

The perception of Irish Roman Catholic disloyalty was reflected in some avenues of honour such as the Lucas-driven avenue at Ballarat. While the Ballarat Avenue of Honour did have Roman Catholics represented, including a priest, they were often not included. Even by 1920, the attendance of 1000 people at a fundraiser for wounded returned soldiers at Ballarat's St Patrick's Hall was not mentioned in Ballarat's secular newspapers, only in the Roman Catholic press. Even as recently as 2016, appeals were still being made for the inclusion of Roman Catholic men in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour:

Thomas and Herbert Mulligan were brothers born in Brown Hill, Ballarat. Their mother, a widow, later ran the Woolpack Hotel in Bungaree – a hotel that's long since disappeared. Like the hotel, the brothers are lost to history. They were killed in France during the Great War. Both have no known grave ... neither Tom nor Herb is remembered in the Avenue of Honour in Ballarat.¹³⁸

My own great-uncle, John Taafe, grew up in Beaufort Crescent and was honoured in the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour planted in that street. Like many others, he was never honoured in the Lucas-managed Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Typical of the Irish Catholic tradition, involved in the Hibernian Australasian Catholic Benefit Society (HACBS) and the Roman Catholic Church, he was married and had settled in Wonthaggi by the time he enlisted

136. "Afforestation," *The Courier* (Ballarat), April 26, 1917.

137. *Ballarat Star*, May 9, 1917.

138. Caleb Cluff, "Give Them Their Due," *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 30, 2016.

at age 40 in 1916. His mother was still living in Beaufort Crescent and could tend his tree, while most of his brothers, still living in the neighbourhood, were past enlistment age.

Then there were the women of Australia who undertook not only the catering at community events, including those surrounding the avenues of honour, but also lobbied for and planted trees, such as at Ballarat North where “[i]t is interesting to note that a lady, Mrs Merlin, is secretary for the Monash Avenue and that the arrangements were no less adequate than those on the other roads”.¹³⁹ Closer to Melbourne, the Bacchus Marsh women “[v]isited the Honour-Avenue and polished up the copper nameplates. He [Councillor Morton] thought a letter of thanks should be sent. The President moved to that effect. Cr Morton seconded – carried”.¹⁴⁰

By 1916, many small returned service association groups had appeared around Australia, some of which were involved in the creation of community honour avenues. The RSL attributes its beginnings to the first interstate meeting of the various states’ returned soldiers associations in June 1916.¹⁴¹ The Victorian body, despite being established at the end of 1914, was not incorporated into the national organisation until 1917 by which time a significant number of avenues of honour had been planted independently of the returned services bodies.¹⁴²

After 1917, however, the organisation was a truly national one and returned servicemen and servicewomen had a body that would work for their interests and wellbeing and that of their families. Scates and Wheatley, in writing of post-war memory, activists stated that “[r]eturned soldiers’ associations constituted a third commemorative stakeholder. Well resourced, politically connected and often organised along quasi-military lines, veterans groups were often quick to speak in memory of departed comrades”.¹⁴³

139. *Ararat Advertiser*, September 3, 1918.

140. *Bacchus Marsh Express*, November 16, 1918.

141. Peter Sekules and Jacqueline Rees, *Lest We Forget: The History of the Returned Services League, 1916–1986*, (Melbourne, Vic: Rigby, 1986), 21.

142. The RSA (Returned Servicemen’s Association) Victoria joined the national body in 1917 by which time many avenues had been planted.

143. Bruce Scates and Rebecca Wheatley, “War Memorials,” in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 3: *Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 531.

The wider Australian community gradually changed in both makeup and outlook throughout period 1914 to 1916 and, again, more dramatically following the divisions incurred by the second conscription referendum in December 1917. The wording of this referendum was clearly framed to indict any people who were not in favour as being unpatriotic if not treasonable: “Are you in favour of the proposal of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Commonwealth Forces overseas?”¹⁴⁴

The Australian people, and significantly those who were serving overseas, clearly voted against the federal government continuing to pursue the Great War by simply answering “no” to the referendum question. In other words, Australians at the time were not in favour of the Commonwealth Government reinforcing the Commonwealth forces overseas; nor did they want conscription into the forces. Such a rejection might have been used against the ‘no’ voters but with such a majority outcome, any action contemplated was impossible to act upon in a punitive way due to the numbers involved. This was a far different outlook towards World War I than had been the case in 1914-15. The vituperation towards those not wholeheartedly and unreservedly in favour of the government line in terms of supporting the war caused fractures in society that remain a century later.

Throughout the four years of war, this change in view from the community clearly escaped Prime Minister Hughes. Similarly, there had been a change in society between the returned service community, their families and the wider community. It was the RSSILA and other small associations of returned servicemen and servicewomen which evolved into the RSL of today.¹⁴⁵ It was the RSSILA that supported the returned servicemen and provided them with another community apart from the wider civic community.

In Australia, more than ever before from that time on, there grew a community within a community. One of the aims of this community was to honour its comrades who had died in the service of their country. In South Australia, only 50 per cent of those who returned were members of the RSSIL.¹⁴⁶ Despite this, the moral claims of the returned service organisations received all the glory for forging a nation. The avenues that had grown from a grass-roots effort to remember those who had left home did not always conform to the returned service

144. National Archives of Australia, accessed March 10, 2017, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/factsheets/fs161.aspx>.

145. These bodies had a variety of names in the initial stages one such in Perth being the “Soldiers and Soldiers’ Relatives, Lest We Forget Association”.

146. Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 216.

organisations and political nationalist aspirations of those who sought more defined and outstanding signifiers of national heroism.

Those who stayed at home and built the new cities, such as Port Pirie and Newcastle, despite increased taxes and strikes, allowed such a moral ascendancy to “salve their conscience”.¹⁴⁷ Similarly, those activists who fought in the industrial battles at home, believing in their equitable and just causes did not wish to appear disloyal to those who had so famously represented all at the battle front. Due to the misuse of opportunity by some, governments used the war exigencies to tighten control on all such activities. Victoria had done so by September 1916:

Certain persons, in defiance of the law, are promoting, without authority, small entertainments “in aid of patriotic funds”. Several of the unauthorised appeals have come under the notice of the State War Council, recently. Official attention was drawn to the matter yesterday in order to emphasise the seriousness of this offence, and the statement was made by way of warning that future cases, will be recommended to the authorities for prosecution under the War Precautions Act.¹⁴⁸

When the 1916 federal government regulation under the War Precautions Act prohibiting appeals for funding and the construction of memorials was issued, it was through the state war councils that authorisation was directed. There was no federal war council at the time, just as the states controlled income tax until the exigency of war made it a federal priority, so most matters ruled under the War Precautions Act were administered through state instrumentalities.

While this situation existed it further highlights divisions of loyalty within the new Commonwealth. The states while fulfilling the requirements of the Commonwealth legislation had slightly different understandings.

In October 1916 regulations controlling and restricting expenditure on memorials was published by the Victorian State War Council under the provisions of the War Council Bill. However, after two years of the Great War, worse news from the front was yet to come. Despite the war news that flowed through, Australians still managed to circumvent these

147. Ibid, 109.

148. “News of the Day,” *The Age*, September 30, 1916.

regulations by planting avenues as Arbour Day projects and either donating trees or keeping tree expenditures within the bounds of regulations.

3.8 Conflicts and Avenues

After the conscription campaign and the referendum of October 1916, there was a dramatic shift in relationships between country and city, civilians and soldiers, Catholics and Protestants and between labour and management. All of this impacted on Australia's mindset, which created a mistrust and sectarianism that had seldom been part of the Australian way of life, and this continued throughout the twentieth century. This sense of mistrust also had a major bearing on the avenues of honour in the Great War. The main period for planting occurred in the 18 months following the first referendum.

The last year of the Great War saw Australians embroiled in industrial and political life as never before. Australians in 1917 began a year that stands out, especially when set against the situation at the start of the war in 1914. No longer an enthusiastic or unified community that saw the justice of the war, 5000 New South Wales railway workshop workers went on strike in August and this spread to include 20 unions across the state. News from the front was also devastating, and by the end of the year: "Over 76,000 Australians had been killed, wounded or missing on the Western Front".¹⁴⁹ Those at home also had to contend with a raft of new taxes such as the entertainment tax on top of the earlier income tax of 1917.

The first battle of Bullecourt on 11 April 1917, with the loss of 3000 Australians, prompted police Sub-Inspector Nicholson that same month to put his proposal to the Ballarat Progress Association for an avenue to be planted along the Burrumbeet road.¹⁵⁰ This was followed almost immediately by the first avenue planted in the then City of Ballaarat, Monash Avenue planted in 1917 (see Figure 11). The second battle increased Australia's casualty list to 10,000 for the two battles. After the second battle: "Some 1170 Australians ... were adjusting to being prisoners of war. This was the largest number of Australians captured in any single engagement during World War I".¹⁵¹

149. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 389.

150. Nicholson, having raised this idea at the Newington Branch of the ANA, was speaking at this time on behalf of the Newington Branch.

151. Beaumont, *Broken Nation*, 303.

In *The War at Home*, Connor, Stanley and Yule stated that World War I created “two castes in post-war Australia”¹⁵². The returned services organisations’ outlook and program gradually eroded the home front community’s commemoration of its volunteers. This was gradually replaced with the honouring of those who made the supreme sacrifice and those who served with official “war memorials”, which became very much “a term of the twentieth century”.¹⁵³ The RSSILA did in fact go on to “[h]ave a particular and privileged say in how the nation was run, and should have first call on the nation’s largesse ... and ritual recognition of Anzac Day”.¹⁵⁴

This societal shift noted by above by Crotty in 2008 and endorsed by Connor, Stanley and Yule in 2015 also reflected the change in commemorative sensibilities in the context of a divisive war. By 1920, official authorities looked to aesthetics and monumentalism. This was well demonstrated by the difference between the original concept of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour as expressed by the Friendly Societies in 1917 when proposing it, and much later, the victory arch called for and constructed by the Lucas interests with strong support from official bodies. While at all times the wider community was called upon, in the case of the avenues it was very much at a grass-roots level without the driving influence of the RSSILA. Later the RSSILA influence grew, clearly favouring a constructed monument that ultimately often superseded the earlier avenue of honour. Over time this bias led to the demise of many avenues such as that at Ballarat North. (see Figure 11)

152. Connor, Stanley, and Yule, *The War at Home*, 217.

153. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 12.

154. Martin Crotty, “Australian Troops Land at Gallipoli,” in *Turning Points in Australian History*, eds., Martin Crotty and David A. Roberts (Sydney, NSW: UNSW Press, 2008), 108.



Figure 11. Former Ballarat North Avenue of Honour in 2006.

The year was a frantic one in Australia. As well as such news from the front, politically, the nation dealt with a general election and another referendum. Australians went to the polls while the battles at Bullecourt still dominated the news. Australians were assured by Acting Prime Minister Hughes that:

The people of Australia have decided that they will not resort to compulsion to fill the ranks of the Australian divisions at the front. The Government accepts the verdict of the people as given on October 28 last. It will not enforce nor attempt to enforce conscription, either by regulation or statute, during the life of the forthcoming Parliament.¹⁵⁵

Having won the election, Hughes was still determined to have the people agree to conscription by subterfuge, and as well as strikes and dispiriting news from the front, November 1917 saw Australians back at the polls. As in the first referendum, there was no mention of conscription in the wording of the referendum question: “Are you in favour of the

155. “Hughes’ speech delivered at Bendigo, Vic,” March 27, 1917, accessed November 20, 2017. <https://www.electionspeeches.moadoph.gov.au/speeches/1917-billy-hughes>.

proposal of the Commonwealth Government for reinforcing the Commonwealth Forces overseas?”¹⁵⁶

The response, which has been taken as a no vote for conscription was equally a no vote for “reinforcing the Commonwealth Forces overseas”. In other words, it was a vote against Australia’s continued involvement in the war. It was a categorical rejection by both the civilian populace and those serving at the front. It did not however, deter the anti-conscription voters of Bungaree from planting multiple avenues of honour.

The largely Methodist community on the Northern Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, opposed the issue in contradiction to its church’s public stance.¹⁵⁷ With organisations such as the Returned Soldiers’ No-Conscription League led by Colonel R. A. Crouch and other anti-conscription groups, the battle was far from simply a Mannix/Hughes issue or a Mannix-dominated campaign as is so often portrayed: “As Victorian branch president of the Returned Soldiers’ No-Conscription League, he [Crouch] worked against W. M. Hughes during the referenda campaigns of 1916 and 1917”.¹⁵⁸

As well as political struggles and quiet development efforts by the majority of Australians remaining at home, there was still conflict regarding those who were believed to have German connections. Since 1914 across Australia, there had been strife over members of the community who were German and those of German descent or perceived divided loyalties. This preoccupation infiltrated into the story of Ballarat’s memorial avenues, which resulted in an even further complication when at Ballarat East:

A German naval reservist, who is a member of one of the bowling clubs, had planted a tree to the memory of a Ballarat soldier in the Ballarat East Bowlers’ Avenue of Honour, Victoria Street. The matter was brought to the notice of the mother of the boy for whom the tree was planted, and she forwarded a protest to the Mayor of the Town (Cr H. B. George), who is president of the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour committee. He has decided to have the tree taken out and another will be planted in its place by the soldier’s mother.¹⁵⁹

156. National Archives of Australia, “The 1917 referendum,” accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.naa.gov.au>.

157. Philip Payton, *Regional Australia and the Great War: “The Boys from Old Kio”* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2012), 150.

158. Austin McCallum, “Crouch, Richard Armstrong (1868–1949),” in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 8, ed. Melanie Nolan (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1981), 161.

159. “Tree to Be Removed,” *Ballarat Star*, June 25, 1918.

Only six months earlier at the opening of the Ballarat North Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Avenue Ballarat, Major Lazarus had warned: “If the allies had the misfortune to be overwhelmed by the Hun and his following, Australians would be working not for 10/- or 14/- per day, but for 2d or 6d per day”.¹⁶⁰

Such was the reality presented in 1917 of the consequences of the situation at the front. This admonition was part of Lazarus’s speech at the opening of the extensive Ballarat Sailors and Soldiers Memorial Avenue in one of the city’s major streets, Lydiard Street. With the entry of the United States into the Great War in 1917, this anxiety was relieved, and there came to be a cross-pollination of ideas about memorialisation that eventually transmitted the concept of planting memorial avenues from the southern hemisphere to the northern hemisphere in the following decade.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter argued that Australia was a remote country of newly reformed colonial states populated and governed by British colonials with the earlier nationalism of federation in eclipse. It examined pre-war attitudes and the basic statistics of Australian society and the changes that occurred throughout the war. From using the war as a promotional tool to the acceptance of a grim reality and the honouring of service. In analysing the social and political landscape of Australia at the outset and during the Great War, this chapter has contextualised the avenues into domestic events in Australia during the war.

Not only was Australia torn by the rhetoric and invective in which the referenda campaigns were conducted but also by industrial changes. This chapter has also demonstrated that while used as recruiting tools, the avenues were also part of a leavening in a society that was undergoing great transition from a rural-based society to a primarily urban one. This in turn leads to the theme of memory and hope in the next chapter, where Ballarat, a self-important community, still acted as an influence on national affairs and was also exporting the avenue concept throughout the English-speaking world, albeit often unconsciously.

160. *The Courier* (Ballarat), 13 August 1917.

Chapter Four

Avenues of Memories, Avenues of Hope

*A Garden City bright and fair to view
From out primeval forests quickly grew.*
(W. Little, Mayor of Ballarat 1890)

4.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that the Ballarat experience in creating avenues of honour from 1917-1920 created a national movement. It will argue that the premier war memorial plantings were elsewhere, and briefly explore the development of such avenues leading up to the Ballarat experience. Through the case study of Ballarat, some of the power plays of elites, and conflicts in that community, will be elucidated upon to give an understanding of the creation of multiple-treed memorials in the city. With that knowledge, it leads into whatever significance this one Ballarat avenue had over others in the city. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour was not necessarily the first and did not represent all who volunteered from the city as other local avenues, now lost, represented many of them. This chapter considers in depth the story in relation to the plethora of avenues of honour in urban Ballarat over time and how this led to the dominance of one over the others

4.2 From Little Acorns

Using a micro-history approach, this chapter details the Ballarat story in order to adequately understand the linkages with distant avenues. Such details detail also reveal the myth that the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was the first avenue of honour in Australia. Having done this, and continuing with this detailed analysis, this chapter also demonstrates that it was a Ballarat dynamic that captured imaginations resulting in the enthusiasm for such memorial avenues nationally and, ultimately, internationally.

Having examined influences for creating avenues as memorials in the previous chapter, the primary reason the phenomenon began in Australia was as a result of Gallipoli which even in 1916 was eulogised as “the birth of a nation”.¹ Not all avenues proposed as memorial avenues to the Great War were treed. St Peters in Adelaide proposed changing the main thoroughfare from St

1. “In Honour of the ANZACS: Dedication of Anzac Avenue,” *Gundagai Times and Tumut, Adelong and Murrumbidgee District Advertiser*, May 30, 1916.

Peters Street to Anzac Avenue.² By 1916 in New South Wales, it had been announced that “the name of Anzac Avenue is to be given to the new roadway to Woolloomooloo through Cook and Phillip Parks”.³

One ardent patriot, Senator Lynch, put to the parliament that the national capital be changed from Canberra to Anzac.⁴ Despite Anzac avenues becoming popular from this time onwards, many were name changes to existing streets and not actually planted with memorial trees, old or new. Only those that are treed memorial avenues are the subject of this research.

With the outbreak of the WWI, it was a subtle move that rewrote the Arbour Day plantings into memorials. Arbour Day was introduced to Australia through the agency of Stephen Cureton from the Chaffey brothers irrigation settlements, so it is fitting that flowing from this one of those settlements, Renmark, was one of the early towns to introduce the memorial avenue concept into Australia for the Great War. The initial plantings of avenue trees had taken place in South Australia, New South Wales and Victoria.

The first of these Australian avenues of honour was planted at Normanville in South Australia, beginning on 13 May 1915. The trees used were Moreton Bay figs that had been provided by and planted by Mr R. B. Clark and were “intended to serve as a living monument to his [each volunteer] gallantry”.⁵ Each tree had the soldier’s name and details attached. Despite the mention of name cards on the trees at Normanville, there is no mention of plaques at Renmark, where donations for palm trees were called for in the newspaper for an avenue planting that was certainly envisaged as a commemorative avenue: “The Renmark District Council is anxious to receive donations of palm trees for the avenue to be planted in commemoration of Renmark’s soldier volunteers”.⁶

Planting commenced on the Mt Lofty Honour Avenue of 43 trees on 9 September 1915 and the names of the 43 volunteers were listed in the newspaper:

Two avenues of trees were planted this afternoon in connection with Arbour Day. In all, 43 trees, consisting of 25 oaks (*Lustanica* species) and 18 English birch were placed in position in memory of soldiers who have enlisted from this district. The attendance,

2. “Proposed Anzac Avenue for St Peters,” *The Advertiser* (Adelaide), October 18, 1915.

3. “Anzac Avenue,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, January 26, 1916.

4. “Federal Parliament,” *National Advocate* (Bathurst), May 19, 1916.

5. “A Living Roll of Honour,” *The Express and Telegraph*, May 19, 1915.

6. *Murray Pioneer and Australian River Record* (Renmark), August 12, 1915.

which included children from the Crafers and Stirling East public schools, was large. Relatives of the soldiers participated in the planting proceedings.⁷

At the same time, Pinnaroo planted “gums, according to the roll of honour list of Pinnaroo volunteers”.⁸ However, there was more to do and practical issues to be dealt with: “It is intended to plant wattles in between the gums later on, but shelter seems absolutely necessary to each tree before anything like success can be assured. We have been asked to invite suggestion for a name for the avenue”.⁹

However, possibly the earliest and most effective promoter of the concept to plant memorial avenues to those who left Australia to fight was Donald Fraser, whose pseudonym was “Jimmie Pannikin”. Fraser wrote to the minister of education for New South Wales in April 1916. As Jimmie Pannikin, he then proceeded to send copies of his recommendation for an Anzac avenue in every town to newspapers across New South Wales. An inspector of schools in that state, his idea quickly received attention there as well as in South Australia and Victoria through newspapers and education department publications.¹⁰

Anzac Avenue in Gundagai, NSW, was planted out in 1916 as a response to the first anniversary of the Gallipoli landings. Also in that state an avenue was planted at Laurieton, as was the case at Eurack in Victoria, although the initial memorial avenue at Eurack was in the school grounds and was of shrubs. These shrubs – most probably wattles, which have a relatively short life span – did not survive, although the main avenue planted a short time later remains.

In Victoria’s Pyrenees region, Lexton Shire Council received a request on 11 April 1917 from Mr E. Russell, head teacher at Amphitheatre State School, for a memorial avenue to be planted in the township of Amphitheatre that sought:

Permission to plant 50 trees on the Amphitheatre–Avoca Road, from the bridge towards Mr Spillman’s, ... to plant a tree for each local resident who has gone on active service, the

7. “Country News: Stirling West,” *Adelaide Register*, September 10, 1915.

8. “Soldiers’ Avenue,” *Pinnaroo and Border Times*, September 24, 1915.

9. *Ibid.*

10. “Arbour Day 1916: Anzac Avenues,” *The Adelaide Register*, April 14, 1916; *Victorian Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, April 14, 1916.

plantation to be called Anzac Avenue, and also soliciting assistance in providing the guards.¹¹

The events at Amphitheatre were well promoted at Ballarat before any avenue of honour concept was publicly proposed there and *The Courier* reported in May 1917:

The residents of Amphitheatre hitherto have decided to plant a very fine avenue in honour of the volunteers, over 50 in number, from the district ... a brass plate bearing the name of each recruit in alphabetical order is to be placed on the trees.¹²

The day arrived and the local report announced:

Arbour Day has always been a red-letter day in the year at Amphitheatre, but this year it stands out in greater prominence than before, for on that day, Amphitheatre residents planted an avenue in honour of the district boys who have left the land of the sunny south for overseas to fight in the cause of right and freedom.¹³

The report then went on to describe the following festivities on the day of the planting:

Races were held in which the Anzacs of the future and their sisters competed with much earnestness. After this social event and celebration, finally Private S. Firms, a Gallipoli Anzac, spoke on behalf of the ANA and the Anzacs. He said that he felt a special pleasure in speaking on behalf of the ANA for that Association had earnestly advocated forestry.¹⁴

The planting of the avenues of honour was in the first instance simply an extension of an Arbour Day program already in place. This also explains, in part, the continuing tradition of this being a celebratory occasion even after the occasion was linked so strongly to the memorialisation of those fighting or killed in the war. Nowhere was this better demonstrated than at Eurack when the students planted an avenue at the school while the local men prepared holes for another avenue of honour along the roadside. The latter avenue was planted 10 days later and its plaques placed on timber crosses in 1918.¹⁵

Quite apart from the history of planting local avenues dating back to the 1850s, the Arbour Day program was the genesis of the Ballarat avenues of honour as was the case around the nation.

11. "Lexton Shire Council," *Ballarat Star*, April 14, 1917. This move was reported around the state including in Camperdown – "Lexton," *Camperdown Chronicle*, April 17, 1917.

12. "Avoca: An Anzac Avenue," *The Courier* (Ballarat), May 24, 1917.

13. "Arbour Day at Amphitheatre: The Anzac Avenue," *Avoca Free Press and Farmers' and Miners' Journal*, June 9, 1917.

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Geelong Advertiser*, December 6, 1918.

Despite the efforts of the Ballarat North Progress Association to have Council plant an avenue of maples in Beaufort Crescent in 1916, wartime preoccupations may well have directed attention away from the enthusiasm for Arbour Day of itself: “Regret was expressed by members of the Progress Association at last night’s meeting that Arbour Day had been practically allowed to lapse”.¹⁶

The same sentiment had been expressed in the *Education Gazette* so it is probable that the war and the initial flood of volunteers may well have been the incentive needed to revitalise the practice. Given the initial refusal of the City of Ballarat to allow the Ballarat North Avenue in Beaufort Crescent to proceed in 1916, such a situation seems anomalous with the national thrust generally.

4.3 But Not Here

At Inverleigh, the State School Arbour Day program and its associated activities and celebrations are described in editions of the *Geelong Advertiser* from 1887–1904 in detail. By 1904, “the schoolyard is well planted; the children planted trees in the streets and reserves”.¹⁷ Because of these earlier plantings, there was no avenue of honour to the Great War planted at Inverleigh simply because there was nowhere remaining in the town for such a significant addition. A similar situation existed at Meredith where cypresses, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, lined the main road in and out of the town, and the main street, Staughton Street, had been planted with elms as early as 1909.¹⁸ At Glenlyon, also, an avenue had been planted in the main thoroughfare in 1898 to beautify the street and honour residents, therefore pre-empting a further planting at the time of the Great War.

These plantings help illustrate the social mindset throughout rural Victoria where the avenue of honour movement had its greatest hold. Charles Fahey, in writing of the effects of the drought in Victoria 1914–1915, reminds one: “[we] cannot understand the society of the early Commonwealth without an understanding of the social structure of the bush”.¹⁹

This social structure was paramount in understanding the enthusiasm for this form of memorialisation in Australia during the Great War. As mentioned previously, the stripping of

16. *The Courier* (Ballarat), April 6, 1916.

17. “Arbour Day at Inverleigh,” *Geelong Advertiser*,” June 28, 1904.

18. “Meredith Progress Association,” *Meredith Sentinel and Steiglitz Miner*, August 6, 1909.

19. Charles Fahey, “Moving North: Technological Change, Land Holding and the Development of Agriculture in Northern Victoria, 1870–1914,” in *Beyond the Black Stump: Histories of Outback Australia*, ed. Alan Mayne (Kent Town, SA: Wakefield Press, 2008), 182.

vegetation from the Australian roadside by the movement of flocks and grazing was a significant part of the motivation for this form of memorialisation in the rural areas. However, other cultural influences were at work. This was “an act of citizenship” and was expressed as such when, reporting on the Laurieton Avenue in New South Wales, a Port Macquarie journalist explained that “the idea – was readily taken up by the townspeople”, and that “Mr J. H. A. Robertson is secretary of the movement”.²⁰ It was designed:

[t]o affirm community, to assert its moral character, and to exclude from it those values groups or individuals that placed it under threat. This collective form of affirmation in wartime identified individuals and their families with the community at large, understood both in terms of a localized landscape.²¹

From the contentious letters between the Ballarat promoters of the Lucas avenue that persisted through the Letters columns in the Melbourne *Argus*, the first Victorian avenue of honour seemed to have been planted at Eurack in May 1916 and another the same year at Sassafras.²² As cited, the Eurack Avenue of Honour was not Victoria’s first or even the first memorial avenue planted at Eurack.

When, in August 1916, the planting of an avenue of pines and camphor laurels in honour of the volunteer soldiers took place at Laurieton in NSW, the local paper reported that the idea, “which is a novel one, was proposed by Mr R. Longworth”.²³ Other reports in other towns carried similar stories about their various proponents. This indicates an Australian grassroots ideology relating to the trees as opposed to the hero status bestowed in previous eras on battles won and on military leaders to the exclusion of other ranks.

The following year, at the time the Lucas Girls were planting the first of the exotic trees in the Ballarat avenue, a mixture of natives and exotics was being proposed at other centres. “At Glen Innes in New South Wales, when the council met in June 1917, the matter of tree planting was discussed. The choice of trees fell upon kurrajongs and ornamental planes”.²⁴

In the far north-west of Victoria, the town of Murrayville proceeded to plant its streets with avenues of memorial trees. Murrayville’s plantings were accompanied by a tree planting carnival,

20. *The Port Macquarie News and Hastings River Advocate*, August 12, 1916.

21. Alan Mayne, *Beyond the Black Stump: Histories of Outback Australia* (Adelaide, SA: Wakefield Press, 2008), 182.

22. C. M. Pentreath, “Avenue of Honour,” letter to the editor, *The Age*, April 30, 1918.

23. *The Port Macquarie News and Hastings River Advocate*, August 12, 1916.

24. “Tree Planting,” *Tweed Daily* (Murwillumbah), June 5, 1917.

which commenced with a street parade involving all segments of the community across the Mallee, including returned servicemen:

After the procession the crowds were addressed from a motor car by Crs James Wilson and H. F. Hecht. This was followed by the official planting of the first tree. The rest of the trees were then planted (over 80 altogether).²⁵

Although the first tree in Victoria's tiny Warrion was planted in 1915, more trees followed in 1917 and 1918. It was, however, the final plantings, the first to one who died within hours of the armistice and the second to another from the flu pandemic after arriving back in Australia in 1919 that remind us of "the final episode of this terrible conflict".²⁶

Far away in Victoria's north-east the *Corryong Courier* carried a full-page feature, with photographs of the dedications of multiple memorial avenues across the region.²⁷ It had images of the cutting of the ribbon opening the avenue at Corryong as well as others at Thoughtla and Cudgewa. Ballarat could not match such all-inclusive and all-enveloping community involvement in its coverage and the avenue plantings there when examined critically, without bias, reveal if not a divided community, certainly a community within a community.

At the time, Ballarat was a major centre of Victoria's railways, servicing over one-third of the state's rail network. It had major workshops, and staff worked across the rich wheat-producing areas of the Mallee and the Wimmera. The Taffe family exemplified this widespread influence. Michael Taffe lived in Ballarat but worked at Ararat in 1915, while at the same time two of his sons were station masters working across the region. In those years the railway had been extended throughout the Mallee in the state's north-west, employing navvies from across western Victoria. Such was the influence of these itinerant workers that such places as Piangue, essentially a railway construction town at that time, planted avenues of honour.

25. "Murrayville Tree Planting Carnival," *Pinnaroo and Border Times*, July 26, 1918.

26. Joan Beaumont, *Broken Nation: Australians in the Great War* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2013), 519.

27. "Honour Avenues," *Corryong Courier*, September 26, 1918.



Figure 12. Avenue of Honour, Cowangie, 2006.

Possibly the most remote district with the harshest climate in Victoria was Mulcra in the Mallee, north of Murrayville where in the final months of the war: “Arbour Day was celebrated here on Friday, June 21, under favorable conditions. Twenty trees were planted to the honour and memory of the gallant boys who have enlisted ... from the surrounding districts”.²⁸

These avenues fill the vast, seemingly empty landscape beyond the towns and enhance the roadsides. They create a strong cultural and historical association with those “in the know”, and by separating the traveller from the seemingly empty space beyond, create an association, even if unconsciously, between the traveller and the avenue – the memorial.

Specific influences of Australia’s avenue movement overseas can be found at Yorkshire in England and in North America. Some avenues will be examined in Chapter six, including those of Victoria, Calgary, Winnipeg and Saskatoon in Canada and, although some in the United States stretched over 30 miles, others examined will be those in Queens, New York, and the Soldiers’ Memorial Highway in Michigan, which stretched over 20 miles.²⁹ These are notable examples where the influence bears comparison with Australian avenues. The existence and dates of planting of these other avenues, both in Australia and elsewhere, indicate that the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was not necessarily the sole influence or even the first.

28. “Mulcra,” *Pinnaroo and Border Times*, July 5, 1918.

29. LeRoy Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane* (Detroit, MI: Priscilla Press, 2004), 202. This entry relates the story of the Soldiers’ Memorial Highway, which was allocated a 20-mile stretch through two counties in Michigan, where planting commenced 5 May 1922.

What the events around the planting of this avenue and its promotion does, however, is place Ballarat at the heart of the Australian movement on so significant a scale, to this “national form of war memorial”.³⁰ National and overseas studies reveal many other influences in avenues and, yet, sufficient examples do lead back to Ballarat, directly and indirectly, so that it can be seen as the fulcrum of an international movement to the planting of avenues of honour. This sets the city’s grand memorial avenue in a national and global context and not merely as a local legend.

4.4 Ballarat: A Case Study

It was impossible to grow up and live in Ballarat through the 1950s without absorbing the legends that surrounded the Avenue of Honour and the Eureka Stockade. These two colossi, together, dominate local legend. Lowenthal’s assertion is that the prime function of memory is to adapt the past so as to enrich and manipulate the present.³¹

Following on from examining the reasons for the beginnings of the avenues of honour in Australia, I now consider the particular factors that influenced the city of Ballarat to develop its avenue of honour. In that city, the people had been creating a garden city since the 1850s and the avenue of honour was simply a further representation of their self-image and that with which they had endowed on their town. The city had a tradition of tree planting and of avenues dating back to the 1850s, when all major thoroughfares had been planted in avenues, including the main street, Sturt Street, in 1858/59.³²

At the Ballarat Botanical Gardens, Wellingtonia Avenue was planted out, an ambitious avenue “stretching 1515 metres through the centre of the Gardens – in 1874, when it was planted, it was the longest avenue in Victoria”.³³ Like such early avenues, the memorial avenues that were being created were further ways “in which representations of colonialism are introjected and projected on to others, about the importance of seeing and dreaming, and how place is implicated in this process”.³⁴

30. Michael Taffe, “Victoria’s Avenues of Honour to the Great War Lost to the Landscape” (Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 2006), 29.

31. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 210.

32. The Avenue Sturt Street, *Excelsior Album of Ballarat Views 1898*, reproduced in Michael Taffe, *Growing a Garden City: Ballarat Horticultural Society 1859-2009* (Ballarat, Vic: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2014), 16.

33. Carol Henty, *For the People’s Pleasure: Australia’s Botanic Gardens* (Melbourne, Vic: Greenhouse Publications, 1988), 85.

34. Ian Cook et al., *Cultural Turns/Geographical Turns: Perspectives on Cultural Geography* (Edinburgh, UK: Pearson Education Ltd, 2000), 366.

The Ballarat North Progress Association had requested Council plant an avenue of maples in Beaufort Crescent in 1916.³⁵ Such lobbying and courting of ideas amongst the ANA and local progress associations did not seem to translate into Council action. A year later, with so many multiple calls for Arbour Day plantings across Ballarat, the Ballarat Progress Association convened a meeting for 27 May 1917. The aim of the meeting was to draw together all the interested parties.

The Ballarat Progress Association had helped coordinate a successful Arbour Day program in 1916, even though some plantings had been prevented by Council. The increased enthusiasm in 1917 could be attributed to the shock of the news coming from Bullecourt, France, in April as expressed by Sub-Inspector Alexander Nicholson at Ballarat:

While the Arbour Day programme was being discussed at the meeting convened by the Progress Association last night, Sub-insp Nicholson suggested that an avenue should be planted to commemorate the great achievements of our gallant boys at Bullecourt. Very little sentiment had been shown, although we were proud of their gallant deeds. He suggested that the avenue should be at the continuation of Sturt Street along the Burrumbeet road.³⁶

The *Ballarat Star* reported similarly but emphasised that Nicholson's suggestion was, in fact, that this be a "special avenue".³⁷ Following this Arbour Day meeting, the secretary of the Ballarat Progress Association proposed a special meeting for the following month recommending that a delegation approach the municipal authorities and that this group should include the major proponents, Inspector Nicholson and Mr Price of Lucas's.

In April 1917, William Coulthard, secretary of the Ballarat Progress Association, issued an invitation to all interested parties, including the City of Ballaarat, to send a delegate to a special meeting for the purpose of pooling ideas and having a coordinated approach to the planting. This meeting of all the interested parties would then have a greater chance of acceptance by the city authorities "for the purpose of making arrangements for Arbour Day".³⁸

The following meeting on 16 May 1917 was convened due to the earlier moves by the Newington ANA, the Ballarat North, Black Hill, and Canadian progress associations, the Eureka Stockade

35. Letter from Ballarat North Progress Association to City of Ballaarat, 11 May 1916. City of Ballaarat Inwards Correspondence, PROV, VPRS 2500/P/0000/Unit 110.

36. *The Courier* (Ballarat), May 17, 1917.

37. *Ballarat Star*, May 17, 1917.

38. *The Courier* (Ballarat), May 17, 1917.

group and multiple church groups and schools across the urban divides to continue their planting programs from the previous year's Arbour Day endeavours.³⁹ Until that stage, there had been no direct involvement from any municipal councils. Following the Central Progress Association's special meeting on 16 May 1917 to discuss the Arbour Day plans of so many disparate bodies, Coulthard recommended: "That representatives of the bodies represented at the meeting wait upon the mayors of the city and town with respect to the scheme proposed by Insp Nicholson and Mr Price".⁴⁰

Following from this, the politics of representation and the social and cultural processes underlying and resulting from the adoption and promotion of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour by the Lucas organisation eventually came to adapt the foundational story and enrich it with their own story. In this way the Lucas interests, especially through the generations of "Lucas Girls", passed on the heritage story through the Ballarat community to the present time.

By the end of the war, the Lucas factory had grown to pre-eminence locally, with its range of products greatly expanded and most of its competitors out of the race.⁴¹ Not only had Lucas's gained in overseas contracts but it had also gained great publicity during WWI for its war efforts in a range of activities and, significantly, in its work on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and the creation of the Arch of Victory. The resultant free publicity that continued for decades would today be seen as product placement.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid.

41. *Sands and McDougall Ballarat and District Directory 1906–07* describes Lucas's as a clothing, underclothing and baby linen manufacturer. Ballarat's Industrial Exhibitions of 1916 and 1917 featured other white-works competitors also based at Ballarat: W. J. Cordwell, Main St, Ballarat East, Salmonow Pty Ltd, Lydiard St, Tylers, Grenville St, Mrs Jones, Main St, Ballarat East and Lucas & Coy. At the end of the war, there were only Lucas's and Tylers, with the latter eventually becoming solely a retail outlet before its ultimate closure.



Figure 13. Lucas advertising booklets 1921 and 1938 using avenue and arch as promotional tools.

Upon close analysis, the resultant avenue was used in aggressive promotion by Lucas's nationally. Every product promotion and commemorative booklet ensured the credit for the memorials went to Lucas's (see Figure 13). For decades after the Great War, the company's promotional brochures relating to its products included references to its contribution towards the avenue and its monumental entrance arch. The 1921 Christmas promotional booklet carried resonances of the earlier souvenir books of the Avenue of Honour in 1918 and 1919 in the title Lucas's *An Appreciation* (see Figures 13 and 14). None of this detracts from the patriotic work of the Lucas Girls and their contribution to Ballarat and its renowned memorial.

Such oversights as the non-inclusion of men in the plantings who had been listed by City Hall and for whose honour the flag was lowered to half-mast illustrates the ad-hoc nature of Lucas's claim of all-inclusiveness. The failure to include many Roman Catholics has already been mentioned; however, there were many others not commemorated in the avenue. Many commemorated in other local avenues were omitted, which led to suspicion of the motivations of some within the committee. However, this speaks today of the ad-hoc advertising methods of gathering information for inclusion and not the intent to omit anyone.

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour spawned many others in the city, and the opening ceremony of the Ballarat North Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Avenue was seen as of prime significance. At the

opening of that avenue, Major Lazarus reminded those present that “[t]hey were that day taking part in a ceremony which would live as long as Ballarat existed”.⁴²

Moving out from Ballarat to another district avenue, that at Mortchup, where an honour roll was provided, together with another honour board placed beside it at the school, which listed those commemorated with a tree in the avenue.⁴³ Another similar example was that at Warrion near Colac; however, whereas Warrion’s honour boards still adorn the community hall, nothing but a roadside plaque remains as evidence of the existence of the Mortchup community – the school, church and attendant residences have now all gone. The remnant avenue that once led to the school, now stands, and falls, in a paddock.

Country newspapers served extensive areas, with the rural population engaged in work across arbitrary boundaries. Shearers and other workers on properties travelled across large areas as well as interstate, and it is not unusual to find articles in regional newspapers such as Victoria’s *Ararat Advertiser* broadcasting that fact:

The planting of memorial avenues is still proceeding vigorously at Ballarat. On Saturday the planting of a hundred more trees brought Monash Avenue well out along the Creswick road into shire territory. The avenue was named by Lady Peacock. In view of the way the ladies managed the Burrumbeet Avenue it is interesting to note that a lady, Mrs Merlin, is secretary for the Monash Avenue and that the arrangements were no less adequate than those on the other roads. The Daylesford Avenue was extended by planting sixty more trees.⁴⁴

At another centre close to Ballarat, the planting of an avenue of honour with 72 golden cypress at Waubra incorporated community celebrations. The *Ballarat Star* reported that following the refreshments provided at the hall after the planting, “[a] musical programme will be given, and at night the proceedings will be brought to a close by a dance”.⁴⁵

In Ballarat itself many memorial avenues were planted and, as with other communities, the inclusiveness of all segments of the population were catered for and considered. In Ballarat East, the trees in the major avenue of honour on the Melbourne road were planted by family members and the planting was followed by activities at the bowling club. Where possible, family members of those memorialised also planted the memorial trees in the Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour.

42. *The Courier* (Ballarat), August 13, 1917.

43. “Avenue of Honour,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 21, 1917.

44. *Ararat Advertiser*, September 3, 1918.

45. *Ballarat Star*, July 11, 1917.

The Canadian Progress Association proposed planting an avenue “from Geelong Road to the top of Sovereign Hill”.⁴⁶ Later in June, reporting on the planting of the Canadian Avenue of Honour, the *Ballarat Star* quoted the mayor of the Ballarat East Township:

I had the pleasure for myself and my daughter for the mayoress of planting the first two trees in an avenue that will reach from the Main road to the look-out on Sovereign Hill. At the request of the Canadian Progress Association, I named the avenue Canadian Avenue.⁴⁷

While these avenues were generated by community actions and included wide community participation, the exception to the rule was the Lucas’s Ballarat Avenue of Honour. In the case of this avenue, sufficient evidence indicates a community idea was enlisted to aid an industrial firm’s agenda for a commercial end purpose. In this regard it is noteworthy that no community coming together, celebratory or otherwise, followed on from its planting; nor was any such follow up provided for.

While sections of the wider community were certainly involved in the planting of the Lucas Ballarat Avenue of Honour, the majority of plantings were completed by employees. By keeping the activities largely in-house, the accolades and resulting publicity devolved upon the firm, which enhanced its reputation and prestige. In the Lucas souvenir books, credit was given to selected industry, organisational and political representatives. These were the Ballarat Fire Brigade, Sunnyside Mill and Ballarat Horticultural Society among others however the predominant message was that the avenue was a Lucas initiative and a Lucas project.

In his annual report, however, the mayor of the City of Ballaarat did acknowledge others including “the gardeners who assisted with digging the holes and securing the plantings”.⁴⁸ He also acknowledged the significance of the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour and the work of the Ballarat North Progress Association in securing it for the city.

Despite parlous financial times, given the huge promotional activity invested by the Lucas company and the belief of the generations of employees and the descendants of the industrialist promoter, this is the avenue in that city that has survived to be a significant heritage site today. This can be attributed to the wisdom of Edward Price and the secretary of the Ballarat Progress Association of 1917 in establishing a committee to oversee the ongoing management of the avenue and the investment of Council in the project.

46. *Ballarat Star*, May 17, 1917.

47. “Arbour Day Celebrations,” *Ballarat Star*, June 26, 1917.

48. City of Ballaarat, *Mayor’s Report, City of Ballaarat 1917* (Ballarat, Vic: City of Ballaarat, 1917), 16.

The idea had been germinating across Ballarat through the various local progress associations and ANA branches since 1916. With the closing of Ballarat's last goldmine company, the New Normanby at Sovereign Hill in 1917, the gold mining industry came to an end.⁴⁹ The various progress associations worked to foster other industries. From the outset, the parks and gardens for which the city was renowned were promoted successfully. The success of such promotion demonstrated that tourism had become acknowledged as an industry.⁵⁰ At the opening of the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour it was seen in terms of beauty and appeal so that "[i]n time to come, the crescent should be one of the most beautiful avenues in Ballarat".⁵¹

On 10 May 1917, the Eureka Stockade Committee decided to incorporate a progress association into the committee for further improvements.⁵² This resulted in the Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour being planted the following month on 30 June.⁵³ This avenue consisted of 60 golden cypress of two avenues, although today it would be termed as one avenue of two rows of parallel trees. The following month, July 1917, the Canadian Progress Association had proposed a memorial avenue in honour of their local serving soldiers to be planted from Main Road (Geelong Road) through to the new reserve they had procured at Sovereign Hill.⁵⁴ Here, the unattractiveness of the mining scar left by Ballarat's last major goldmining company needed to be rectified. The proposed memorial avenue, therefore, would not only contribute to the greening of the landscape but would also add to the tourism potential of the city.

The result of this coming together saw William Coulthard, Alexander Nicholson and Edward Price lead a delegation to the City of Ballarat for official sanction for Nicholson's idea. With the appropriate support of the shire, town and city, Coulthard and Price could bring their forces to bear in harnessing community support and creating a Ballarat Avenue of Honour.⁵⁵ The first section of Ballarat's now famed Avenue of Honour was planted on 3 June 1917 with great fanfare and official sanction, the first tree being planted by the Victorian premier at the time, Sir Alexander Peacock (see Figure 14).

49. Bate, *Life After Gold: Twentieth-Century Ballarat*, 23.

50. *Ibid*, 59.

51. *Ballarat Star*, June 30, 1917.

52. *Ballarat Star*, May 15, 1917.

53. *Ballarat Star*, July, 4 1917.

54. *Ballarat Star*, May 17, 1917.

55. "Avenue of Honour," *Ballarat Star*, June 2, 1917. In this article, captioned as a tribute by Lucas Employees, it is stated that "it is less than three weeks since the suggestion was made to the young ladies of Lucas' establishment".



Figure 14. Ballarat Avenue of Honour. *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men*, Ballarat, Lucas & Co, 1919.

Following the intense, patriotic and emotional Lucas promotion of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, which Lucas's had made their own in a very short time, others sought to be seen as equally patriotic. Lucas's had so branded the Burrumbeet road avenue that it was referred to by the original proponents in the various local ANAs as Lucas's Avenue. Another letter from the same source stated that as "it is now intended to set the trees in the Lucas and Co.'s Avenue of Honour on the Burrumbeet road".⁵⁶ The third edition of the souvenir booklet issued for the avenue *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men* highlighted the company's proprietorial attitude to the avenue.⁵⁷

After several prompts and letters to the newspapers in the preceding weeks the councillors from the Borough of Sebastopol met on 5 July 1917:

A proposal that an avenue should be planted in honour of local boys who had enlisted was made by Cr Clark at the Sebastopol Council meeting last night. ... He thought they should follow the laudable example set by the Lucas Girls and have a local avenue.⁵⁸

The mayor of Sebastopol, Cr Jones, then confirmed: "He had had it under consideration himself, and had been assured of substantial assistance by the Cambrian Society and other local bodies".⁵⁹

56. *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 19 1917.

57. Reprinted from E. Lucas & Co., *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men*, Ballarat, Vic: Lucas & Co, 1919. Cover title acknowledges only Lucas's.

58. "Sebastopol Avenue of Honour," *Ballarat Star*, July 6, 1917.

59. *Ibid.*

So in the Ballarat district the race was on, and the Ballarat North Progress Association, which had requested permission to plant an avenue 14 months earlier, had already set aside 16 June 1917 for its first plantings. The association then had to put the event aside following Council support for the rapid and vigorously organised Lucas planting to be staged only two weeks earlier.

Only days after the first plantings in the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour in Beaufort Crescent, another Avenue of honour was planted in one of the city's major streets, Lydiard Street North, starting at the tram terminus, which was then between Macarthur Street and Gregory Street. This avenue extended to Howitt Street and later extended further again. Named the Ballarat Sailors and Soldiers Avenue of Honour, the plaques appear to have been removed from the trees in the mid-1920s as noted in the manuscript containing those commemorated on the trees that "Other plaques may be at Mr Dawson's".⁶⁰

The drought that led up to 1915, coupled with the drain of men to the call to arms, left Victoria in the grip of a rural depression. In the Ballarat district, the Shire of Bungaree was technically, if not actually, in a situation akin to bankruptcy. In speaking of the proposed avenue in Lydiard Street, which traversed the Bungaree Shire, "the shire engineer (Major J. S. Lazarus) realised the Bungaree Shire Council had no money available for the purpose".⁶¹ Despite this, however, by taking up penny drives and other fundraisers, the shire managed its contribution to this avenue and another outside its offices at Leigh Creek on the Melbourne road.⁶² This shire was also committed to the Ballarat North Sailors and Soldiers Avenue, which passed through its municipal boundary.

At the opening of that avenue, at a time when defeat was a distinct possibility for the Allies, Major Lazarus reminded those gathered: "They were that day taking part in a ceremony which would be one of the most historical in the annals of Ballarat, and which would live as long as Ballarat existed".⁶³

His address was followed up by Major Baird who, speaking of the fighting still going on, went on to praise the residents' patriotism, adding that if the Germans overwhelmed us: "Australians

60. A full listing for the names in this avenue is held at the Ballarat City Library in an exercise book titled *Ballarat Soldiers and Sailors Avenue of Honour* and dated 1927 by which time the plaques appear to have been removed. A notation in this book states: "Other plates may be at Mr Dawson's". This notation and the date on the cover indicate that there were plaques on the trees, and that it is from those plaques the names have been taken and entered. It also leaves open the likelihood of further names not included in the listing due to some plaques being missed.

61. *The Courier* (Ballarat), August 13, 1917.

62. "Honouring District Soldiers," *Gordon, Ballan & Egerton Advertiser*, September 5, 1919.

63. *The Courier* (Ballarat), August 13, 1917.

would be working, not for 10/- or 14/- per day, but for 2d or 6d per day”.⁶⁴ Apart from other Arbour Day plantings around Ballarat, by May 1917 plans were falling into place for four avenues of honour in the city, with a further eight created by the end of the year.

The final five of these avenues were created off-street; in the case of the Orphanage, Canadian and Black Hill reserves, they were on Crown land reserved for recreational purposes. The Eureka Stockade was parkland that had been reserved as a memorial to commemorate the battle on that site in 1854 and the last, at the Ballarat Agricultural High School, like so many avenues across Victoria started since 1915, was in a school ground.

Promoted by the Eureka Stockade Committee, planning for the avenue of honour at the Eureka Stockade Reserve had been in train since May and the holes had been prepared a week before the planting ceremony. Sixty trees were planted in the avenue of honour at the reserve on Saturday 30 June 1917.⁶⁵ These trees were:

[p]lanted by the lady relatives of the soldiers. Two avenues were planted. The Committee’s Avenue was opened, the first tree planted by the Mayor (Cr Levy) ... The Citizens Avenue was named and the first tree planted by the Hon. R. McGregor, MLA.⁶⁶

General Birdwood writing to Mrs Rashleigh, who had planted two trees in the avenue, one for her son serving at the front and another for the general, expressed his thanks:

I do indeed accept this most gratefully as a proof of your very kind feelings towards me for anything I may have been able to do for the magnificent and brave men of whom I feel it has been a privilege to have been a comrade during the last three years.⁶⁷

Mrs Rashleigh had travelled from Geelong to plant her two trees for her son, whose forebear was a Eureka Stockader. “Titch” Rowlands was another descendant of a stockader honoured in the Eureka avenue with a tree planted by his family. Rowlands died in England from the Spanish flu pandemic following the war. The failure to note this avenue of honour planting was corrected when, after the war, the Australian War Memorial sent index cards to families requesting that any details in relation to their loved one’s record missing on the card be advised.⁶⁸ Details were

64. Ibid.

65. *Ballarat Star*, July 4, 1917.

66. Ibid.

67. Amanda M. Taylor, *Dinkum Oil: Letters Published in the Ballarat Courier During the Great War* (Ballarat, Vic: The Courier, 2006), 285.

68. National Archives Australia, accessed March 12, 2006, <https://www.recordsearch.naa.gov.au>.

promptly supplied of Pte Thomas Grange Rowlands, grandson of Eureka Stockader Thomas Rowlands, “who fought in the battle, on the site a tree is planted to each soldier descendent”.⁶⁹

Not far from Eureka, Sebastopol was another suburban municipality of Ballarat, where an avenue of 120 trees had been planted after only two weeks of discussion: nearly all of the available population of Sebastopol turned out on Saturday afternoon for the opening of the Avenue of Honour in commemoration of the soldiers from the borough who are fighting the Empire’s battles abroad.⁷⁰ The Sebastopol avenue was later extended to contain over 200 elms and oaks. When Birdwood was advised of the details of this avenue, and of it being renamed from Cheshunt St to Birdwood Avenue, he wrote:

I write to thank you for your kind letter of the 17th June and to tell you how much I appreciated the honour which you have conferred upon me in calling the avenue which you have opened as a memorial to the soldiers of your district “Birdwood Avenue”. I am indeed proud to know that you have so kindly linked my name in such a manner with our gallant Australian soldiers ... I trust it will be my good fortune to see your avenue one of these days and to meet many friends, who I feel have shown me much more kindness than I can possibly deserve in Australia. ... Convey my sincere thanks to the members of your committee for their kind action. Yours sincerely, W. R. Birdwood.⁷¹

So, long before the Lucas-promoted Ballarat Avenue of Honour was emblazoned into the headlines, people in Britain of the prominence of Birdwood were aware of the concept of an avenue of honour from other avenues of honour raised at Ballarat.

Writing home to his family at Sebastopol from the front, young Harry Clark records his pride and endorsement of the new avenue of honour planted at Sebastopol and the renaming of the street from Cheshunt Street to Birdwood Avenue: “I think that was a very appropriate name to give the avenue of honour in Sebastopol, ‘General Birdwood Avenue’. They could not have named it after a better man, ‘a soldier and a man’...”.⁷² These Ballarat avenues were now being discussed across a broad range of correspondence and those at the front were aware of them. Clark’s letter indicates possible beneficial effects on the morale of those at the front who were being honoured in the avenues. Given the camaraderie of the trenches, it is to be expected that this source of honour would be shared amongst Clark’s friends and also possibly with those from other countries.

69. Ibid.

70. “Sebastopol Honour Avenue: General Birdwood Honoured,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), August 6, 1917.

71. *The Courier* (Ballarat), November 2, 1918.

72. Taylor, *Dinkum Oil*, 283.

Knowledge of the Ballarat avenues was also being disseminated around Australia and to the battle front by both media-assisted and personal communications. However, the letter to all Victorian municipal councils in September 1917 from Captain Dyett, secretary of the Victorian Recruitment Committee, that has been interpreted as meaning that avenues of honour be used as an incentive to recruiting, cemented the idea across the consciousness of Victorians at home:

The movement is already afoot in Melbourne, and has been followed in other towns such as Ballarat, Rokewood, Chelsea and Northcote. Every municipal council should take this opportunity of beautifying the municipality with suitable trees in the public gardens, reserves, roads and parks. Not only will the avenues be a fitting memorial to the gallant sons of the local residents, but it will also enable returned soldiers to be employed with a suitable vocation, something that they will take an enthusiastic pride in.⁷³

The letter was clearly aimed at honouring those who served and at repatriation efforts for the employment of returned servicemen. The final admonition has been interpreted as being a forceful recruitment effort: “Just as the glow of pride will come to the returned soldier when he sees his tree and his name, so must the burning shame scorch the conscience of the eligible man who did not go before it was too late”.⁷⁴ This recruitment inference seems more in the nature of political necessity given that it emanated from the recruitment committee. However, from this time onwards, the planting of avenues of honour accelerated and spread to almost every hamlet in the state.

Tears were blending with the rain as Anne Kerby returned home from watching the Mayor, Cr George, plant the two trees in the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour on the Melbourne road to her cherished sons whom she had not seen in over two years, and one of whom would never be returning. Writing to *The Courier* after the event in 1918, Kerby thanked the organisers: “The Victoria Bowling Club for granting her desire to have her sons’ memorial trees planted together”.⁷⁵ She then continued, thanking the mayor of Ballarat East, Cr George, for “placing his motor car at her disposal”.⁷⁶

All five of Anne Kerby’s sons enlisted – one returned with the loss of his left eye and Norman was killed at Gallipoli. Two months after Norman’s death, his mother received his final letter. In her grief she wrote to the defence department with the request: “I would like to know who was near

73. “Work for Returned Soldiers: An Avenue of Honour,” *Ararat Chronicle and Willaura and Lake Bolac Districts Recorder*, September 7, 1917.

74. *Ibid.*

75. *The Courier* (Ballarat), letter to the editor, July 8, 1918.

76. *Ibid.*

him when he died; life is full of bitterness. I am yours gratefully".⁷⁷ While this story remains to be further explored, the trees she planted were clearly significant to her and the close-knit Ballarat East community.

When Edward Price lobbied the City of Ballarat to remove this eastern avenue's memorial status and invest it in his company's avenue, the feelings of such women as Anne Kerby were not in consideration. Sensitivity or consideration of community or interest outside that of the commercial interests of Lucas's power elite was not negotiable. However, such interests were always projected, as in Price's letter to the committee, as being in the interest of uniformity in the planting program and the appearance of the avenue for the city.⁷⁸ It must be noted that the order of keeping the sons' trees together was maintained when alternative trees were planted in the final planting of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.⁷⁹

While the appropriation of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour by a commercial firm drove that memorial planting forward, it also raised much misinformation, which has persisted to the present time. One letter in *The Courier* attacked the Lucas appropriation of the idea and tried to set the record straight:

The Newington ANA, through its representative (Insp Nicholson) suggested that the ANA and kindred societies should plant an avenue on the Burrumbeet road ... Lucas and Co. (after appropriating the site of the other organisations' proposed plantation) have announced their intention ...⁸⁰

It is a noteworthy observation on individual, industrial and social attitudes and interests of the era that only one in three of the Ballarat Orphanage volunteers are represented in Lucas's Ballarat Avenue of Honour.⁸¹

The media program undertaken by Lucas was intense and aggressive. Whenever a letter appeared in the press, be it metropolitan or remote, the Lucas machine had it covered. When letters appeared in Melbourne's *Argus* newspaper refuting Lucas's claims in relation to their avenue, a

77. Letter to the Hon R. McGregor from Anne Kerby, August 2, 1915. NAA Series B2455 Kerby, Norman Vivian Gladstone, accessed May 5, 2017.
<https://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/DetailsReports/ItemDetail.aspx?Barcode=7372400&isAv=N>

78. Letter from Edward Price to the Avenue of Honour Control Committee, May 24, 1918. PROV, VPRS 2500/P/000/Unit 114.

79. E. Lucas & Co., *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men* (Ballarat, Vic: Lucas & Co, 1919), 70.

80. "Avenue of Honour," letter to the editor, *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 12, 1917.

81. Lynne Sheedy, *Arthur Kenny Avenue of Honour Re-creation* (Ballarat, Vic: Children and Family Services, 2015), 4.

pseudonymous letter would often appear in support.⁸² This is also happened at Ballarat, where Lucas's mounted an aggressive campaign attacking the creation of other local avenues.⁸³

Bate makes the point that, apart from Lucas, 200 women were employed at other white-work factories in Ballarat.⁸⁴ In 1916 and 1917, the Ballarat Factory Day promoted the various enterprises, including Lucas and its competitors. Among other white-works factories listed at the Factory Day exhibitions in those years were Salmonow, Ltd, W. J. Cordwell in Main Street, opposite the Ballarat East Post Office, Jas. Tyler and Co, Grenville Street and Mrs White's ladies' clothing at 301 Lyons Street South.

Edward Price announced his knowledge of the avenue at Mount Lofty when he started the Lucas promotion putting his case for the avenue at Ballarat.⁸⁵ He raised this "proposal" despite the earlier suggestion of Inspector Alexander Nicholson to create the avenue on the Burrumbeet road starting at the shire/city boundary to honour the local "lads" who had faced the Germans at the Battle of Bullecourt.⁸⁶ Neither evinced any knowledge of other similar projects around the district despite the local and interstate newspaper coverage given to the likes of that at Amphitheatre.

Without doubt, it was the Mount Lofty avenue planted in 1915 that Tilly Thompson recalled following Inspector Nicholson's call for an avenue of honour to be planted at Ballarat on the Burrumbeet road. It was, therefore, this avenue from the Mount Lofty railway station that Tilly used in her harnessing of the Lucas workers to take the initiative in their advocacy and work on the great Ballarat Avenue of Honour. It was not, however, until after the first plantings of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and the resultant wide publicity that many other Australian avenues were planted.

The influence of Lucas's Ballarat Avenue of Honour is demonstrated by the volume of inwards Council correspondence surrounding its activities.⁸⁷ A perusal of the correspondence reveals letters seeking assistance and advice from across Victoria and other states of the Commonwealth.

82. E Lucas & Co, "Lucas Scrapbook," Gold Museum Collection, Sovereign Hill Museums Association, Ballarat. Ref: 84.670.

83. Ibid.

84. Bate, *Life After Gold*, 31.

85. *The Courier* (Ballarat), May 17, 1917.

86. Ibid.

87. Letters from the ANA and the Ballarat Progress Association to the City of Ballarat, May 1918. PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/ Unit 114.

As demonstrated, not all the correspondence related to the grand avenue on the Burrumbeet road. There had also been correspondence from both interstate and overseas relating to the avenue at the Eureka Stockade reserve, the avenue at Sebastopol and the avenue under the sponsorship of the Methodist church at Golden Point.

All of these enquiries were dealt with by the Ballarat City Council. There is no record of any reference to the Shire of Ballarat or to the Lucas company, although such correspondence was tabled at Committee of Control of Avenue of Honour meetings.⁸⁸

Inglis estimated that approximately 40 memorials were created without prosecution during the war.⁸⁹ In determining this estimate, avenues of honour are clearly not considered war memorials. This was despite the fact that there were innumerable references in contemporary personal and official correspondence as well as newspaper reports and municipal minutes where they are so regarded. By 1919 they were being acknowledged as memorials. Dedicating the West Merbein Avenue of Honour after WWI, the state commandant Brigadier-General Brand stated:

Such, a memorial will in course of time beautify the landscape and will remind us all of the beautiful avenues in France; and in the same way as the A.I.F. afforded protection to the weak, so these beautiful, trees will afford protection to human beings and beasts These memorials; no matter what form, they assume, are a fine tribute to those who have fallen.⁹⁰

The state president of the RSSILA, Mr R. G. Palmer, also spoke and planted a tree in memory of the first Australian officer killed in the war, Naval Lt. Elwell. In the same district, the newspaper went on to report that “the dedication of a memorial row of palms was held at the central state school”.⁹¹ Newspaper reports and letters to editors across Australia continued to carry the avenue idea throughout the nation.

The concept, born in South Australia and Victoria in the first 12 months of the war, was spread by multiple means. However, those which are on record comprise newspaper reports, municipal minutes and archival records of inter-municipal relationships. Just two years after memorial

88. Minutes of Meeting, May 17, 1918, Committee of Control of Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS/PO/Unit 114. Refer to correspondence from Shire of Ballarat, H. V. McKay, Ipswich City Council and City of Melbourne.

89. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 120.

90. “Planting an Honour Avenue,” *The Mildura Cultivator*, October 25, 1919.

91. “At Mildura School,” *The Mildura Cultivator*, December 20, 1919.

avenues commenced, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was the one that captured the popular imagination of people and organisations across Australia.

This was due to three factors, the first being the extensive media coverage emanating from coverage of the Lucas patriotic activities and the company's intensive promotion of the avenue. The scale of the planting aroused interest, admiration and even after the initial planting, it was written about in letters to editors across Australia. The final efforts that extended the avenue to 22 kilometres ensured ongoing attention; this was the first of Australia's big highway drawcards not approached again until the "Big Bananas and Big Pineapples" of the 1960s. Finally the involvement of key political personalities including the Premier, Minister for Forestry, and ultimately the official opening by the Prince of Wales focused national attention on the avenue and its entrance arch.

Having already displaced the friendly societies and progress associations that had been advocating memorial avenues since 1916, Price ensured his company gained control of the project. This is not always apparent due to his method of presenting the project through his staff. Directed by his dynamic sales representative, Tilly Thompson, staff involved in wartime fundraising threw themselves into the project and became renowned as the "Lucas Girls".

After initially supporting an eastern avenue entrance, Price changed his attitude. Disregarding the township of Ballarat East, which like many other regional and rural councils was not far short of bankruptcy, he wrote on behalf of his company, to the secretary of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour Control Committee of which he was the key member and arguably the most powerful and forceful personality: "We apply for permission to plant trees in the avenue on Burrumbeet Road, for the whole of the soldiers from Ballarat, who are not already represented there, thus making the complete avenue".⁹²

This letter, suggesting that the Ballarat Avenue of Honour be the one avenue for all those from Ballarat who were serving their country, was not sent until May 1918. This avenue was already promoted by and very strongly identified with the Lucas company. As with the moves to create avenues of honour at Ballarat, this rivalry was also reflected in the planning and planting of these avenues. The City of Ballarat supported Price's proposal, so the names on the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour plaques were then translated to the western avenue. The rivalry between the eastern and western municipalities in Ballarat over the first 70 years of their existence was intense

92. Letter from Edward Price to the Secretary Avenue of Honour Control Committee, May 24, 1918. PROV, VPRS 2500/P0/Unit 114. Letter requested taking over the commemorative trees at Ballarat East Avenue of Honour and incorporating them in the one avenue.

and following amalgamation of the two municipalities in 1922 the plaques were removed from the eastern avenue.

Following the withdrawal of support from the Ballarat East avenue plantings by the Price faction, the dynamic also changed in the eastern township. One example of this is recorded in the minutes of the Ballarat East ANA branch. Having supported the initial planting, when asked to support Lucas's extended plantings on the Western Avenue of Honour, members declined. With the avenue at Ballarat East being planted and Lucas's lobbying against it, the local branch minuted: "No action regards extension on the Burrumbeet Road".⁹³

Ballarat's *The Courier* newspaper reported many letters of protest and indignation at the usurping of the project and letters of objection also came from farmers. Objections to the Lucas promotions were in part as a result of the appropriating by the Lucas interests of a scheme proposed by others. As history has demonstrated, the company, through its sales director and staff, effectively took all credit for the concept and the work involved. Certainly some industries benefited but few more so than Lucas & Co. Pty Ltd, which continued to expand and develop markets further afield.

With the amalgamation of the two municipalities in 1921, the Ballarat East plaques, like their Lydiard Street counterparts, were removed and its avenue was left to languish. Today, the avenue is represented by only a dozen remnant trees on the old Melbourne road. It is unrecognisable for what it once represented to the Ballarat East community. Similarly, the other local urban avenues not under the auspices of the Price/Lucas family – Lydiard Street, Ballarat, Ballarat North, the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Avenue, Sebastopol, the Ballarat orphanage, Barkly Street, Hill Street, and Grant Street – all fell from public consciousness.

Despite this, in a letter published on 13 July 1917, a writer, possibly from Lucas's, styling himself/herself as "observer" had letters in both the *Ballarat Star* and *The Courier*, decrying the selfishness of others who were planting avenues.⁹⁴ This letter-writing technique supporting the pre-eminence of the Lucas-sponsored avenue was repeated in Melbourne's *Argus* and *The Age* as well as the local papers whenever there was any challenge to the Lucas claims in relation to the avenue.⁹⁵ All of this propaganda was enlisted, despite the fact that other entities had proposed and

93. Minutes, 10 July 1917, ANA Ballarat East Branch, Sebastopol Historical Society, Sebastopol, Vic 402; Minutes 1912 – 1914, ANA Ballarat East Branch, Sebastopol Historical Society, Sebastopol, Vic.

94. *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 13, 1917.

95. E Lucas & Co., "Lucas Scrapbook", Gold Museum Ballarat Ref: 84.670.

been involved in arbour days and the resultant avenues of honour for Ballarat prior to the Lucas involvement.⁹⁶

In the meantime, Ballarat East continued with its planting independent of the City of Ballarat and the Price faction. At the planting of the fourth section of the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour in 1918, which took that avenue to the boundaries of two adjoining rural shires, the mayor, Cr George, stated: “During my mayoral term, I have actively associated with an energetic committee of gentlemen in the formation of an avenue from the Buninyong Railway Bridge to the town boundary, on the Melbourne road”.⁹⁷

Ironically it was Edward Price himself who put to the Committee of Control of the Avenue of Honour the motion:

That a letter be sent to the Melbourne City Council and to the Country Roads Board, suggesting that their support be given to the effort to plant the proposed avenue of honour on the Melbourne-Ballarat Road in order that they may link up ... making a continuous avenue of honour from Melbourne through Ballarat.⁹⁸

So the intent to reach further afield and create a memorial representative of the Ballarat East community was endorsed by the representatives of that community. It was only later, following local government changes, that history was altered in the removal of such material traces of the former community. That community and its memories were absorbed into another more diverse community with a more westerly focus. This is also a reflection on the boundaries of thinking throughout RSL groups and others. None of them is either wrong or right; they simply reflect changing demographics, but this thesis must put on record such ambiguities.

While this action was taken and various reports echo its intent from time to time, as late as 1948, complaints were still being directed to the Ballarat City Council for its disregard of the condition of the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour: “There is not much honour to anyone in the existing unkempt state of the avenue and something should be done about it”.⁹⁹

The immediate solution was to clean up the sign and site, but shortly afterwards, the sign indicating that it was an avenue of honour was removed; time, population movements and

96. Wattle (signed), “Avenue of Honour,” letter to the editor, *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 12, 1917.

97. Town of Ballarat East, *Mayor's Annual Report*, (Ballarat, Vic: Town of Ballarat East, 1918), 36.

98. Minutes of Meeting, May 17, 1918, Committee of Control of Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS/PO/Unit 114.

99. “That Unkempt Honour Avenue,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), April 16, 1948.

highway realignments and reconstruction have since removed this avenue from the community's memory. There remain only a dozen unrecognised former avenue trees on the old Melbourne road.



Figure 15. Remnant Ballarat East Avenue of Honour, 2006.

An examination of Price's correspondence reveals a very forceful personality who, while a strong advocate for Ballarat, was also a strong self-promoter and advocate for his company, even to the point of fighting Council to gain his own commercial ends.¹⁰⁰ Following all the Lucas promotional hype, with the first plantings on the Burrumbeet road on 4 June 1917, a letter appeared in *The Courier* on 12 June 1917. In an attempt to set the record straight, the writer outlined the initial proposal and advocacy by Nicholson and others for avenues of honour in Ballarat:

The public should be acquainted with one or two things that transpired at the preliminary meeting in connection with the celebration of Arbour Day. In the first place the Newington ANA, through its representative (Insp Nicholson) suggested that the ANA and kindred societies should plant an avenue on the Burrumbeet road. Not until this suggestion was made was anything brought before the meeting re the planting of an avenue of honour.¹⁰¹

This and similar complaints are further evidence of the discontent across the community at the Lucas takeover of the avenue concept. It also shows the resentment to the manner in which they

100. Letter from Furnival Chambers Solicitors to Ballarat City Council, December 20, 1918. PROV. VPRS 2500/P0000, Unit 110. In this letter, which was directed from Edward Price through his solicitors, he threatens to not pursue extensions and increased employment at Ballarat if Council does not adhere to his request to take over an easement. Without going through every example in Price's correspondence in this vein, such letters exemplify how he controlled mayors, his employees, commanded loyalty and outbid rivals.

101. Wattle (signed), "Avenue of Honour," letter to the editor, *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 12, 1917. (See Appendix 3).

controlled the project, which deprived those who had initiated such planting proposals any relevant input or real public recognition. The objector concluded:

Now Lucas and Co have announced their intention of planting another 500 trees this year and to finance the project by appealing to the public of Ballarat and district for funds. This, too, was part of the ANA and other associations' scheme. This latest move has practically upset the whole arrangements of the bodies mentioned, who were considerate enough in the first place.¹⁰²

Although creating a legend in their promotion of the Avenue of Honour over others, the Lucas company was feeling the strain, and by 1932 had requested of the Ballarat Horticultural Society that the "burden be lifted" from them.¹⁰³ The burden, however, had to be lifted by others as the Avenue of Honour Control Committee, still under the control of Edward Price, refused to grant any representation of further organisations on the committee. Consequently, after short deliberations, the Ballarat Horticultural Society declined to assist despite requests from both the Lucas company directly and the Avenue of Honour Control Committee.¹⁰⁴

In all of this focus on Ballarat, it remains to be highlighted that within the urban area at least, 11 other avenues of honour were planted with varying degrees of support, fanfare and civic pride. These were supported by the various ANA groups and Progress Associations originally involved with the avenue on the Burrumbeet road. Despite the rhetoric and legend-making machine of Lucas, it is noteworthy that only one in three of those enlistees that were memorialised in the Ballarat Orphanage Avenue of Honour, Kenny Avenue, are represented in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour: "Many of the families of the Orphanage boys were fragile or fragmented, and were not in a position to put their sons' names forward to be honoured. No one else could speak up for them".¹⁰⁵

The loss to memory of many of Ballarat's avenues of honour and the removal of plaques after municipal amalgamations must also be attributed to the fact that denial and repression is also a mechanism of memory: "If particular representations of the past have permeated the public domain, it is because they embody an intentionality – social, political, institutional and so on – that promotes or organises their entry".¹⁰⁶

102. Ibid.

103. Minutes of Meeting, August 3, 1932, Ballarat Horticultural Society, GM 90.0712.

104. Ibid.

105. Child and Family Services (CAFS) Ballarat, *Memorial Book* (Ballarat, Vic: Child and Family Services, 2015), 4.

106. Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*, (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1999), 2.

While behind the scenes at Ballarat the normal cut and thrust of local politics in both industry and municipal politics played out, the image from outside was far different. By 1918, largely on account of Lucas's aggressive promotion, the influence of Ballarat in the planting of avenues of honour could be evidenced across the Commonwealth. The *Grafton Examiner*, reporting that Dubbo had planted a memorial avenue in Darling Street, added: "This 'Avenue of Honour' is in memory of the men of the district who have taken up the heavy cross of defending the Empire".¹⁰⁷

The article continues on to compare the planting of the Dubbo avenue with that at Ballarat where, "The girls employed in a Ballarat (Vic) avenue white-work factory set themselves to plant an avenue, that was at that stage 10 miles long, for each man who had enlisted from a certain quarter of the city".¹⁰⁸ Once again, the writer gives unqualified credit to the Lucas Girls; however, in citing "certain quarters", the report suggests that the divisions within the Ballarat community were perceived by astute outside observers. Within urban Ballarat, these divisions in certain quarters were evident in letters to the editor of the newspapers and are certainly revealed in the minutes of meetings of organisations.

For the Lucas company, however, the result: "Testifies to a will or desire on the part of some social group or disposition of power to select and organise representations of the past so that these will be embraced by individuals as their own".¹⁰⁹ Had the scheme, which advocated re-naming and re-dedicating the trees and avenues in Victoria Park, Kalgoorlie, not been abandoned, a similar parallel might have existed there. In relation to an avenue of honour at Kalgoorlie, the Council authorities: "(1) Recommended that the existing avenues in Victoria Park be availed of as avenues of honour; (2) that they be appropriately named after the campaigns and battles in which the Australians had most distinguished themselves".¹¹⁰

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour was not, in fact, planted in the City of Ballarat but the adjoining Shire of Ballarat, which was a rural shire. Here again, objections from shire ratepayers were constantly being raised, although these objections gradually diminished over time. One letter to *The Courier* from "Farmer" raised objections and concluded: "I think that we who use the roads are entitled to a little consideration".¹¹¹

107. "Memorial Avenue," *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), August 3, 1918.

108. *Ibid.*

109. Wood, *Vectors of Memory*, 2.

110. *Kalgoorlie Miner*, September 24, 1918.

111. "Trees on the Burrumbeet Road," *The Courier* (Ballarat), June, 1 1917.



Figure 16. Ballarat and District 1917 with Avenues of Honour indicated in red.

Inset 1:

Linking image –position of Avenue Entrance Arch “Arch of Victory”.

Inset 2:

Urban Ballarat incorporating Ballarat East, Shire of Bungaree, Shire of Ballarat and the Borough of Sebastopol 1918. Avenues of Honour indicated in red and date ranges are shown in Appendix I.

The first proposed avenue in the City of Ballarat back in 1916 was the first avenue of honour to the Great War to be planted in the city. The initial plantings in the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour in Beaufort Crescent were on 10 June 1916, a week after the first of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour plantings in the adjoining Shire of Ballarat. They were planted following preparations

involving the progress association and the boys from Macarthur Street State School.¹¹² A second planting in Beaufort Crescent took place a year later on 29 June 1917.¹¹³ This avenue was later extended out along the Creswick road and dedicated as Monash Avenue by Lady Peacock on 31 August 1918.¹¹⁴

With only half the Beaufort Crescent trees of the Monash Avenue of Honour remaining today, it becomes a truism that collective memory can be not only ahistorical but anti-historical, blotting out that which a specific collective or group does not choose to own: “Collective memory simplifies; sees events from a single committed perspective; is impatient with ambiguities of any kind; reduces events to mythic archetypes”.

The Ballarat Avenue of Honour today is just such a mythical archetype, while its local contemporaries and those who conceived them are footnotes in the development of this archetype. In 1919, the western end of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was diverted to the north across past the Weatherboard school as it is to this day. The original memorial trees stretching west along the highway to the township of Burrumbeet were left to the elements, and not only the trees but also all memory of this original portion of the avenue has been lost despite the committee “requesting this council to raise sufficient money to retain the trees already planted on the Beaufort road”.¹¹⁵

Despite such anomalies, the legend took over from the reality and was passed on through generations of loyal Lucas Girls, employees ignorant of the role played by those outside of the Lucas narrative, or the company politics behind the original events. Such is the case, even in academic studies, where it is often stated in contemporary work that in 1916: “One of the first memorial trees was planted in Annandale in Sydney”.¹¹⁶ This statement is at odds with the findings in this thesis, which has produced evidence that the planting of memorial trees and avenues had been planted in three states by that time. As Lewis said: “Memory deludes itself by believing that things it hoped would have happened actually did happen; the same foible can be recognised in post-war scholarly writings”.¹¹⁷

112. *Ballarat Star*, June 11, 1917.

113. *Ballarat Star*, June 29, 1917.

114. “Monash Avenue Naming Ceremony,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), September 2, 1918.

115. *Ballarat Star*, May 7, 1919.

116. John Connor, Peter Stanley and Peter Yule, *The War at Home* (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 2015), 225.

117. Brian Lewis, *Our War: Australia During World War I* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1980), 367. See also Alistair Thomson, ‘Anzac Memories Revisited: Trauma, Memory and Oral History’ in *The Oral History Review*, Volume 42, Issue 1, 1 April 2015, Pages 1–29.

At the opening of the Scarsdale Avenue of Honour in September 1918, the mayor of Ballarat acknowledged Inspector Nicholson as the creator of the movement, when he was “introduced to the gathering as the one who inaugurated honour avenues”.¹¹⁸ Nicholson “modestly admitted he was one who inaugurated the movement”.¹¹⁹

The avenue of honour movement started in Australia because its citizens had been searching for a sense of destiny and a deeper identity as Australians since the nationalist heyday of the 1890s. Having achieved Federation, this sense of destiny was heightened despite the difficulties of the era such as industrial action, droughts and floods, which, until the war interposed, were in some ways a reflection of what had gone before. Gallipoli undoubtedly ensured this was the time; pride was being called upon and the motivation was high, especially following the first anniversary of the landings, when Inspector Donald Fraser from New South Wales wrote, suggesting that:

[p]lanting Australian trees in memory of our dauntless dead in far Gallipoli. Our own native trees, such as the South Australian sugar gum, the Tasmanian blue gum, the beautiful flowering gum of Western Australia, the Cootamundra wattle, the jacaranda, the flame tree, the coral tree, the poinsettia, the Christmas bush, &c., &c., would make a distinctively Australia monument to do honour to Australia’s fallen sons.¹²⁰

Although not all avenues planted were native species as Fraser had advocated, they did come to be seen as a uniquely Australian form of memorial.

Despite the several memorial avenues across the Ballarat urban area to those who served in the Great War, it was the Ballarat Avenue of Honour which had been the most influential in cementing the idea and the practice of establishing the avenue of honour as a form of memorialisation in Australian culture. Even a decade after the initial planting of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, Darwin’s *Northern Standard* newspaper, from the only major region of Australia lacking a memorial avenue, observed:

That the girls employed by Messrs Lucas and Company, Ballarat, lined a fourteen-mile avenue of honour with trees. That had a fourteen-mile avenue of honour been lined with kapok trees or some trees of economic value in the vicinity of Darwin, this result would have been of much more practical utility than any monument of stone, the commemorative tablet could have been there just the same.¹²¹

118. “District Avenue of Honour,” *Berringa Herald*, September 28, 1918.

119. *Ibid.*

120. “Suggested Anzac Arbour Day,” *The Adelaide Register*, April 14, 1916.

121. *Northern Standard* (Darwin), May 17, 1927.

The scale of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour in such a small national community as Australia in 1919 drew such attention that Australians readily accepted the promotion of it as the first and longest. Its scale ensured that it:

[g]ave a special sense of loss and longing, where each tree represented a life lost, or an absent loved one, or even just a life affected by war. The length of the avenue, as one drives through, is a growing horror.¹²²

All of this places Ballarat at the fulcrum of the Australian movement to this “national form of war memorial”.¹²³ There may have been power politics at a local level and considerable commercial propaganda, but all of this produced a significant outcome. The Ballarat Avenue of Honour, reputedly the longest and first such avenue to the Great War, fed local pride, heritage movements and commemorations across the decades up to the present day. Due to the corporate leadership that appropriated, guided and promoted it, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour became a legend that spawned an international movement.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter argued that memorialisation using avenues of honour, although starting as a small grassroots practice by individuals and communities, became a movement once Ballarat adopted the practice. As the leader, Ballarat turned an incidental practice into a phenomenon and became the birthplace of a movement. In the first place it demonstrated how the Ballarat community developed multiple avenues of honour across the urban area. Having demonstrated that the premier memorial plantings were elsewhere, the case study of Ballarat, turned the focus on those treed memorials in the city adding to an understanding of the pre-eminence of one avenue over the others. The following chapter continues the Ballarat Avenue of Honour story to better understand the proliferation of memorial avenues throughout Australia and in doing so confirms Ballarat’s role as the pivotal point for the early national acceptance of this form of memorial over others.

122. Katie Holmes, Susan Martin, and Kylie Mirmohamadi, *Reading the Garden: The Settlement of Australia* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2008), 149.

123. Letter from the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee to the City of Ballarat, August 20, 1918, Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/PO, Unit 114.

Chapter Five

Ballarat and Beyond

*The wet dawn inks are doing their blue dissolve.
On their blotter of fog the trees
Seem a botanical drawing –
Memories growing, ring on ring
("Winter Trees" by Sylvia Plath)*

5.1 Introduction

In arguing the case for Ballarat's leadership and influence in creating a movement for avenues of honour this chapter again probes the Ballarat experience. It views Ballarat from a proud past to the locus of civic involvement with the Lucas interests in 1917 and through to exploring how Ballarat played a part in taking the idea to other parts of Australia. It will reveal how a regional Australian centre managed such an endeavour and where this dissemination was intentional and where it was ad hoc. It also discusses, what relationships or consequences, if any, resulted for Ballarat, in terms of advantages or disadvantages for the city or region.

Ballarat was the epitome of a Victorian city and its founders, many of whom were still exerting their personalities and influence on the city, saw it as a re-creation of Britain: "A new Britannia" in the Antipodes; "the strength of identification with Britain makes it hard to see them as Australians. When they spoke of 'our nation' they meant the homeland".¹

The pioneers and those following them had been promoting the city they had created since the first gold discoveries of 1851 up to the eve of the Great War under a variety of pseudonyms: "City of statues, city of trees, city of pictures, city of song, golden city. These were not enough. Ballarat was also to be a loyal city".²

Ballarat was still operating very much as a minor city-state in 1914, and throughout the war, having a self-image of themselves and the city they identified with, which was very much as Bate's lines indicate. While the creation of multiple urban avenues in the various municipalities across Ballarat point to very local neighbourhood interests, they had also

1. Weston Bate, *The Lucky City: The First Generation at Ballarat 1851–1901* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1985), 254.

2. *Ibid*, 253.

demonstrated that their town was loyal, solid, independent and a survivor. By April 1917 avenues of honour had begun to appear across the nation and a selection of these is listed in Appendices 1 and 2. In acknowledging their development, the *Queensland Times* added its voice to this new practice:

In each park steps should be taken to form an avenue of trees, to be known as “Anzac Avenue”. The cost would be trifling; and, if trees of proved longevity were utilised, the memorial would be permanent. Generations yet to come would thus have tangible reminders of what Australians and New Zealanders did when put to the highest test. Something should certainly be done to perpetuate the memory of those who gave their all so that Australia might retain her freedom.³

Perpetuate memory Ballarat certainly did; two months after this article in the *Queensland Times* and almost immediately after the first planting at Ballarat, the Lucas advertising machine was at work.

Lucas’s aggressive self-promotion and the methods it used raised several objections such as that put to the Ballarat Courier by the Newington ANA:

The Newington ANA through its representative (Insp Nicholson) suggested that the ANA and kindred societies should plant an avenue on Burrumbeet road Not until this suggestion was made was anything brought before the meeting ... Now Lucas and Co. (after appropriating the site ...).⁴

However, despite such local knowledge as to the original source of the suggestion for the Burrumbeet Road Avenue of Honour and the actions of the Lucas interests, the major players went with the Lucas lobby. With repetition, the Lucas stories have become the accepted facts despite that there are records of other bodies, particularly the Newington ANA, which has Inspector Alexander Nicholson putting forward the idea earlier. The fact that regional schools had been undertaking such programs over the previous 12 months seems to have been ignored by the Lucas promoters as well as the constant promotion since 1916 of the New South Wales and Victorian education departments emerging from Jimmie Pannikin’s advocacy as cited in Chapter Four. The earlier decision of the orphanage authorities published locally – the Lal Lal plantings of 1915 and 1916 along with the Ballarat North Progress Association avenue proposal to Council of 1916 – have all been ignored by the promoters of the Lucas story.

3. “Anzac Day,” *Queensland Times*, April 25, 1917.

4. “Avenue of Honour,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 12, 1917.

In her role as a senior sales executive at Lucas's, it was Tilly's responsibility to not only sell the individual products of the firm but to also sell belief in what they were doing to the Lucas employees. She endeared herself to people through her own personal strengths and selflessness, which was coupled with a sense of purpose and service ethic, especially when it came to those who served their country. Her drive, personality and leadership abilities, those attributes which she brought to raising the Thompson children following her marriage, were now put into this service with the Lucas employees. By investing themselves in the creation of this memorial avenue, the Lucas organisation and its products would be brought to the attention of all Australians. This was initially effected through the travelling salesmen, and executives from other manufacturers and influential people who, in their travels, who promoted the Lucas company's direct connection with the memorial.

The management of the Lucas organisation was astute in its use of political advantage and is well demonstrated in its manipulation of the Ballarat City Council. This is especially evident in relation to the focus placed on the mayor and the city as the custodians of the avenue almost from the outset. The influence of the 1917 Victorian Recruitment Committee letter to all councils, in many cases published in newspapers throughout the state, cannot be disregarded for its influence across Victoria. As already noted, this letter, in its appeal to municipalities to plant avenues of honour, cited Ballarat as an example to be followed.

While organisations such as the railways, the municipal officers' associations, the brass bands and others played an active role in promoting the spread of the avenue of honour concept, so, too, did the newspapers. This came about in three ways: first, through normal channels such as announcing local successes at Ballarat's national eisteddfod or events coming out of Ballarat – one of which was the Lucas-directed avenue – other local memorial avenues and related matters; second, was the reporting of political events emerging from Ballarat such as the political endorsements of the creation of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour; and third was the publicity in the newspapers for the avenue that had emanated from the Lucas company's commercial promotions at Ballarat.

I have found no direct evidence of Lucas promoting the avenue in newspapers across the country. Given the strong national marketing contacts through sales director Tilly Thompson and director Edward Price, I believe that such was the case. On the day of the initial planting of the first 500 trees as well as subsequent episodes, the story was run in newspapers across

the nation from remote regional productions to the capital city major newspapers.⁵ The planting actually accommodated 505 trees but a rounded 500 had better audience appeal. The number of trees planted was recorded in the first and second editions of the souvenir booklet.⁶ but the third edition, under the title *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men*, does not differentiate between the first and second plantings by Lucas employees.⁷ It divides the plantings into those planted by the Lucas staff and those planted by other groups with the two separate plantings of Lucas's appearing as one.

Edward Price, as a member of the Avenue of Honour Control Committee, vigorously promoted the avenue concept. This is demonstrated in the minutes of the committee through actions such as his motion that:

A letter be sent to the Melbourne City Council and the Country Roads Board, suggesting that their support be given to the effort to plant the proposed avenue on the Melbourne-Ballaarat Road in order that they may link up with the Avenue of Honour here.⁸

Added to this are the many examples preserved in the archives, of Price writing on his company letterhead to people who could further his ideas. One example is his letter to City of Ballaarat Mayor Bell requesting that his company's avenue be accorded the privilege of including the names that had been commemorated on other avenues around urban Ballarat.⁹ At the same time the mayor and councillors of the township of Ballarat East were promoting the concept of connecting to Melbourne and the mayor, Cr Levy, in opening that avenue on the Melbourne Road added: "The hope was expressed by the committee that the tree planting scheme would be carried on right to Melbourne".¹⁰

Despite the part played by the Lucas organisation in promoting the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, and hence its promotional and advertising role, the preponderance of correspondence

5. A bibliography of the national newspaper articles relating the story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour between June 1917 and September 1917 is featured in Appendix 4. Given other prominent issues that were often not featured in places distant from the source, this listing indicates an organised publicity program.

6. *Souvenir of the Avenue of Honour*, 2nd ed., Ballarat, August 18, 1917, 4–14.

7. E. Lucas & Co., *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men* (Ballarat, Vic: Lucas & Co, 1919), 5–26.

8. Minutes of Meeting, May 17, 1918, Committee of Control of Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS/PO/Unit 114.

9. Letter from Edward Price to the Mayor of Ballarat, May 24, 1918. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/PO/Unit114.

10. "Ballarat East Avenue of Honour: Planting Commenced," *Ballarat Star*, August 27, 1917.

requesting advice or guidance in emulating the idea came to the City of Ballarat. Some correspondence was directed to the Ballarat Progress Association, but in the main, enquiries sent from distant municipalities and interested bodies went to the Ballarat Town Hall.

Although it was to the City of Ballarat that these distant authorities wrote, the minutes of the Avenue of Honour Control Committee reveal that this correspondence was passed on to the avenue committee. The mayor of the day was appointed as an ex-officio committee member since the earliest days of the committee's formation when "[a]t a meeting of this committee held last night, the following resolution was carried: That the Ballarat City, Ballarat East and Ballarat Shire Councils be asked to appoint their mayors for the time they are in office".¹¹ With this resolution adopted, the official municipal endorsement and representation assured the long-term future of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.

5.2 Telling Letters

Following the decisions of the committee, the replies were then returned under the auspices of the City of Ballarat, such was the power wielded by Price. The council correspondence demonstrates the strong relationship between the City Council, the Avenue of Honour Control Committee and Edward Price from the Lucas company.¹² More significantly, the correspondence confirms the reliance of avenue committees and councils across the nation on the Ballarat experience.

As well as the physical evidence in the proliferation of avenues of honour across the nation, letters of enquiry together with responses such as that from the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee thanking the Ballarat Council for inaugurating the avenue idea, confirm the status of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour as being the inspiration for a movement. Although a remote rural centre, the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee noted this proliferation in a letter acknowledging the planting of the avenues across multiple municipalities following Ballarat's example as "being adopted throughout the country".¹³ All of this municipal correspondence places the focus on Ballarat's civic body, not on Lucas. This civic dimension meant that all visitors – from the local tour groups to the visiting businessmen and politicians – were

11. Letter from Control Committee Avenue of Honour to the City of Ballarat, August 8, 1917. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/Unit 114.

12. City of Ballarat, Inwards Correspondence. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS2500 (multiple units as cited throughout, e.g. units 110, 113, 114)

13. Letter from the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee to the City of Ballarat, August 20, 1918. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/PO, Unit 114.

escorted to the avenue as one of the sights to see when visiting the city. This also resulted in the official opening of the Arch of Victory by the Prince of Wales in 1920, an event that provided another avenue for worldwide attention in the media.



Figure 17. Correspondence requesting information on costings and processes for planting avenues of honour from across Australia flowed through Ballarat.

At that time Ballarat was the mecca for the Australian Brass Bands Association and its annual national championship competitions attracted bands from throughout Australia and New Zealand. The Ipswich City Band was also communicating with their Ballarat counterparts.¹⁴

The initial planting of an avenue at Ipswich had no discernible reference to Ballarat. The first stage of the Ipswich Avenue of Honour, planted on 9 July 1917, was followed by a second planting on 14 July 1917:

A novel scheme for honouring our soldiers, and at the same time beautifying the approach to One Tree Hill has been inaugurated. Trees are being planted on either side

14. Letter from the City of Ipswich Band and later from the City of Ipswich to the City of Ballarat, Inwards Correspondence, September 28, 1917. PROV, VPRS2500/p.0000/Unit114.

of the bush track from Wood-street to the main road about half-way up the mountain, and each tree will have attached to it the name of a soldier.¹⁵

What happened to this scheme seems to have been lost as Wood St and One Tree Hill are no longer even memories. While the July exercise at Ipswich does not appear to have been supported by Council, in September 1917 the Ipswich Chamber of Commerce lobbied the council for a memorial avenue in its city. This was followed up with further correspondence to the City of Ballarat from the City of Ipswich, which sought added information on matters such as plaques. Following on from this, proposals were put to the council at Ipswich the result of which was to be that “the name of a soldier to be memorialised on a medallion affixed to the tree. Referred to the parks committee”.¹⁶

After the plantings at Ipswich, further plantings followed, after which an avenue further along the road at Yeronga Park was created. The story of the Yeronga avenue is then taken up as a local initiative in the Queensland newspapers, and in one way it was, but the influence of Ballarat is clearly reflected in the chronology of events. Although some initial moves for avenues were prompted by the letters of individuals to the newspapers across the country, including the *Queensland Times*, it was invariably to Ballarat that the municipalities looked for inspiration and advice when necessary.

In such ways the influence of Ballarat could be seen and the immediate consequences were that the city’s reputation as having expertise in such plantings was enhanced. Recommendations were sought by others into the planting and management of their own efforts to emulate Ballarat’s avenue planting. Only a week after the commencement of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour on Burrumbeet road, under the banner of “War News”, it was reported as far afield as central and north Queensland that “It has been suggested that an avenue of trees should be planted, extending from Ballarat to Melbourne”.¹⁷

In formulating their ideas, those responsible for developing Ballarat’s Avenue of Honour had been well aware of several memorial avenues outside their own sphere of influence. So, too, did other regions and municipalities built on wider knowledge. The Yeronga Park Avenue

15. “Trees as Memorials,” *Queensland Times*, July 9, 1917.

16. “Ipswich City Council,” *Queensland Times*, September 12, 1917.

17. “Australia and the War,” *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton), June 14, 1917; “A Novel Suggestion,” *The Northern Miner* (Charters Towers), June 15, 1917.

planting is featured in *The Week* in Brisbane under the headline: “Heroes of Stephens – Trees in Their Honour”.¹⁸ There is no mention of Ballarat in faraway Victoria.

Yet, the City of Ballarat inwards correspondence files and the minutes of the Control Committee of the Avenue of Honour coupled with the actions of the nearby Ipswich City Council, however, endorse these regional links with south-east Queensland. The final planting of the Yeronga Park Avenue, like so many others, including Ballarat’s, was some months later. The final planting of 23 August 1919, bringing the total number of trees to 93, was featured in *The Telegraph* in Brisbane.¹⁹

Also in July 1917, only a month after the news of Ballarat’s new grand avenue of honour was first publicised around the nation, there was an article citing Ballarat, and that Queanbeyan Council should “[t]urn their attention to the latest scheme for honouring those who have fought for their country and Empire. This is to plant avenues of trees, ‘honour avenues’, in every city and town throughout Australia”.²⁰

As if to add weight to the argument, the writer turned closer to home by highlighting the nearby planting in New South Wales: “A commencement has been made at Thirroul, an avenue of 98 trees having been already planted in Thirroul Park, and space reserved for others”.²¹ Here, again, Ballarat is cited as influencing matters:

A suggestion was recently made in this column that each town in the State should create an “honour avenue” by planting, in some street, a tree for every soldier who enlisted ... to show future generations what it did in the great war. Ballarat has taken up the idea. Other places are discussing it. The Thirroul Progress Association has obtained permission from the Bulli Shire President to plant an honour avenue in the local park. Each tree, if possible, is to be planted by a member of the family of the soldier.²²

5.3 Media and Minutes

Amongst the correspondence received at Ballarat, that from the Shire of Donald helps to highlight tensions that existed in the social fabric of the rural town. Writing to the City of

18. “Heroes of Stephens,” *The Week* (Brisbane), September 21, 1917.

19. “Yeronga’s Honour Avenue,” *The Telegraph* (Brisbane), August 25, 1919.

20. “Honour Avenues,” *Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer*, July 17, 1917.

21. Ibid.

22. “Honour Avenues,” *The Sydney Morning Herald*, June 28, 1917.

Ballaarat in 1918, the Donald Shire secretary, George McCracken, submitted several enquiries to the city relative to the provision of plaques and their costs. He also went on to advise that the Shire of Donald “[i]s planting trees etc [*sic*] and will be pleased to receive any information on this matter”.²³

The *Donald Times* reported on the example set by Ballarat, which also highlighted the cooperation between councils in distant Gippsland:

Many municipalities are showing a commendable desire to provide permanent memorials in honour of the young men of their districts who have enlisted for the war. Avon Shire Council, at its last meeting, favourably considered a proposal which has been made by Cr Carter to plant, in conjunction with the Sale Borough Council, a memorial avenue on the three-chain road between Sale and Stratford in honour of the young men who went to fight for the Empire. A similar action might well be entertained by the Donald Shire Council.²⁴

The shire secretary was following instructions from council, where it was moved that the shire plant an avenue of honour on the Donald–Minyip road after the Ballarat example on the Burrumbeet road. The shire president, in summing up his decision, advised that he “was told the Ballarat avenue was a beautiful sight and that they had inscribed on each tree the name of every soldier and nurse who had made the great sacrifice”.²⁵

This move by the Shire of Donald followed extensive discussions in Council and through the columns of the *Donald Times* since the news of the Ballarat plantings was initially published in 1917. The Shire of Donald received correspondence from “the shires of Ararat, Mildura, Creswick and Ballarat, replying to enquiries re soldiers’ memorial avenues. Cr Green said he thought that a tree should be planted in memory of every fallen soldier”.²⁶

Despite the flow of letters to the editor, minuted Council deliberations, and the letter from the Victorian State Recruitment Committee of September 1917, discussions at Donald dragged on. The avenues were planted as related in shire secretary McCracken’s letter of 1918 without any ceremony. Despite all the initiatives taken by Council and community members, nothing was resolved until after the armistice.

23. Letter from George McCracken to the City of Ballaarat, October, 12, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, City of Ballaarat. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/ P1, Unit 114.

24. *Donald Times*, January 11, 1918.

25. *Donald Times*, December 17, 1917.

26. “Donald Shire Council,” *Donald Times*, November 15, 1918.

An opposing motion that advocated a memorial hall was raised after the war and the hall was eventually built in lieu of any avenues being dedicated. However, the hall lasted a mere 11 years before being destroyed by fire.²⁷ The avenues, by then planted but never dedicated as avenues of honour, became a significant landscape feature on the four major approaches to the town for the next century. The memorial hall, despite fulfilling its utilitarian purpose, became the issue of an even more acrimonious debate after its loss.²⁸ Today the hall site is occupied by public restrooms and one of the avenues that might have been has been removed with some trepidation for those interested in the three remaining.

Ironically, the same council managed to support the planting of the avenue of honour for nearby Watchem in June 1918 after a request from the head teacher there, following which “[a] meeting was convened by the shire president for Tuesday last re tree planting in the streets of Watchem”.²⁹

Not all people were enthusiastic about planting memorial avenues and the same council also had difficulty in raising interest at nearby Watchem. Despite Council promising the trees and allocating £10-0-0, when a meeting was convened to deal with the Watchem avenue: “Owing to the small attendance, the meeting lapsed ... It would be most regrettable if the thing was to fall through for want of support”.³⁰

5.4 Western Victoria

In following up an archival reference to Avon Shire in Gippsland, another attitude in relation to race is revealed that would today be considered contentious. At the opening of the avenue at Stratford the then mayor commented that “[t]he gathering today is to honour the men of our race and district, who at the call of war, left ... the arts of peace and their own comfortable homes in Gippsland to go overseas and fight”.³¹

Not all shires supported the planting of these memorial avenues, either. The Mount Alexander shire initially denied permission to the towns of Campbell’s Creek and Newstead in its

27. Charles E. Sayers, *Shanty at the Bridge: The Story of Donald* (Donald, Vic: Shire of Donald, 1963), 154.

28. *Ibid.*

29. *Donald Times*, June 25, 1918.

30. “Watchem,” *Donald Times*, May 21, 1918.

31. “Avon Shire Memorial Avenue,” *Gippsland Mercury*, September 3, 1918.

municipality. The refusal aroused protest and was published widely.³² The memorial avenue originally proposed for Newstead was to be planted on land subject to flooding and a new site was settled upon. Finally, the Newstead Avenue of Honour was planted on higher ground and opened on 18 September 1919.³³

One of Victoria's most loved avenues is the Bacchus Marsh Avenue of Honour, which is between Melbourne and Ballarat. As with other centres, it was to the City of Ballarat that the Shire of Bacchus Marsh turned in June 1918 requesting, among other issues relevant to the planting of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour: "How it is worked, who pays for the plates with the names, and who supplies the trees, or any other information you could supply".³⁴

Further to this request to Ballarat, the Bacchus Marsh Shire Council also sought permission from the newly formed Country Roads Board and accepted its directives:

The trees are planted where they are (encroaching on the pathway in places) by order of the Country Roads Board, this august body insisting on them being 23ft. from the centre of the roadway. Elms chosen because the C.R.B. disapprove of evergreens - keep the road damp in winter.³⁵

By mid-1918, national newspaper reports indicated the Ballarat Avenue of Honour had become widely renowned and they were also supplemented by the promotions of the local tourist and industry body, the Ballarat Progress Association. In Werribee, the local newspaper, the *Werribee Shire Banner*, first reported on a proposal for a memorial avenue under that headline "Avenue of Honour" in May 1918, and, aiming to emulate the promotional style of the Lucas Girls of Ballarat, appealed for support:

The Merrymakers – girls of Werribee – come to the rescue, and with your assistance their proposal will be accomplished. What is it? A most suitable proposition, viz., that an avenue of trees be planted along the Melbourne–Geelong road, at the entrance to the town, and each tree will have the name of a Werribee soldier attached.³⁶

32. "Soldiers' Honour Avenue. Objected to by Shire Council," *Gippsland Times*, July 14, 1919.

33. Newstead Historical Society, *Walking Tour Guide*, 2000.

34. Letter from the Shire of Bacchus Marsh to the City of Ballarat, June, 11, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, City of Ballarat. Avenue of Honour File, PROV 2500 VPRS P0000/Unit 114.

35. *Melton Express*, August 10, 1918.

36. "Werribee Avenue of Honour," *Werribee Shire Banner*, May 23, 1918.

Although it was a successful day and Werribee enjoyed a great attendance for the planting of its avenue of honour, it was certainly one of those towns with an eye to what others were achieving. This is highlighted by the Mayor of Werribee's observation following his call for volunteers, when few supported the working bee to erect tree guards.

Since the idea of planting trees to form an avenue of honour to those brave soldiers who have enlisted for active service was first mooted at Ballarat, almost every town of any consequence in Victoria has taken the matter up.³⁷

Having highlighted the example of Ballarat, the report continued to compare the Werribee response to that of the western Victorian town of Cressy:

A town with a population of about 200 souls ... 80 willing workers turned out to the local committee's appeal and erected 80 guards in connection with their local avenue. Contrast this with Werribee, where, to a like appeal only three helpers put in an appearance.³⁸

Finally, the mayor summed up, admonishing his people with the statement: "Werribee has a population 6 [*sic*] times that of Cressy. Is there not sufficient of the residents who will turn up at 2 pm on Saturday next to help complete the work?"³⁹

Another centre noticing the efforts among their neighbouring municipalities was Queenscliff. Following the planting ceremonies at Ballarat, several people approached the council at Queenscliff for a similar memorial avenue.⁴⁰ Mayor Thwaites moved that Queenscliff plant an avenue of honour.⁴¹ When the motion to plant such an avenue was moved at Council, the *Queenscliff Sentinel*, after extolling the proposal for an avenue on the one sealed road into the "insular" town reported:

This mark of appreciation, so far as our own soldiers are concerned, has been done in several centres, particularly at Ballarat, where there is an Avenue of Honour of several miles, and which in after years will be a glorious testimony to the value of true citizenship.⁴²

37. *Werribee Shire Banner*, September 12, 1918.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*

40. *Queenscliff Sentinel*, editorial, September 22, 1917.

41. *Ibid.*

42. *Ibid.*

Whatever of the politics behind Ballarat's great avenue, it did bear witness, and continues to do so, to a deep sense of citizenship. The social links between Ballarat and Queenscliff extended back to the nineteenth century after the rail link between Geelong and Queenscliff was completed. This was partially due to their military links, but also both centres were promoted by the Victorian Railways as day-excursion destinations and regular Ballarat excursion trains to the sea at Queenscliff had become popular. Reports in the *Queenscliff Sentinel* reinforced the close ties between the two centres in terms of Ballarat's South Street Eisteddfod, fire brigade demonstrations as well as railway excursions.⁴³

The first contingent of the new A. M. Corps, the 70th and 46th infantry, was sent from Ballarat to Queenscliff on Wednesday 7 August 1914, following the declaration that Australia was at war.⁴⁴ Following the first planting, an angry and disappointed mayor wrote a letter to the editor of the *Queenscliff Sentinel*:

When I looked around on the faces of the people when I addressed them, I could not help feeling a deep sense of disappointment; for out of a population of 17,000 or 18,000 there could not have been more than 100 adults present, and it must go down to our everlasting shame that so few of our citizens thought it worthwhile to honour our brave dead.⁴⁵

This highlights, again, how the municipalities across Victoria were watching their counterparts. While, as shown, the mayor of Werribee had a similar response, the second planting at Queenscliff drew more support as a memorial when it was announced:

An "In Memoriam" service was held on Monday afternoon, conducted at the newly planted Avenue of Honour in remembrance of the men of Queenscliff and district who have fallen in battle. There was a large attendance, including the schoolchildren, who hung floral wreaths on each tree guard. The fine old hymn, "Rock of Ages" was announced by Rev Watson Laidlay; Rev J. Adams led in prayer, followed by a suitable address by Mayor Thwaites.⁴⁶

43. "Schools' Excursion: Run to Ballarat," *Queenscliff Sentinel*, April 27, 1918.

44. Bate, *Life After Gold: Twentieth-Century Ballarat*, 48.

45. *Queenscliff Sentinel*, editorial, July 27, 1918.

46. *Queenscliff Sentinel*, November 23, 1918.



Figure 18. Plaque from Queenscliff Avenue of Honour tree.

In such ways, the influence of the Lucas-promoted avenue at Ballarat had spread. However, it had not been simply the Lucas company promoting the avenue. Other organisations had also been popularising the avenue, a prominent example being the churches. Following the publicity surrounding the avenue plantings at Ballarat, which included those of the churches and the Ballarat Orphanage, the Melbourne *Argus* reported that at nearby Beaufort: “An honour avenue has been planted in the grounds of the Beaufort Presbyterian manse to commemorate the volunteers from the congregation serving in the Great War”.⁴⁷

Further north in the Wimmera town of Donald (that had been dogged with controversy over its plans for an avenue) the local newspaper broadcast the news of church-sponsored avenues at Ballarat:

A tangible proof of the benefit of planting pine trees is provided by the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, authorities. They have sold pine trees growing on the property for £50, and now propose to plant an avenue of honour in recognition of young men who have enlisted.⁴⁸

Following on from the publicity emanating from the major Ballarat Avenue of Honour, the minister from the Congregational manse at Chatswood in Sydney had a memorial avenue planted outside the church, “having heard about the Honour Avenue planted in your city”.⁴⁹

He then wrote to the mayor of Ballarat advising him of the Chatswood Congregational community’s endeavour, adding: “We now want to place a name plate on each tree, and I have been requested to write to you to find out what kind of plate you used and about what they cost”.⁵⁰

47. *The Argus*, Country News, December 17, 1917.

48. *Donald Times*, July 6, 1917.

49. Letter from the Anglican Church Chatswood to the Mayor of Ballarat, September 25, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, City of Ballarat. PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/Unit 114.

50. *Ibid.*

The letter continues with other requests and details before ending, as was by then, so often the case again lauding Ballarat's leadership in the planting and promotion of the avenues: "Thanking you and your city for the original idea, and in anticipation for the further information".⁵¹ This one letter, while not specifying where the Ballarat story came from, indicates one example of how information and perception of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was disseminated simply by repetition from unidentified sources without a deliberate attempt to promote or advertise the Ballarat project. At the same time at Footscray in the western suburbs of Melbourne:

A deputation from the Presbyterian Church, Messrs Twist and Bayley, waited upon the city council on Tuesday night to ask the Mayor to call a public meeting of citizens to deal with the question of starting a Soldiers' Avenue of Honour in Footscray.⁵²

5.5 Interstate Moves

While no avenue seems to have come of this deputation, two years later the same influences were still flowing through the churches and in New South Wales:

The Methodists of Triangle arranged to plant trees to form a memorial avenue. The planting took place on Saturday afternoon. One of the trees planted in the avenue in the course of a most interesting ceremony, is to the memory of the late Mr. William Cox, a fine old Methodist and a great supporter of the church and cause.⁵³

Far away in Western Australia, letters were sent to the City of Ballarat from the City of Perth requesting the advice of Ballarat's experts on the plantings of avenues as memorials to those who served.⁵⁴ At Albany, where the troopships had assembled prior to sailing for the battlefields, H. C. Sims penned a letter to the editor of the *Albany Advertiser* suggesting an "Avenue of Honour for Albany".⁵⁵ This was followed up a week later with another letter, this time from C. Barwick from Nhill in Victoria, advising of the avenue and park memorial plantings at Natimuk and enclosed the newspaper report of the latest plantings at Ballarat, "making an unbroken stretch of over 13 miles".⁵⁶ His letter advised that he was writing: "so

51. Ibid.

52. "An Avenue of Honour: Proposal to Council," *Footscray Advertiser*, June 8, 1918.

53. *Mudgee Guardian and North-Western Representative*, August 26, 1920.

54. Letter from the City of Perth to the City of Ballarat, June 11, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, City of Ballarat. PROV, VPRS 2500/Unit114.

55. "Avenue of Honour for Albany," *Albany Advertiser*, August 31, 1918.

56. "Avenue of Honour for Albany," *Albany Advertiser*, September 7, 1918.

that the people of Western Australia see what is being done to commemorate the noble deeds of the Victorian boys who went to the war”.⁵⁷

While the distance between the centres is vast, even with today’s advances in communications and transport, the social and familial links were strong following on from the Western Australian gold rush of the 1890s. Many followed the gold from mining centres such as Ballarat and many contractual links to their foundries were made by Ballarat industrialists supplying the Western Australian goldfields.⁵⁸ One can only wonder if there was any connection between Sims and Barwick. Although Albany raised a memorial, the idea of an avenue of honour so preoccupied people that it was three years after the Barwick and Sims letters were published before it could be reported that, “Albany’s second tribute to the fallen men of the town and district assumed concrete form in the shape of an avenue of honour”.⁵⁹

The “Letter to the Editor” from Nhill in far-western Victoria to Albany in the south of Western Australia demonstrates the significant manner in which the Ballarat story had been circulated. There was also enthusiasm in Kalgoorlie, but the council there acknowledged the inadvisability of emulating Ballarat due to the soil and rainfall constraints. The Kalgoorlie report highlights how the story wavered from reality into mythical legend when it states that:

Every man who enlisted in Ballarat had a tree planted in his honour at no cost to the citizens. The idea originated with the patriotic daughter of the proprietess of a large white-work factory which had been established in the old Phoenix Foundry.⁶⁰

Other connections were through the many graduates from the School of Mines Ballarat who moved to interstate mines as miners, engineers and to other mining-related occupations. With the outbreak of war, many of these Ballarat and district trained men volunteered and went on to serve, many as engineers and tunnellers in tunnelling companies from distant starting points around the nation.⁶¹

The City of Perth approached the City of Ballarat with both telegrams and follow-up mail and Ballarat responded with the usual courtesy, generously supplying information on every aspect of the scheme, including the Lucas souvenir booklet which, again, suitably promoted that firm

57. Ibid.

58. Bate, *Life After Gold*, 21.

59. “Avenue of Honour,” *Albany Advertiser*, July 27, 1921.

60. *Western Argus Kalgoorlie*, August 20, 1918.

61. Mining Mud and Medals Tunnellers, accessed March 3, 2016, <http://www.miningmudmedals.org>.

with free advertising and Perth acknowledged accordingly: “as well as the souvenir which you have subsequently sent to me”.⁶²

After several communications back and forth, the first planting for an avenue of honour at Kings Park in Perth was undertaken the following year. It consisted of 400 oak and plane trees including 11 “royal oaks” grown from acorns sent by Queen Mary in England and planted in August 1919 to mark the anniversary of the outbreak of the war.⁶³

Appropriately this had already been named May Avenue, but only one of the original avenue of honour oak trees remains today, which is greatly revered. These trees suffered to the point that re-planting was necessary in the 1940s using eucalypts. The superintendent at Kings Park explained:

The oaks and planes that did not thrive were those planted around May Drive, which were intended to honour the memory of fallen servicemen. These are the trees that in 1941–42 were replaced by *Eucalyptus botryoides*.⁶⁴

The word was certainly promoting Ballarat in the west and the City of Kalgoorlie also examined the Ballarat project when Cr Wall in speaking mentioned what had been done at Ballarat:

where ten miles of roadways had been planted with trees, each surrounded by a guard and with a name attached, in honour of soldiers. Every man who enlisted in Ballarat had a tree planted in his honour at no cost to the citizens.⁶⁵

Kalgoorlie then decided to use existing plantings. With the Ballarat example in mind, the Kalgoorlie Shire Council debated the viability of creating an avenue of honour in its city:

Relative to the suggestion to form an avenue of honour on the goldfields, the works committee has submitted the following report on the subject to the Kalgoorlie Municipal Council: “After discussion, and having regard to the difficulty of growing trees on the fields and the expense necessary to maintaining them, it is recommended that the avenues in Victoria Park be made avenues of honour and that any ratepayer wishing to commemorate the memory of any soldier of who has lost his life at the war

62. Letters and Telegram from the City Perth, of May 1918, Plus Acknowledgements and Memo 15 June 1918 to the City of Ballarat, Inwards Correspondence Files. PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/Unit 114.

63. “An Avenue of Honour,” *The West Australian*, August 23, 1918.

64. J. E. Watson, “King’s Park Trees,” *The West Australian*, September, 13 1946.

65. “Avenue of Honour,” *Kalgoorlie Miner*, August 14, 1918.

may have a tree dedicated to the memory of that soldier and may supply a memorial plate, which the council will affix to the tree...”⁶⁶

This proposal was swallowed up in news of the events leading to the armistice. Nothing further is heard of the proposal following the armistice as there was a hiatus in activity until in July 1919 when it was announced: “All regulations and rulings controlling the collection and disbursement of funds for war memorials have been repealed, and there is now no control by local committees or any other body”.⁶⁷

In view of the repeal of these regulations, the Kalgoorlie council decided that instead of pursuing the avenue idea, it would proceed with a memorial designed by West Australian sculptor Peter Portelli.⁶⁸ Similarly, far away on the eastern side of the continent, the city of Newcastle settled on a monument after debating the merits of a “soldiers’ avenue” throughout 1918 and 1919.⁶⁹

The many letters to newspapers across the country brought the Ballarat story to the attention of many people across Australia. However, as was evident at Donald, Kalgoorlie and elsewhere, the result did not necessarily translate into emulation. Even at nearby Geelong, which had sought the assistance of Ballarat’s John Lingham in re-designing Johnstone Park in 1911, any incentive to emulate Ballarat’s avenue fell on deaf ears.

Determined to motivate the Geelong community, reference was again made to Ballarat in the local newspaper when:

A party of New Zealand tourists lately returned from abroad, whilst visiting Geelong, remarked upon the obvious suitability of the eastern elevation along the foreshore beyond Garden Street for a terraced esplanade. Ballarat has set the example of commemorating the deeds in battle of our soldiers by planting a magnificent avenue. Will Geelong do the like?⁷⁰

Still waiting for action from the City of Geelong, the Methodist community at Highton planted their avenue at the church: “Mr J. H. Lister MHR planted the first tree. He

66. “Avenue of Honour,” *Western Argus* (Kalgoorlie), August 20, 1918.

67. *The West Australian*, July 9, 1919.

68. *The Daily News* (Perth) July 15, 1919.

69. “Soldiers’ Avenue Alterations in Plan,” *Newcastle Sun*, July 1, 1919.

70. “An Anzac Boulevard,” *Geelong Advertiser*, June 27, 1917.

congratulated the Methodists on the idea of planting trees in the church grounds to keep in memory the brave deeds of our boys”.⁷¹

Also at Geelong, credit must be given to Ballarat influences other than from the Lucas company. As she lived in Geelong, Mrs Rashleigh’s involvement with the Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour at Ballarat and the correspondence between her and General Birdwood was duly reported in the *Geelong Advertiser*.⁷² With the publicity surrounding the Governor-General and Lady Helen Munro Ferguson’s involvement with the dedication of the Ballarat Orphanage Avenue of Honour, Kenny Avenue, the Protestant Orphanage at Geelong stepped up the following year so that “[t]his afternoon an avenue of trees was planted at the Protestant Orphanage in memory of the orphanage boys who have served in the army. Six have been killed”.⁷³

The article conveying the story of this avenue was headed “Geelong Avenue of Honour” so that the people of the city might at least have a sense that their city, too, had such a memorial avenue. Between 1917 and 1919, many tried to have the Geelong council emulate the Ballarat project. As late as June 1919, under the heading “Geelong”, Melbourne’s *The Age* advised: “An avenue of trees in memory of the district fallen soldiers was planted on Saturday afternoon at Waurm Ponds”.⁷⁴

Nothing of the kind was undertaken in the City of Geelong itself despite the *Geelong Advertiser* reporting on the Geelong Protestant Orphanage Avenue of Honour as well as those at Ballarat, Werribee, Eurack, Queenscliff, Werneth and the church effort at Highton in the adjoining shire. The City of Geelong had been honouring the Anzacs at Johnstone Park since 1916 and like the City of Kalgoorlie had decided to build a memorial in that park.

Although there were early plantings in other areas of Adelaide in 1915 and 1916, the town clerk from the City of Port Adelaide wrote to the City of Ballarat in 1918: “My council has under consideration the planting of an avenue of honour, and I would be glad if you could

71. “Highton’s Soldiers’ Avenue,” *Geelong Advertiser*, September 2, 1918.

72. “News of Geelong and District Soldiers,” *Geelong Advertiser*, December 15, 1917.

73. “Geelong Avenue of Honour,” *The Argus*, September 14, 1918.

74. *The Age*, June 23, 1919.

give me any information concerning the avenue of honour in your city”.⁷⁵ This was followed up with a request for specific details on plantings and responsibilities and, as elsewhere, acknowledgement of receiving the Lucas souvenir booklet.

Another interstate approach was made by the City of Hobart. In March 1917, the City of Hobart approached Ballarat requesting advice on creating an avenue. Following a flow of correspondence between Ballarat and Hobart, Mr L. J. Lipscombe, superintendent of reserves for the City of Hobart, visited Ballarat to inspect the memorial avenues and took his findings back home.⁷⁶ A letter of introduction was also issued on the same day to the City of Hobart assistant engineer, W. J. Rait, on his visit.

The resultant Soldiers Avenue in the Domain at Hobart was formally proposed in August 1917, with the impressions gained at Ballarat and the results of the visit and discussions taken into consideration. In June and July 1918, Hobart’s *The Mercury* provided detailed reports on the preparation and plantings in the Domain, noting that “[t]he trees, all cedars, are being provided by the city council and have been purchased from Ballarat”.⁷⁷

In Victoria, the avenue committee at Corryong also sought advice from the City of Ballarat in relation to its proposal for an avenue of honour, although there seems to be no tangible link between the two centres. There were, however, very strong links between the members of the Municipal Officers’ Association across Victoria, the records of which have been little availed of in historical research in this regard. Despite the fact that Victorian plantings had commenced as early as 1915 and avenues of honour had been planted in the north-east of the state since mid-1917, it was to Ballarat that Corryong looked, not to those towns closer to hand.

Following an introductory note as to the formation of the Corryong Memorial Avenue Committee, the secretary wrote to the City of Ballarat for assistance in 1918. He provided details of soil type, rainfall and other practical issues in order to ensure the utmost success for the Corryong Avenue of Honour:

75. Letter from the City of Port Adelaide to the City of Ballarat, September 6, 1918, Inwards Correspondence Files, PROV, VPRS 2500/P/0000/114.

76. Letters from the City of Hobart to the City of Ballarat, March 15, 1918, Inwards Correspondence Files, PROV, VPRS2500/P/0000/Unit 114.

77. “Avenue of Honour: Today’s Digging Operations on the Domain,” *The Mercury* (Hobart), June, 24, 1918.

I have been instructed to write to you to see if you can give any advice or information re above. [He then continues]: “Would you kindly let me know what trees you have planted also the best method of protecting same with guards. ... The climate here is very similar to yours, our soil here is a composite of granite country, average rainfall of 30 inches a year, no means for watering trees other than carting water.”⁷⁸

Following the response from the City of Ballarat, the Corryong committee proceeded with planting an avenue of cedars to “the soldiers who have left this district”.⁷⁹ Subsequently, the *Corryong Courier* featured a full page with photos of the opening of some of the district avenues of honour at Corryong, Cudgewa, Wabba, Thougla, Tintaldra and Toowong.⁸⁰ By July the following year, the committee had published the first 126 names of those who had been honoured at Corryong, adding:

It is the intention of the committee to plant trees this year, at least, to the number of boys who have gone on active service, and to keep on planting year after year till the avenue assumes proportions which shall stand a lasting monument to the town and district.⁸¹

Today this avenue of mature cedars leads up to the local war memorial outside the RSL but its significance has diminished in favour of the monument. While all 126 trees no longer stand, the remnant avenue remains impressive given the stature of the cedars. As has happened elsewhere, the first tree was considered too close to a later building and was truncated and eventually, after decades, carved. This Corryong example is now a carved representation of a soldier on one side of the tree trunk and a mountain man on the other.

Another avenue, this time of eucalypts, was planted on the approach into the Wimmera town of Rupanyup (see Figure 19). This again demonstrates the Ballarat connection as the trees were provided by the former curator of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens North Reserve, John Lingham. At Ballarat, the Lingham family had been involved in the Ballarat North Avenue of Honour, Monash Avenue, the Ballarat North Soldiers and Sailors Avenue of Honour as well as the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.

78. Letter from the Corryong Council to the City of Ballarat, June 8, 1918, Inwards Correspondence Files, PROV, VPRS 2500/P/0000/114.

79. Ibid.

80. “The Soldiers Avenue,” *Corryong Courier*, July 4, 1918.

81. Ibid.



Figure 19. Rupanyup Avenue of Honour, 2015.

The City of Ballarat inwards correspondence also highlights the point that Ballarat had inspired the nation and a grateful letter from the secretary of the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour committee ended with the postscript: “This form of memorial is being adopted throughout the country, thanking you.”⁸²

Municipal councils and goldfields links there certainly were; however, personal relationships were always the cement in the creation and building up of this memorial type. This is highlighted in H. V. McKay’s letter of 28 July 1917 to Ballarat seeking assistance in providing information to the Sunshine Council.⁸³ Following the response from Ballarat, Sunshine went on to dedicate its avenue of Monterey cypresses, *Cupressus macrocarpa*, donated by H. V. McKay, in Sun Crescent.⁸⁴

This also reflects the influence of businesses and the relationships built up by businesses with each other and with councils across the nation. Ballarat businesses promoted the idea in their

82. Letter from the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee to the City of Ballarat, August 20, 1918. City of Ballarat Inwards Correspondence, Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/ Unit 114.

83. Letter from H. V. McKay to the City of Ballarat July 28, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/ Unit 114.

84. Olwen Ford, *Harvester Town: The Making of Sunshine 1890/1925*, (Melbourne, Vic: Sunshine and District Historical Society Inc, 2001), 226.

spheres of influence, hence the relationships between Price and McKay and also Ballarat's extensive nurseries. The donation of trees to the Rupanyup Avenue of Honour Committee by Lingham from the North Reserve of the Ballarat Botanical Gardens has already been highlighted, while Nicholls' nursery in Ballarat supplied trees not only to the Ballarat Avenue of Honour but also to Talbot.⁸⁵

The correspondence directed through the City of Ballaarat, together with the visits from interested parties from elsewhere, bear testimony to the influence of the city's avenues of honour, particularly the Lucas-directed avenue. However, as noted by the correspondence from General Birdwood in relation to the Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour in 1917 and that from the Congregational Manse at Chatswood in Sydney the following year, it was not solely the Lucas-promoted avenue that was broadcast farther afield. Among the many letters received by the mayor, the writer of the letter from the manse removes any doubt by using the plural: "Having heard of the honour avenues planted in your city".⁸⁶

The church community's interest as far away as Sydney is demonstrated in correspondence from the church authorities at Chatswood when they approached the City of Ballaarat. Despite the planting of avenues across Victoria, the letter from the manse at Chatswood in Sydney in 1918 requested details of the plaques: "What metals used, the words used on them and the size of the plaques".⁸⁷ This has also been demonstrated in relation to other places such as the Donald church's publicity that has already been mentioned in relation to Ballarat's Mount Pleasant Avenue of Honour.

Closer to Ballarat, the Shire of Ripon had already commenced moves for avenues of honour and publicity was being given to a church-sponsored avenue at Beaufort where:

An honour avenue has been planted in the grounds of the Beaufort Presbyterian manse to commemorate the volunteers from the congregation serving in the great war. The trees were supplied by the members of the Girls Guild. There are now 49 trees and others will be planted as volunteers leave.⁸⁸

85. *Talbot Leader*, June 10, 1919.

86. Letter from the Congregational Manse Chatswood to the City of Ballaarat, September 25, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/Unit 114.

87. *Ibid.*

88. *The Argus*, Country News, December 17, 1917.

Following this, New South Wales responded to the movement to create avenues of honour, and while Ballarat had often been cited specifically as the spark that ignited the idea, it had been often in more general terms attributed to Victoria:

Referring yesterday to the inauguration of a memorial avenue at Concord, Mr R. B. Orchard, the Minister for Recruiting, expressed the hope that other municipalities would adopt this splendid idea of recognising the sailors, soldiers, and nurses who were serving the Empire. "I would like to commend it to the people of New South Wales," he said.⁸⁹

The opening of this suburban avenue was reported widely across New South Wales and the Minister went on to add: "Victoria has already taken the matter up seriously, and it is a tribute, that will, I am sure be appreciated".⁹⁰

Once Edward Price had taken the initiative from local police sub-inspector Alexander Nicholson, he put his sales director, Matilda "Tilly" Thompson, in charge of the project and the Lucas company set about their vigorous promotional drive. This was pursued with passion, and on the King's birthday holiday on 4 June 1917, the first planting of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour took place. Lucas's staff had developed a reputation for conducting fundraisers throughout the war and the move towards funding an avenue of honour was in many respects a natural development. The girls ran frolics, product exhibitions, sold dolls and even had a football match, possibly the first such game in Australia between two women's teams.

Today's acceptance of the significance and story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and the Lucas stories in which it is embedded, to the total exclusion of the original proposals, actions and personalities involved, testifies to the success of the Lucas program and its promotion. Similarly, the proposal for an arch as an entrance to this avenue originally coming from a Mr E. J. Windsor has never been acknowledged. Like the avenue credits, the Arch of Victory story is totally embedded in the Lucas legend, although it was proposed before the Lucas-run competition for an entrance design was entered into.⁹¹

These factors all proclaim the success of the Lucas promotion of its avenue and that the avenue concept was deliberately disseminated nationally by the company. Similarly, the part

89. "Memorial Avenues: Idea Commended," *The Maitland Daily Mercury*, August 6, 1918.

90. *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate*, July 6, 1918.

91. *Ballarat Star*, July 29, 1918.

played by the City of Ballarat in sending brochures and responses to municipalities and state tourist agencies around Australia were deliberate and benefited Ballarat, financially and socially. Such actions ensured the city maintained an image of strength, leadership and civil excellence that was often greater than the reality.

The first point of impact for spreading the idea for avenues of honour was in the local neighbourhood, and by the end of 1917, most settlements close to Ballarat had started their avenues or plans towards creating their own avenues. As with other patriotic fundraising efforts, locals looked to social occasions as at Yendon, 13 kilometres south-east of Ballarat, where to raise funds for their avenue, it was announced that “a concert in aid of the avenue of honour will be held in the Yendon Hall tomorrow night”.⁹²

Following bitter disputes over the names on the school honour board, the Yendon Avenue of Honour was finally planted over a year later on 21 August 1920.⁹³ With the rural decline following World War II, the avenue was left to languish until the centenary of the Great War in 2014 roused the community to action in restoring it. The planting of the avenue at Yendon left Ballarat circled by municipalities and towns that reflected this popular use of trees and landscape as their sites to be honoured – their own sacred sites or sacred places. Inglis uses both terms – first, in the title of his great work, and later in calling attention to the sign at the war memorial in Orange.⁹⁴

This background story does not detract from the role and the significance of the work of the Lucas Girls. Nor does it detract from the significance of the employees in continuing the traditions set in motion and the continued support and advocacy of Price’s descendants in saving what today is a memorial of international significance. This commercial enterprise with strong leadership and marketing skills was integral to the survival of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Strong generational support has also contributed to this survival and regeneration.⁹⁵

92. *Ballarat Star*, July 15, 1919.

93. *Ballarat Star*, August 28, 1920.

94. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 204.

95. Bruce Price, grandson of Edward Price, is a World War II returned serviceman and is president of the Arch of Victory/Avenue of Honour Committee Inc. See City of Ballarat website. Accessed 10 November 2017 <http://www.ballarat.vic.gov.au/lae/awards-and-ceremonies/ballarat-heritage-awards/2012-ballarat-heritage-awards/arch-of-victoryavenue-of-honour-committee-inc.aspx>.

Through these memorials, those on the home front could express themselves in a way that later built monuments never provided for, by virtue of celebrations that often accompanied their plantings compared to the solemnity surrounding most later monuments. Many people were empowered to continue on with life while still grieving separation and or death. Despite this, as recently as October 2007 *The Melbourne Age* reported: “Those who still live with the memory of their parents’ grief and unanswered questions and conflicting emotions”.⁹⁶ Such emotions were also apparent following the removal of the Brighton Avenue of Honour in the 1960s and subsequent letters of enquiry such as that of Thomas Dietz from Canberra seeking information on the fate of the family’s tree and plaque.⁹⁷

A personal, living tree may have helped resolve some of the generational conflicts for this suburban family brought about through such unanswered questions. At the planting of the Brighton–Caulfield Avenue of Honour in Melbourne in 1918, Professor Ernest Scott of the University of Melbourne reminded his listeners: “The attachment of sacredness to old trees lingered long after the primitive religions died”.⁹⁸ Speaking further of the trees in this avenue: “gather, and look up to the bronze plaque, and read the name and record respectfully; a tree wherein the birds would sing his praises from season to season down the long avenue of time”.⁹⁹

Reporting on this avenue, *The Age* article ended: “Altogether, about 2000 trees are to be planted before the avenues are completed”.¹⁰⁰ I have found no record that this project was ever completed to such a stage. These examples of plantings were influenced directly by the Ballarat publicity and the rapid spread of the story of its avenues, particularly the grand avenue on the Burrumbeet road.

5.6 Spreading the Word

The main catalyst would appear to have been the promotional program promoted by the Lucas interests. While education department appeals discussed elsewhere and other promotions were of importance, it was Lucas’s early advertorial work that was the major dissemination of the

96. “The Dargo 10: A Sacrifice Forged on Flanders Fields,” *The Sunday Age*, October 14, 2007.

97. Letter from T. Deitz to the City of Brighton, May 12, 1990. PROV, VPRS 10430/P1, Unit 33, file 211A.

98. E. Scott, *Avenues of Honour Public Demonstration*, 10.

99. *Ibid*, 10.

100. “Avenue of Honour: Tree Planting at Caulfield and Brighton,” *The Age*, August 5, 1918.

story and the public's imagination was captured from Perth to Hobart to Cairns. This, then, can be said to have been managed by the advertising department of the Lucas organisation.

The word did spread, however, by less aggressive and targeted means. Word through municipal representatives and bureaucracies, as outlined, or through personal contact and relationships, such as Mrs Rashleigh's letter to General Birdwood, ensured that the word eventually spread. After the story of Lucas's endeavours became widespread, the newspapers were publishing letters and council reports on avenues of honour across Australia. Having already published an admonition to the Queanbeyan district about the example set by Ballarat in planting these avenues, the newspaper there proceeded to advise: "The publication, *Queensland Local Government*, strongly supports the proposal and gives at full length what is being done at Ballarat".¹⁰¹

The Ballarat papers also encouraged other centres within their distribution area with detailed reports. The "Country News" segment of *The Courier* 11 September 1917 published details of the avenues at Scarsdale and Cressy.¹⁰² While not having any direct consequence for Ballarat, a little-noticed consequence of the influence of the city in the spread of the avenue concept as published in the state wide *Weekly Times* was that:

For the purpose of planting trees as a memorial to every Australian with his name attached, a meeting was held recently and the "Soldier Trees" Association was formed, with the Minister of Mines and Forests being elected president. It will be the aim of this association to stimulate municipal councils to furnish suitable avenues of honour to be planted with "soldier trees".¹⁰³

Prior to this, and only a month after the first planting at Ballarat, an avenue was planted at Toowong in Brisbane, with the *Courier Mail* reporting:

The wild bush track which leads from Wool Street, Toowong, to the cutting on the hillside, and thence to the main road to the summit is to be called Honour avenue and on each side there is to be planted trees, each bearing the name of a soldier on active service.¹⁰⁴

101. *Queanbeyan Age and Queanbeyan Observer*, July 17, 1917.

102. *The Courier* (Ballarat), September 11, 1917.

103. *Weekly Times*, October 20, 1917.

104. "Honour Avenue at Mt Cootha," *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), July 9, 1917.

The article proceeded with the names of species and the planters. Even as late as 1922, Brisbane's *Daily Mail*, after writing of the example of European avenues, again published the Ballarat story captioned "Anzac Avenue":

In Australia a successful attempt has been made to establish an avenue from Ballarat. The avenue when completed will be something over 20 miles long, the first and longest section of it being entirely due to the efforts and collections made by girls in Ballarat. The entrance to the avenue is graced by a very fine arch, and when these trees are well grown thousands of people will travel from Melbourne for the express pleasure of driving along this avenue.¹⁰⁵

Even at remote Roma, the proposal to plant a "heroes avenue" was presented and advice proffered by the curator of Brisbane Botanical Gardens.¹⁰⁶ Later, after much discussion in Council, it was decided to plant an avenue to honour those who had been killed in the service of their country. In summing up his argument, the mayor of Roma noted:

In some towns in Victoria the "powers that be" had planted avenues of trees. He would like to see them go on planting trees in Roma. The mayor remarked that it was proposed to plant a tree for every boy of Roma who had made the supreme sacrifice at the war.¹⁰⁷

Despite the many avenues planted in every state, the major avenue at Ballarat was still cited in justifying the planting of avenues of honour elsewhere in Australia. Even after the war, T. J. Rothwell OBE, president of the RACQ, speaking to the proposal for a memorial avenue from Brisbane to Redcliffe, proposed that:

Redcliffe, as the finest place in Moreton Bay, naturally came into their mind. ... he believed that everybody would subscribe. The sentimental part of the proposal counted for a lot. In Ballarat a practically similar scheme had been a great success, and 3900 trees had been planted.¹⁰⁸

Following on from this, Anzac Avenue to the Redcliffe peninsula was opened three years later on 6 December 1925 with great fanfare reflecting the reports of one of Australia's earliest memorial avenues, that at Renmark. This, however, was to be the longest memorial avenue launched in Australia:

105. "Anzac Avenue," *Daily Mail* (Brisbane), November 20, 1922.

106. "Heroes' Avenue," *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, April 27, 1918.

107. "Town Council," *Western Star and Roma Advertiser*, May 15, 1918.

108. "Anzac Memorial Avenue," *Brisbane Courier*, July 13, 1922.

Redcliffe was en fete on Saturday when the Acting Premier (Mr Forgan Smith) opened the first section of the Anzac Memorial Avenue, which, when completed, will stretch for 26 miles from Kedron Brook to Redcliffe. Lined with ornamental trees on either side, ... Mr Smith, with a pair of scissors presented to him in an inscribed case, cut a ribbon stretched across the road.¹⁰⁹

Ballarat, the inspiration for this late addition to the type, was a busy railway centre that not only carried traffic but was also an administrative hub with railway workshops and locomotive repair shops. The employees across this huge system were members of what Patsy Adam-Smith recalled as “the great family of railway workers”.¹¹⁰ Railway staff from Mildura to Portland were rostered out from Ballarat, servicing the rich granaries of the Wimmera and Mallee. This community also carried the idea of arboreal memorialisation throughout that region so that in distant Ouyen: “They were allowing relatives the privilege of planting trees at 3/ each, and several had already paid”.¹¹¹

Newspapers were a major source of broadcasting the Ballarat story and the major rural country news in Victoria was distributed through the *Weekly Times*, which claimed the largest circulation in Victoria of any general weekly newspaper published in the state.¹¹² In June 1917 the paper reported: “On June 4 an Avenue of Honour consisting of 500 elm trees, representing the first 500 Ballarat soldiers to enlist, was planted in that city. The planting was done by the girl employes [*sic*] of Messrs E. Lucas and Company Ltd”.¹¹³

The submissions in the Horticulture column were sent in and the wording of this release suggests that it would have been submitted by the Lucas company. *The Weekly Times* did not cover New South Wales or South Australia, where responses might have raised questions about claims such as it being the first “Anzac avenue” in Australia.¹¹⁴ The combination of inter-council cooperation and the media in this way helped to ensure that the Ballarat concept was adopted across Australia. The *Weekly Times* featured avenues of honour from towns across Victoria from that time onwards, usually submitted by named writers.

109. “Queensland’s Anzac Memorial Avenue,” *Townsville Daily Bulletin*, December 7, 1925.

110. Patsy Adam Smith, *Romance of Victorian Railways* (Melbourne, Vic: Rigby, 1980), 11.

111. *Ouyen Mail*, September 18, 1918.

112. *Weekly Times*, July 29, 1917. The *Weekly Times* was the major weekly for rural communities throughout Victoria and parts of South Australia and New South Wales. Although actual circulation figures for the *Weekly Times* were not published in 1917 they were 75,000 by 1951.

113. *Weekly Times*, Horticulture, June 9, 1917.

114. *Ibid.*

The rural newspaper in New South Wales, the *Farmer and Settler*, and like Victoria's *Weekly Times*, cited the example set at Ballarat, even advancing Haddow's thesis of a century later in proclaiming the avenues as "[a] democratic memorial system".¹¹⁵ It advocated that "[i]n the larger proportion of Australian towns and settlements ... the loyal citizens [of such districts] might consider with advantage the example set by the people of many Victorian towns".¹¹⁶

The article moved on to the one city that more than any other was, now after 15 months, acknowledged as the example set before the nation of this practice: "Beautiful Ballarat, principally beautiful because of its wealth of foliage trees, has added another mile or two of young saplings to its avenue on the Melbourne road, and the soldiers' trees make a line several miles long on the road to Burrumbeet".¹¹⁷

Other councils with interests in urban Ballarat also contributed to the vision of Ballarat as a city of avenues and the mayor of the township of Ballarat East proudly claimed: "I had the pleasure for myself and my daughter for the mayoress of planting the first two trees in an avenue that will reach from the Main road to the lookout on Sovereign Hill. ... I named the avenue 'Canadian Avenue' ".¹¹⁸

At the same time, the ANA and the state school committee requested permission to plant an avenue of honour on the Melbourne road in Ballarat East:

Messrs C. E. Ludbrook and J. Drummond, representing the association of the combined state school committees of Ballarat East, and Mr A. Nicholson, representing the Australian Natives' Association, waited on the Town Council yesterday to ask for permission to plant an avenue of honour on the Melbourne road.¹¹⁹

This was only three months after Inspector Nicholson had broached the proposal to the ANA in April that an avenue be planted on the Burrumbeet road, after which that project was taken up by Lucas's.

115. "Avenues of Honour: A Democratic Memorial System," *Farmer and Settler* (Sydney), 16 August 1918.

116. Ibid.

117. Ibid.

118. *Ballarat Star*, June 26, 1917.

119. Ibid.

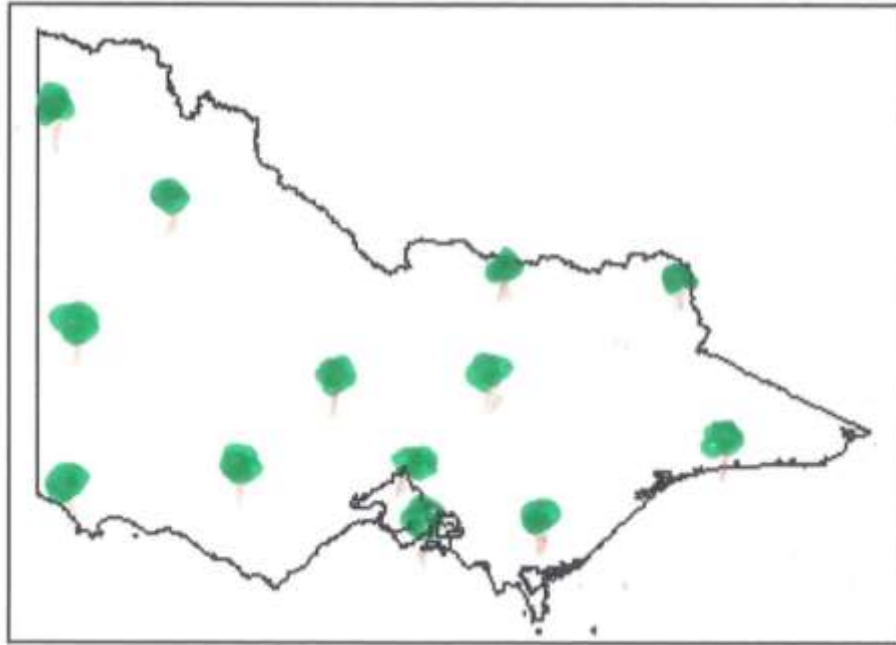


Figure 20. Map of Victoria showing extent of distribution of avenues.

Not stopping at the Ballarat example, however, the article continues to include the whole of the state of Victoria, which by then had generally adopted the practice (see Figure 20). The *Ballarat Star* observed:

It is not only the cities, however, that are commemorating the patriotism of their young citizens; the little one-house settlements in Victoria are adopting the same happy idea. Why may we not have our memorial avenues in every Australian settlement?¹²⁰

Ballarat's proximity to Melbourne, which was the heart of the new nation, aided in the spread of the memorial avenue concept. The mayor of Melbourne, Cr Brunton, was a strong advocate and had played a role at Ballarat from the first plantings in 1917. Writing to the City of Ballarat in May 1918 thanking it for the advice it received, the Melbourne City Council advised that "Councillors Brunton and Smith have moved in the direction of having an Avenue of Honour planted".¹²¹

Many investigations into a suitable site for Melbourne's Avenue of Remembrance took place over several years until national war hero, civic pioneer, and returned general, Sir John Monash, exercised his own personality, influence and expertise to create what became the

120. Ibid.

121. Letter from the City of Melbourne to the City of Ballarat, May 30, 1918, Inwards Correspondence, Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS 2500/P0000/Unit 114.

National Shrine of Remembrance.¹²² On Anzac Day 1916: “An Anzac Avenue was established in the Domain, Melbourne”.¹²³ This, however, has been lost in the intervening years and the monumental Shrine now holds the focus of state pride on days of commemoration.

5.7 A City with Vision

Over and above all other considerations in Ballarat’s influence around the nation was its familiarity to Australians. It had secured its place in Australian history through the gold rushes of the 1850s and the discovery of the world’s great nugget, the Welcome Stranger. The events of the Eureka Stockade in 1853 ensured its place in the story of political freedom and the city was close to Melbourne – then the national capital. Political speeches were issued from Ballarat and were reported from there across the nation.

Coinciding with the Great War, the goldmining industry at Ballarat concluded with the closure of the last of the great mines, the New Normanby at Sovereign Hill in 1917. Due to the romance of the era, which lived on, and the continuing promotion of the city as one of trees and gardens, tourism remained an important industry, albeit in an infantile state. The Arbour Day plantings and the memorial avenues formed an umbrageous environment while the city entered a quieter period.

While the Lucas promotion of its avenue of honour and also its promotion of Ballarat were intentional and designed to stimulate the economy of both industry and the city, much of what eventuated did little. Following WWI, Ballarat’s local economy stagnated. The Lucas company, however, continued to expand at the cost of its local competitors, and a small local tourist industry in and around the city continued to develop. The avenue movement certainly developed and spread, but the city’s economy did not begin to recover until World War II.

The influence of Ballarat can be seen in the activities of McKay at Sunshine, particularly in his ongoing correspondence with former Ballarat connections. This influence is also confirmed in correspondence between Mayor Brunton of the City of Melbourne and Ballarat City Council. Connections also existed in Williamstown where many families had moved to from Ballarat with the development of the Williamstown railway workshops. By 1920,

122. John Lack, “Shrine of Remembrance,” in *The Encyclopedia of Melbourne*, eds. Andrew Brown-May and Shurlee Swain, (Melbourne, Vic: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 661.

123. “Arbour Day, 1916: Anzac Avenues,” *Education Gazette and Teachers’ Aid*, May 18, 1916.

plantings were under way throughout Williamstown with 64 palms planted there on 5 June and an additional “15 palms planted at Spotswood, the memories of 252 gallant fallen soldiers will become treasured in trees throughout the municipality”.¹²⁴

The report explains that more trees were being held for planting awaiting others “who enlisted at Williamstown yet whose homes and relatives were English domiciled”.¹²⁵ Many Australian Britons, in fact, fell into this category of having family still in England. The translation of Australian ideas in relation to planting avenues in Britain that were transmitted through these family connections still awaits further research.

Ballarat was the major city on the Melbourne to Adelaide road and rail networks. This ensured that travellers paid attention to its memorialisation actions. Many efforts were made to promote the linking of avenues between Melbourne and Ballarat:

It is suggested that an avenue of trees be planted, extending from Ballarat to Melbourne, each municipality along the main road to plant a tree within its bounds for every soldier who has enlisted, and for the Royal Victorian Automobile Club to fill the blank spaces between the municipal sections.¹²⁶

The following year, Edward Price also supported this idea and in his motion of 17 May 1918 that the Ballarat Avenue of Honour Control Committee should write to the Country Roads Board, he qualified the reason as being that of “[m]aking a continuous avenue of honour from Melbourne through Ballarat on the main Melbourne–Adelaide road”.¹²⁷

The Shire of Bungaree, immediately adjoining Ballarat East on the Melbourne side, produced tree plantings on the Melbourne road in front of its shire offices as well as those linking to the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour and the Ballarat Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Avenue in the shire’s Ballarat urban area. The Ballan Shire, however, never added a link and those sections planted at Myrniong, Bacchus Marsh, Melton, and Deer Park were too far apart to create any sense of a link.

124. “More Palms Planted 64 in Monash Avenue: 252 ‘Memories’ in all,” *Williamstown Chronicle*, June 12, 1920.

125. *Ibid.*

126. “One Soldier, One Tree,” *Graphic of Australia*, July 6 1917.

127. Minutes of Meeting, May 17, 1918, Committee of Control of Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Avenue of Honour File, PROV, VPRS/PO/Unit 114.

The enthusiasm of memorial avenues across Australia, as spread by the media, also extended to the linking of centres as demonstrated and encouraged at Ballarat so that from Sydney we find:

The Concord Council now proposes to secure the cooperation of adjoining municipalities so that the Soldiers' Avenue, commencing from the Broadway, Glebe, and finishing at Bathurst, may ultimately be accomplished. An immediate start is suggested for the councils between Glebe and St Marys.¹²⁸

Around Ballarat, as observed by Haddow, the process of diffusion ensured many avenues of honour were planted. The prime mover in promoting these avenues was Sir Alexander Peacock, who was Victoria's premier at the time. His constituency was mainly within the Shire of Ballarat and, arguably, the shire planted more avenues of honour around the city than any other of the local surrounding shires.



Figure 21. Map of Victoria showing key centres. (Map data © Google Maps 2010)

Apart from the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, there were others at Ballarat North, Addington, Glendaurel, Weatherboard, Learmonth and Tourello. Similarly, every major centre in Victoria (see Figure 21) had avenues of honour within their vicinity if not in their regional cities.

128. "Soldiers' Avenue: From Glebe to Bathurst," *The Sydney Morning Herald*, May 21 1918.

In 1920, E. Hart wrote to the shire requesting that a tree be added to the Tourello avenue for Private O. S. Hart, 22nd Battalion, who was born at Learmonth.¹²⁹ This was agreed to, and by 1922, the Tourello Avenue of Honour was extended to the point where there were 52 walnut trees.¹³⁰ Other avenues were often added to incrementally in this way, but such additions have usually gone unrecorded.

The term “avenue of honour” was replicated all around the Ballarat region and spread across the nation so that many former Anzac avenues, honour avenues and memorial avenues gradually became known as avenues of honour. This nomenclature did not translate overseas; however, the concept and publicity certainly did.

While media releases from the Lucas organisation and letters to editors from employees would have disseminated much of the news to Australian outlets, it seems more likely that overseas media would have been very much a secondary audience. The first overseas reporting of the Australian memorial avenue movement does not seem to have occurred until 1918 when it began appearing in English newspapers.

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how Ballarat forged a relationship between civic and commercial interests to broadcast its avenue of honour further afield. It argued that the city played a part in taking the idea of these memorial avenues to Australia and the first acknowledgement of it as such. By linking this to the national acceptance and emulation of such a form of memorial, it argued that memorialisation using avenues of honour became a movement and one that saw Ballarat as an example, a leader, and despite not being the birthplace of Australia’s memorial avenues it was the birthplace of a more formal avenue of honour movement by introducing the term avenue of honour and generating the enthusiasm for that form of memorial. The following chapter examines the evidence that this national movement was promoted as an Australian phenomenon and was subsequently adopted transnationally.

129. *Ballarat Star*, Ballarat Shire Council, July 6, 1920.

130. *Ballarat Star*, Tourello, August 2, 1922.

Chapter Six

Across the Seas

*You and I
Are suddenly what the trees try
To tell us we are:
That their merely being there
Means something;*
("Some Trees" by John Ashbery)¹

6.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that the avenue of honour movement that had spread across Australia during the war influenced the enthusiasm for the planting of similar overseas memorial avenues. In support of this it examines overseas memorial avenues in those cases where there is an acknowledgement of the influence and links with the Australian avenue of honour movement. Although not suggesting the links are always direct, in Australia, North America, New Zealand and England there are discernible links as this chapter will demonstrate. Within Australia there are significant archival records and newspaper reports identifying such links. In Britain, Canada the USA and New Zealand the most direct and obvious links are in the newspaper reports.

There are however other influences less apparent, often through personalities such as those on overseas committees or of those visiting or returning home after the experience of first hand witnessing the memorial avenue phenomenon in Australia. In examining the transnational aspects of the avenue movement from the Great War it becomes apparent that in terms of war memorials, individual memorials to those once considered other ranks or lower orders were a new phenomenon for humanity. Culturally and historically governments and leaders had not regarded such people as worthy on community memorials.

6.2 From Ballarat with Love

When Australian avenues appeared in overseas media, just as in Australia, the first reports focussed on and detailed the Australian links.² Following a report on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, the *Bedfordshire Times and Independent* concluded by giving the example of

1. John Ashbery, "Some Trees" in *Seven Centuries of Poetry in English*, (Melbourne, Vic: Oxford University Press, 1998), 50.

2. *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, May 10, 1918, *West Sussex Gazette*, September 19, 1918, *Wells Journal*, September 27 1918, *Leeds Mercury*, September 19, 1918, *Hartlepool Northern Daily Mail* , September 13, 1918, *The People* (London), September 22, 1918.

Williamstown, Victoria, that linked families in the two countries, “We note that No 618, Allan B. Farrer (tree planted by Miss S. Farrer), killed in Gallipoli was the son of Mr J. Farrer (still living), who left Kempston many years ago”.³ Such a reference further reinforces the strong links between families in Australia and Britain and the general “Britishness” of Australians at that time.

In examining the transnational aspects of the avenue movement from the Great War, it becomes apparent that in terms of war memorials, individual memorials to those once considered other ranks or lower orders were a new phenomenon for humanity. Culturally and historically Europe had not identified such people with community memorials. Europe did, however, transmit to its diasporic international communities the avenue concept as it pertained to honouring the great and powerful, and passed on classical concepts of avenue plantings and arboreal symbolism.

The practice of planting avenues to honour those serving in the Great War started in Australia in May 1915, spreading throughout the nation and beyond. Later, Ballarat significantly helped turn what was seemingly an ad-hoc series of regional avenue plantings and dedications into a national movement. Following on from this, the city then assisted in the Australian memorial avenue movement that was burgeoning into an international one. I refer to this memorial avenue movement by its more popular Australian name as the avenue of honour movement.

Just as Ballarat led the way in promoting the avenue of honour concept across Australia, the nation’s citizens and leaders spread the word internationally. In October 1917, Ballarat’s *The Courier* newspaper featured a story that advised its readers who were writing to their wounded friends or relatives lying in hospitals in Britain how to circumvent the military authorities from withholding letters from home to these soldiers. After explaining the reasons, the lengthy article continues:

For the guidance and assistance of all, we publish below a list of hospitals to which such letters may be addressed to wounded Australian soldiers, and also the text of a letter by Mr J. B. A. Thomas of Smythes Road, that may appeal to many as suitable for copying purposes for transmission to our brave boys. The list of hospitals is as follows:⁴

3. *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, May 10, 1918.

4. *The Courier* (Ballarat), October 20, 1917.

The article then lists 29 hospitals and their addresses where letters could be sent without being intercepted by the military and includes sample letter which had been used by Mr Thomas. In his letter, he emphasised the planting of the avenues of honour:

Dear Soldiers in Hospital, We are delighted to hear from time to time of the noble deeds and heroism of the Australians on the battlefield. ... We are planting living memorials for you in the shape of avenues of mountain ash, and elm, and other trees. God honours the brave, you know, and we hope we have the spirit of the Master in doing this. The trees are being planted on each side of the road from Ballarat to Lake Burrumbeet. This is called "The Avenue of Honour".⁵

Also in October 1917, British General William Birdwood was acknowledging his debt of gratitude to Mrs Rashleigh in Geelong for a tree planted in his honour in Ballarat's Eureka Stockade Avenue of Honour. "I write to thank you so much ... that you had honoured me by planting a tree at the Eureka Stockade for me, and another for your boy in our 5th Division Ammunition Column".⁶

Again the following year, Birdwood, in writing to N. Howell, the honorary secretary of the Sebastopol Avenue of Honour committee at Ballarat, confirmed his interest in the planting of trees as a form of memorial: "I am so glad...your memorial has taken this form for I have always advocated and taken a live interest in tree planting..⁷

Two years later, Birdwood laid the foundation stone of the Arch of Victory, which had been built as an entrance to the Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Again, being on a major arterial road and the extension of Ballarat's main street, all related receptions, dinners and correspondence were directed through the offices of the City of Ballarat.⁸ Although the avenue owes much to the Lucas organisation, it is the entrance to the avenue – the Arch of Victory – which is Lucas's major contribution. Birdwood's response to these avenues is one example of the inspiration from their story travelling to the other side of the globe by one of the most influential leaders from Britain.

Despite his earlier introduction to other Ballarat World War I memorial avenues, Birdwood was not confronted by a novelty, but might well have been further influenced to spread the

5. Ibid.

6. Amanda M. Taylor, *Dinkum Oil: Letters Published in the Ballarat Courier During the Great War* (Ballarat, Vic: The Courier, 2006), 285.

7. *The Courier* (Ballarat), November 2, 1918.

8. Letters to the City of Ballarat. Avenue of Honour File, PROV. VPRS 2500/P/0Unit 114.

word of this natural form of memorial in a country stripped of its trees. Here was a man who declared:

I have always advocated and taken a live interest in tree planting wherever it was possible to do so. During the many years which I spent in India, I was able to do much in this respect, and have always felt the greatest satisfaction in seeing nice parks and avenues of trees, which I had planted years before and had matured in my absence.⁹

A great testimony from Birdwood, this letter reveals influences such as his that almost guaranteed word of these memorial types was aired in Britain and that their status would be raised in the genre of war memorials. Soon after, he was back in an England, where the new Roads of Remembrance Association was working to encourage the creation of roads and avenues as war memorials.

6.3 Britain

The Roads of Remembrance movement in Britain was formed in June 1919.¹⁰ Notice of the formation of the association appeared in major newspapers with a list of those initiating it and its objects.¹¹ The new organisation boasted influential men who were associates of Birdwood, such as Major Arthur Haggard, brother of author Rider Haggard, Colonel Crompton C. B. and Major Richard Rigg:

The object of the association is to promote adornment of suitable highways and the precincts of schools and institutions with trees in memory of men who gave their lives in the war. It is recommended that these trees should be given and planted by relatives, friends ...¹²

The *British Roads of Remembrance as War Memorials* booklet was a reprint of the article the association published in the journal *The King's Highway* in that year.¹³ A year later, following his visit and attendance at the opening of the Arch of Victory on 2 June 1920, the Prince of Wales carried word of the avenue abroad. This started when the story was relayed across

9. *The Courier* (Ballarat), November 2, 1918.

10. "Roads of Remembrance," *Gloucestershire Echo*, June 7, 1919.

11. "Court and Social," *Chelmsford Chronicle*, June 13 1919.

12. "Roads of Remembrance," *Gloucestershire Echo*, June 7, 1919.

13. Gordon Fulton, "Roads of Remembrance," *Manitoba History: Horticulture in Manitoba History*, no 31, Spring (1996): 3, accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www/http.manitobahistory.com>.

Britain on 4 June 1920 in all major newspapers.¹⁴ From this time on, similar memorial avenues started to appear in Britain.

Memorial avenues remain around England but lack any great prominence. Visiting the memorial avenue at Horsforth near Leeds in Yorkshire, a local taxi driver could not believe the street he frequently drove through was a memorial avenue planted after the Great War. After two passes along the street, he pulled over and took note of the small memorial crosses on many of the trees. Each of the trees in this avenue, Stanhope Drive, originally carried a plaque containing the details of those for whom they were planted (see Figure 22).¹⁵



Figure 22. Horsforth Memorial Avenue – Stanhope Drive. Inset: Avenue tree with crosses and poppies.

With the significant local press coverage of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour across Yorkshire since 1917, the planting and processes at Ballarat were emulated, with the memorial trees each carrying a plaque with details of the soldier it represented. The avenue of 212 trees for

14. *The Globe*, London; *Belfast News*, Ireland; *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, Scotland, June 4, 1920. These newspapers had reports of the opening of the Arch, the avenue and the presentation to the prince of a pair of silk pyjamas by the Lucas Girls.

15. *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, November 9, 1925.

those who died was officially opened by the Countess of Harewood, with one tree dedicated to the only woman killed:

Horsforth lost 211 men and one woman (Nurse Hogg) in the Great War. To their memory, an avenue of 212 trees has been planted in Stanhope Avenue, each one bearing an iron plate with a name at its foot. ... This memorial, so touchingly personal, yet so communal, was yesterday afternoon opened by the Countess of Harewood, who cut the ribbon stretched across the avenue.¹⁶

Even though the Horsforth Urban Council contributed a five-ton boulder as a memorial, the avenue fits with the style of an avenue of honour. Here, too, plaques identifying those memorialised were placed on the trees in the avenue, which made it truly an avenue of honour. Today, although the original plaques have disappeared, small crosses with poppies are annually placed on trees by descendants, friends and other caring parties, marking them as loved and much-regarded memorials.

The first national notice issued from the Roads of Remembrance Association appeared in the lead-up to the first anniversary of the armistice, which urged all those commemorating the event to “[i]nclude in the programme the planting of memorial and victory trees in prominent places along suitable roads ... commemorative tablets for memorial trees are obtainable from the hon. secretary”.¹⁷

The association’s efforts and advertising do not seem to have translated into community action in the way that Australia had experienced. The promotions in journals such as *The King’s Highway* would not have had the wide readership as the major daily newspapers and targeted a specific audience of road users and those interested in transport. This may be a reflection of the association’s quasi-official status and lack of a direct role or profile within the bureaucracy or government.

On 23 March 1920, the King’s sister, Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll, planted the first tree at Chailey Military Hospital, reminding those present that the planting was “[i]n connection with the ‘Roads of Remembrance’ scheme”.¹⁸ Although not specifically mentioning Ballarat, the *Sussex Agricultural Express* linked the Roads of Remembrance concept to Australia, reporting: “The scheme is as practical as it is beautiful, and that it

16. Ibid.

17. “Trees as Armistice Memorials,” *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, November 8, 1919.

18. “Roads of Remembrance,” *Sussex Agricultural Express*, March 26, 1920.

appeals to the British mind is shown by the fact that already memorial roads have been constructed in various parts of Australia”.¹⁹

It may have been due to the cross pollination of Australian ideas in the wool-marketing centre of Bradford or from other official sources that the municipal authorities there were being encouraged to explore the concept. The avenue story from Australia had ample exposure in the region’s newspapers and had gained some traction with “certain persons”:

The City Engineer and Surveyor reported that he had received a request from certain persons for permission to plant “Memorial Avenues” in their districts, which avenues would consist of an avenue of trees and a Memorial tablet to those who had fallen in the present war.²⁰

The creation of these memorial avenues was duly approved by the Corporation of the City of Bradford, but further research is required locally to create a full listing of them as the references are often vague, especially when reading proposals a century later. Smaller memorial avenues with plaques were planted around Leeds at East Keswick, Horsforth and Scholes. Equally vague is the reference on the council records to ‘certain persons’, these may well have been influenced by the earlier Ballarat story published in the newspapers across the region.

All the surviving World War I memorial avenues in Britain date from the 1920s. Very few promotional articles appeared in British newspapers in reporting on the Roads of Remembrance program. News of meetings, such as that involving parliamentarians and supporters in London, tended to provide bare facts without creating any real enthusiasm:

A very interesting meeting took place today at Speaker’s House, under the patronage of Mrs Lowther. Its object was to encourage in this country the building by local authorities of “Roads of Remembrance” in memory of local regiments who served in the war.²¹

This was a particularly detailed report as several of the short pieces in the newspapers were simple notices inserted by Mrs Morrison as secretary of the Roads of Remembrance Association. In this instance, in an effort to give appropriate endorsement to the project, the names of suitable dignitaries were mentioned. The article that was nevertheless a promotional

19. Ibid.

20. City of Bradford Corporation, Minutes of Street Drainage and Works Committee, September 11, 1919. Minute Book No 36.

21. *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, March 25, 1920.

one released from the association in London went on to state: “Thoroughfares could be planted with trees dedicated to individual soldiers, companies or regiments. Sir Ernest Wild and Sir Harry Brittain were among those who spoke at this afternoon’s function”.²²

While this article appeared in major newspapers, including those in London and Leeds, it lacked official endorsement or any consistent follow-up. No mention is made of the Roads of Remembrance Association’s program by the *Yorkshire Evening Post* in promoting the East Keswick memorial avenue:

The trees are already purchased and the tree guards made, and a united public ceremony and service will be held on Saturday January 31 at 3 pm, when it is anticipated that the parents or nearest relatives of our fallen heroes will plant each one a memorial tree.²³

The trees in the avenue at East Keswick still carry plaques bearing the details of the soldiers they represent, although these are replacements. Like so many of its counterparts around the world, the memorial avenue at nearby Scholes is missing many of its chestnut trees, and other cultivars now interrupt any sense of uniformity along the avenue.

Several memorial avenues were planted across Britain in the 1920s and ’30s, but while the publicity was certainly in the newspapers, not all roadside memorial plantings seem to have resulted directly from the ideals and promotions by the Roads of Remembrance Association. Most of the association’s advertising was in small single-column notices.

The decision to create a memorial avenue at East Keswick owed more to news of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour being published across Yorkshire rather than the efforts of the Roads of Remembrance Association.²⁴ The Imperial War Museum database lists over 68,000 war memorials across Britain and a survey of these memorials reveals fewer than 40 avenues had been planted to memorialise the Great War. Among the first avenues with plaques was that at East Keswick in January 1920.²⁵

22. Ibid.

23. “East Keswick War Memorial,” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, January 24, 1920.

24. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, *Yorkshire and Leeds Intelligencer* and *Leeds Mercury* all ran stories on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour cited in this chapter; however, I have found no articles in local sources at that time featuring the Roads of Remembrance Association.

25. “Memorials,” Imperial War Museum, accessed January 18, 2016. <http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials>.

Without Australia's support of avenues at all levels of government and the private sector, the same paralysis may well have occurred in Australia too. An examination of newspaper reports from across Australia reveals appeals to municipal councils by leaders, governments and letters to the newspapers advocating avenue plantings.



Figure 23. East Keswick Memorial Avenue, Yorkshire. Inset: Plaque for Ernest Dalby, East Keswick.

In Britain there appears to have been no corresponding national support and dissemination of the idea except for those reports of the Australian movement in newspapers and the occasional advertisement placed by the Roads of Remembrance Association. After the visit of the Prince of Wales to Australia in 1920 and the official opening of Ballarat's Arch of Victory and its Avenue of Honour, more publicity was generated across Britain as well as North America through many newspapers such *The Sunday Star*, Washington USA, and *The Globe*, London, and others as footnoted elsewhere in this chapter.

The planting of avenues of honour to the Great War, however, is most noticeable in Australia. Unlike Australia, Britain was close to where its soldiers lay forever. The War Graves Commission undertook the memorialisation of where its men and women were buried, usually a few hundred kilometres from London, and certainly the social elite and officer class, those with sufficient funds, were able at length to visit the resting place of their loved ones.

The straight lines of roadside plantings of poplars across the French countryside are given as a possible reason for the adoption of the avenue as a form of memorial to this war.²⁶ Haddow

26. E. L. Powers, "Roadside Planting" (editorial), *Good Roads*, vol. 61, no. 14 (5 October 1921), 177, cited in Gordon Fulton, "Roads of Remembrance," *Manitoba History: Horticulture in Manitoba History*, no 31, Spring

reflected that the Champs-Élysées, “which terminates at the Arc De Triomphe, is one of the world’s most famous avenues”.²⁷ Although Australia had started planting the avenues two years earlier, by mid-1917 the impressions of the avenues in France were being relayed home from Australian soldiers.

Writing home to his sister, Private Henry McSween of Rosebrook described the panorama in the French countryside:

You can safely bet there is a row of trees on each side joining a beautiful avenue for miles and miles. Again, your eye catches sight of red-tiled roofs of the villages nestling amongst the green trees, and it looks very nice indeed.²⁸

As elsewhere, Australia has emulated the European tradition of planting memorial trees to significant occasions and people since European settlement in 1788. At the opening of the Concord Avenue of Honour in 1918, R. B. Orchard, Minister for Recruiting in New South Wales, referred to the European influence, reflecting: “I was much impressed on my visit to France with *La toutes Nationalo* [italics added], which are to be found in every town. They are magnificent avenues of trees, the idea having been started by Napoleon”.²⁹

This and other comments indicate that some degree of influence from the avenues in France may have been a factor, but the overwhelming evidence is that the strong avenue tradition dating back to the mid-nineteenth century at Ballarat was the major factor in that city.³⁰ Owing to the local use of these avenues in Australia starting with proposals as early as May 1915 before volunteers started writing about overseas avenues or returning from France, theories relating to any direct French inspiration are questionable, certainly in relation to Australia.

More generally, other ideas may be considered inherent in the psychological constitution of people, whereby “[p]rimitive myth and magic had evolved a symbolic repertoire expressed in

(1996): 3, accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www/http.manitobahistory.com>. The corollary between the French avenues and those in Canada is drawn by Gordon Fulton in citing E. L. Powers.

27. Haddow, “Avenues of Honour in Victoria” (1987), 24.

28. “Local Soldiers’ Letters,” *Koroit Sentinel and Tower Hill Advocate*, 22 December 1917.

29. *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners’ Advocate*, July 6, 1918.

30. Michael Taffe, *Growing a Garden City: Ballarat Horticultural Society 1859–2009* (Ballarat, Vic: Ballarat Heritage Services, 2014), 81.

Renaissance art and sculpture”.³¹ In Britain and across North America, the tradition of planting memorial avenues was introduced following the armistice, and in Canada, Gordon Fulton has described them as being based on symbol-laden images and has given examples, the first being:

France’s tree-lined country avenues: Winnipeg’s memorial avenue ... was intended to be “a far-off reminder of the long straight tree-lined roads of France down which young men from [the college] had marched in their rendezvous with death”.³²

Also from the *Saskatoon Daily Phoenix*, Saskatchewan: “A Saskatoon veteran described them as ‘long straight roads, with large elms on either side, beautiful and useful, and loved by the Canadians overseas’”.³³ Most of these observations or conclusions have been made on reflection after people had returned from the war. In Canada, however, the situation was different to that of Australia.

In writing about the memorial avenue at Manitoba Agricultural College in 1956, the authors of the Golden Jubilee record saw the avenue as “[a] far-off reminder of the long straight tree-lined roads of France down which young men had marched in their rendezvous with death”.³⁴ It must be recognised that this analogy was drawn 40 years after the war in a different ethos. However objective historians aim to be, they experience their sources through the sensibilities of the time in which they write.

In the United States, too, the avenues of France were often cited as the major influence in seeking to plant memorial avenues as in this early promotion of the American roads of remembrance proposal in 1919:

The *Amaroc News*, official organ of our army on the Rhine ... notes that in France each road, it matters not how small or how seldom used, has its quota of beautiful shade trees whose limbs form an arch to protect the traveller from the sun.³⁵

31. Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York, NY: Vintage, 1996), 210.

32. Manitoba Agricultural College, *Golden Jubilee 1906–1956: A Record of the Years, Commemorating Fifty Years of Agricultural Education and Endeavor* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba 1956), 14, cited in Gordon Fulton, “Roads of Remembrance,” *Manitoba History: Horticulture in Manitoba History*, no 31, Spring (1996): 3, accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www/http.manitobahistory.com>.

33. “Genesis of Memorial is Described,” *Saskatoon Daily Phoenix*, June 19, 1923.

34. Manitoba Agricultural College, *Golden Jubilee 1906–1956: A Record of the Years, Commemorating Fifty Years of Agricultural Education and Endeavor* (Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba, 1956), 14.

35. “Soldiers Know Value of Tree Planting,” *The News Scimitar* (Tennessee), October 16, 1919.

A similar *raison d'être* was being put forward by reports in referring to the support of the President of the United States: "President Harding has heartily indorsed [*sic*] memorial tree planting. All along the Lincoln Highway memorial tree planting is going forward under the direction of the American Legion, whose members know so well the tree-lined roads of France".³⁶

Even in New York, similar sentiments were being expressed as to the French influence: "In Louisiana a memorial tree is being set out every forty feet along the Jefferson Highway. It was through some tree-lined road in France that every man who played a man's part had to march to keep tryst with his destiny".³⁷ The latter sentiment relating that these roads of remembrance were emulating "some tree-lined road in France" was reiterated across the nation starting across the New York state border in Delaware".³⁸

Meanwhile, despite Canada being involved with the Empire forces, the influence throughout North America in planting honour or memorial avenues to those who left for the front generally took place later. In the United States, this could be attributed to that country not entering the war until April 1917. While the initial impetus at Ballarat came from the ANA and progress associations from 1916 onwards, that at Victoria, British Columbia, in 1918 was supported by, among others, the Rotary and Kiwanis clubs. Similarly, several of the avenue plantings in Michigan and elsewhere in the USA also came from Rotary and Kiwanis groups, organisations that had not yet been established in Australia.³⁹

In advocating for the planting of trees along the roadsides as memorials to Britain's servicemen, Mrs M. H. Morrison, honorary secretary of the Roads of Remembrance Association, on 26 October 1921 wrote: "So in silence, while we sleep, nature would raise her own edifice".⁴⁰ It is noteworthy that major centres in England had been subject to zeppelin

36. LeRoy Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane* (Detroit, MI: Priscilla Press, 2004), 94.

37. "Road of Remembrance," *New York Tribune*, November 19, 1921.

38. "Road to Remembrance," *Newark Post*, December 7, 1921.

39. Kiwanis Club of Sunbury, accessed 28 September 2015. <http://www.kiwanis-sunbury.org.au>. Kiwanis was formed in Michigan in 1915 and was not established in Australia until 1967, over 50 years later. Rotary was first established in Australia in 1921 by which time most of Australia's avenues of honour had been planted and were well established.

40. "An Armistice Day Suggestion," *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, November 2, 1921.

attacks during the war. While the British were being subjected to such bombings, Australians were planting their memorial avenues, word of which was being sown like seeds in Britain

In Australia the prevailing idea that a generation was lost now needs to be re-evaluated as 60 per cent of those eligible for service never volunteered. Similarly, in Britain a re-evaluation of the human cost in the war is taking place. The Imperial War Museum's centenary exhibition of the Great War reminded visitors that in Britain 88 per cent of those who fought returned home (see Figure 24). As Raphael Samuel defined heritage as relics under threat, memorial avenues to the Great War in Britain, following this definition, do not fall into the category of heritage.⁴¹

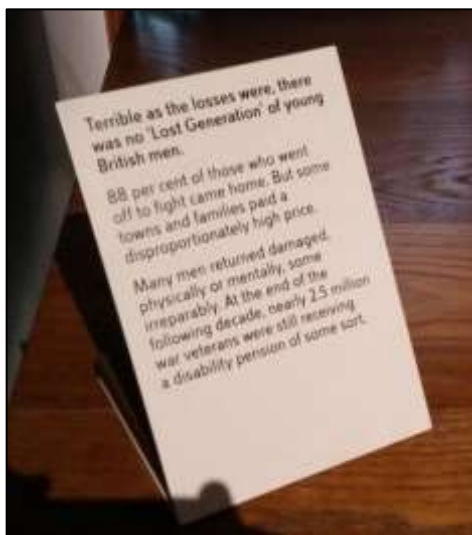


Figure 24. Imperial War Museum story card, 2017.

Word of Australia's avenues of honour was being spread across Britain from August 1917. In the northern city of Newcastle upon Tyne, there was a report on the planting of the first avenue of honour in Melbourne in August of that year. This carried the story from the Melbourne *Argus* announcing: "Mr Hughes, the Commonwealth Premier, the occasion of his planting here today the first tree in the Soldiers' 'Avenue of Honour' ".⁴²

As reports of Australia's memorial avenues had been appearing in British newspapers from 1917 onwards, the Roads of Remembrance Association's aims would have had a degree of familiarity to locals. The promotion of the Roads of Remembrance project has been raised,

41. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory* (London, UK: Verso, 1994).

42. "An Avenue of Honour at Sandringham," *The Argus*, cited in the *Newcastle Journal*, August 20, 1917. This refers to the avenue of honour planted at Sandringham when the Prime Minister planted the first tree in memory of Corporal C. H. C. Dey.

but while the idea was translated both in Britain and across the Atlantic in terms of tree-lined roadways, such was not the entirety of the original brief. In London, *The Spectator* reported in 1920: “The idea is that there could be no better, more useful, or more lasting memorial of the war than a new and broad highway in each part of the country”.⁴³ The report continued, pointing out that “awkward and dangerous corners” could be removed, treating the improvement as a war memorial suggesting that “we might have our Appian Way”.⁴⁴

None of this reflects the concept of tree planting as it clearly comes through in the Roads of Remembrance Association’s booklet and its transliteration in the wider public sphere. Members of the Royal Family supported the Roads of Remembrance program. Apart from the King’s sisters, Princess Louise and the Countess of Harewood and her husband, Earl Harewood, the King’s brother, Prince Albert, was also involved in official openings of avenues:

In support of the roadside memorial tree planting scheme of the Roads of Remembrance Association Sir Robert Baden Powell has written to the hon. Secretary to say that Prince Albert will open an avenue in Birmingham planted by Boy Scouts in memory of those of their number in that district who fell in the war.⁴⁵

As the newspapers were constantly publicising memorial types, both the style and type of memorial was constantly being questioned: “A memorial should be one which the public could not fail to associate with the Great War and its object, from this point of view, should be unmistakable”.⁴⁶

Many other towns, including Coseley in the West Midlands and Worksop in Nottinghamshire, planted memorial avenues.⁴⁷ In the village of Dunchurch, Warwickshire:

There is an avenue of 470 trees, stretching (for a distance of less than six miles. Montana elm saplings, limes, and beeches border the road for three miles, while there are also three miles of fir trees. This part of the memorial scheme has special fitness and interest. In years to come ... the spirit of the heroes of Gallipoli will live on.⁴⁸

43. *The Spectator* (London), April 3, 1920.

44. *Ibid.*

45. “Memorial Trees,” *Nottingham Journal*, March 27, 1920.

46. *Hackney Gazette*, May 23, 1919, cited in D. Lambert, *War Memorial Parks and Gardens*, accessed April 12, 2015. <https://www.historicengland.org.uk>.

47. Imperial War Museum, accessed April 15, 2017. <http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/search?query>.

48. “Heroes of Gallipoli,” *Hampshire Advertiser*, June 3, 1921.

Like Burnside in Adelaide, South Australia, the avenues at Dunchurch, Worksop and Fleetwood were planted to be adjuncts to formal built memorials and lacked individual plaques. The influence on all of these projects may well have been through the Roads of Remembrance Association. The association's meeting of 26 March 1920, again, made reference to "Australia's pioneer work in connection with avenues of honour for those killed in the war".⁴⁹ Despite this reference, however, only one entry in the Imperial War Museum database of war memorials is listed under the banner of the Roads of Remembrance scheme. This was the road of remembrance at Folkestone, Kent, in 1924 where troops marched to board their ships for embarkation to France.

There were other Australian voices in Britain involved with memorial roadside plantings. Dargavel has noted there were two Australians involved with the Roads of Remembrance Association: "Australia's High Commissioner, ... was appointed as a member of its Council and Sir Henry Barwell, South Australia's Agent-General also played a role".⁵⁰ The influence of the Australians in the formation and development of Britain's Roads of Remembrance Association was significant. As late as 1931, the former Australian High Commissioner's role was acknowledged when:

The Roads of Remembrance Society meeting in London on Thursday decided to plant 150 trees along the new thoroughfare at Harrietsham, Kent, in memory of Sir John Alexander Cockburn, a former High Commissioner for South Australia, and founder of "Arbour Day." Twenty-two affiliated societies in the Home Counties have contributed at least one tree each. The trees will bear plates on which the names of the societies will be inscribed. The dedication was at Harrietsham on Saturday, Arbour Day.⁵¹

Cockburn had been premier of South Australia and had served with distinction in the British army during the war, serving afterwards on several committees in Britain.⁵² Another former South Australian premier and key member of the association, Sir Henry Barwell, originally

49. *Adelaide Register*, March 29, 1920, cited in John Wadsley Planning and Heritage Consultancy, *City of Ballarat, Conservation Management Plan – Ballarat Avenue of Honour and Arch of Victory* (Hobart, Tas: John Wadsley Planning and Heritage Consultancy, 2014), 52.

50. John Dargavel, "Trees Age and Memories Change in the Avenues of Honour and Remembrance," in *Australia's Ever Changing Forests IV, Proceedings of the Fourth National Conference on Australian Forest History*, 1999, eds., John Dargavel and Brenda Libbis (Canberra, ACT: Australian National University, 1999), 45.

51. "Roads of Remembrance," *Sevenoaks Chronicle and Kentish Advertiser*, November 7, 1930.

52. *The British Medical Journal*, Obituary, Sir John Alexander Cockburn, December 14, 1929.

entered parliament in South Australia in 1915, when these memorial avenues were just being introduced into that state, and he introduced reforms in town planning:

Following the 1918 elections, he [again] became attorney-general, and minister of industry in charge of town planning, for which he established a new department. ... He published two papers on soldiers' settlements and town planning in 1918 and 1919. A 1919 Act also provided for the establishment of a garden suburb at Mitcham.⁵³

With such a background, Barwell brought his knowledge of Australia's avenues of honour to the table in England. This Australian voice on memorial roads, as well as Australia's High Commissioner being on the Roads of Remembrance Association Committee, ensured the message spread across Britain and beyond. The High Commissioner had also served under General Birdwood during the war and corresponded with him.⁵⁴

Added to these influences for these memorial avenues in Britain, there were Australian enlistees whose domicile and families were in England as in the Williamstown example in Chapter Five.⁵⁵ The correspondence between Australia and England, where it related to memorial plantings, contributed further to promoting the concept in England.

The influence of the grand avenue at Ballarat in a far-distant Australia seems to have been as great in Britain as was the Roads of Remembrance Association influence. It certainly complemented the association's publicity, which added further legitimacy to its project. More directly in Bedfordshire, the locals were advised as early as 1918: "The city of Ballarat in Australia has adopted a method of commemorating its soldier sons by planting an avenue of trees in their honour, one tree for each man in the order of their enlistment".⁵⁶

The story of Australia's memorials was becoming better known in England and North America. Frequent references in newspapers demonstrate that those in England were being made aware of the arboreal memorials of Australia. Mr J. J. Virgo, national field secretary of the YMCA, writing to the *Middlesex Chronicle* in 1918 of his recent Australian visit, wrote of

53. Maryanne McGill, "Barwell, Sir Henry Newman (1877–1959)," in *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, vol. 7, ed. National Centre of Biography (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 1979), accessed December 1, 2017, <http://www.adb.anu.edu.au/biography/barwell-sir-henry-newman-5150/text8631>.

54. "Post-war correspondence with Lord Birdwood: Part 3," Australian War Memorial, accessed December 1, 2017, <http://www.awm.gov.au/articles/blog/post-war-correspondence-lord-birdwood-part-3>.

55. Chapter Five refers to those "enlisted at Williamstown yet whose homes and relatives were English domiciled".

56. *Bedfordshire Times and Independent*, May 10, 1918.

the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, stating: “Ballarat (Victoria) has in a unique way demonstrated its appreciation of the brave fellows who have responded to the Empire’s call”.⁵⁷ Similar sentiments were expressed in newspapers across England at that time. The *Leeds Mercury*, in its reporting on the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, continued to praise the Australian efforts, describing Ballarat’s memorial at that stage as being “an avenue of five miles of beautiful trees adorn that distance of the entrance to the city”.⁵⁸

The article went on to expand further afield to where at “another town a tree is planted on the sea front in memory of every boy who has fallen”.⁵⁹ Only days later, the *Wells Journal* further also advised its readers that Ballarat “is planting an avenue of five miles at the entrance to the city”.⁶⁰ Less than a year after the major article featuring the story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour in the *Leeds Mercury*, the same paper reported on the carrying of a proposal by the City of Bradford: “For the planting of 3268 trees in a circular avenue round the city being planted, over nine miles in length, as a war memorial”.⁶¹

It would seem the publicity relating to Ballarat’s example had certainly influenced people in the Leeds/Bradford region. As elsewhere, the suggestions for a memorial avenue appeared to have been represented from the electorate, recalling those certain persons. On 11 September 1919, Walter Barber, the Lord Mayor of Bradford signed off on the projected memorial avenue:

The Committee examined and approved plan and particulars submitted by the City Engineer and Surveyor showing a scheme for the planting of a circular memorial avenue in the city, involving the planting of 3268 in a total length of 9 $\frac{2}{3}$ miles of road.⁶²

57. *Middlesex Chronicle*, September 28, 1918.

58. *Leeds Mercury*, September 19, 1918.

59. *Ibid.*

60. *Wells Journal*, September 27, 1918.

61. *Leeds Mercury*, October 15, 1919.

62. City of Bradford Corporation, Minutes of Street Drainage and Works Committee, September 11, 1919. Minute Book No 36.

By February 1920, the proposal had reached the stage whereby arrangements for this avenue of over 3000 trees were in the process of being finalised “for a formal inauguration ceremony in connection with the tree planting (memorial avenue)”.⁶³

This proposal went through the committee stages of Council, which was circuitous at best, perambulating through three departments of Council. Following up on this, several other proposals were put to Council: “A total of eleven schemes were submitted before finally the city council was asked to vote on just two schemes in April 1920”.⁶⁴ With the death of the mayor and Alderman Kay, the two strongest advocates for tree planting were no longer in the Council chamber. Apart from Bradford’s truly monumental avenue of 3268 trees, which was abandoned with the sudden changes in the council chamber, other memorial avenues with plaques were planted across the region.

The village of Horsforth in West Yorkshire planted its avenue of remembrance with plaques on each tree in 1925. This, in turn, may have been influenced by nearby East Keswick, where a memorial avenue consisting of 16 lime trees had been planted, each tree bearing a name board with the name of a local man who had lost his life in the Great War. Both of these avenues are in the tradition of the Australian avenues of honour. The East Keswick avenue of limes also represented the type of single-row avenue as opposed to those with trees opposite each other along a path or road.

As noted earlier, the concentration of these memorial avenues in and around Yorkshire might also be attributable to the press coverage about the Ballarat endeavour in the region. Both the *York Post* and *Yorkshire and Leeds Intelligencer* featured news articles from the Australian movement as well as about the British Roads of Remembrance Association. When the Earl of Harewood opened the memorial avenue at Horsforth on 8 November 1925, he was replicating a theme of avenues previously planted on his nearby Harewood House estate.

The majority of memorial avenues in England were planted in the 1920s by which time Australia was turning to building memorial structures and raising statues. In 1921, the community of Sittingbourne in Kent planted an avenue of limes (each with a plaque), followed by Barwick in 1922. In 1925, a memorial avenue was planted at Walford in Herefordshire, and another at Coseley, Staffordshire in 1928. Other avenues were being

63. Ibid, February 12, 1920.

64. Kathryn Hughes, *Great War Britain: Bradford Remembering 1914 – 18* (Brinscombe Port Stroud, UK: The History Press, 2015), 187.

planted into the 1930s such as those at Colchester in 1933 and Lymm in 1934.⁶⁵ The site chosen for the Britain's National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas in 2001 is close to the memorial avenue planted Coseley.

At Bramshott in Hampshire, an avenue of 400 maple trees was planted, but this was replaced by a grove in 1995 with memorial plaque that reads in part: "This plaque is mounted on the butt of a sycamore which formed part of an avenue of trees ... planted to commemorate Canadian servicemen who were trained locally and died at Bramshott".⁶⁶ There was a large military camp and hospital at Bramshott, where Canadians were stationed, many dying from the Spanish flu.⁶⁷

When writing of the memorial avenue in Fleetwood's Memorial Park in 2014, Stephanie Collinson found: "Photographs of children whose fathers had been killed in the Great War, planting the avenue of sycamores that still exist".⁶⁸ She then attributes the idea to the King's Highway Department's pamphlet *Roads of Remembrance as War Memorials* and that the concept for these memorial avenues had also spread "right across the Commonwealth".⁶⁹ When the Roads of Remembrance Association was established in 1918, it started promoting its goals across the country, although it did not issue a brochure outlining its purposes until 1919–20.

The trees, and in fact the park itself, was not created until 1925, six years after the memorial clock tower was built on the Fleetwood promenade in 1919. The *Lancashire Evening Post* found the memorial avenue concept novel in 1925, reporting that:

At Horsforth (Yorks.) yesterday, probably the most novel war memorial in the country was opened by the Earl of Harewood in his capacity of Lord-Lieutenant of the West Riding. The memorial takes the form of an avenue of 212 trees, each bearing the name of one of the fallen.⁷⁰

65. Imperial War Museum, accessed May 4, 2017, <http://www.iwm.org.uk/memorials/search?query=Coseley>. These avenues are all listed on the Imperial War Museum's lists of war memorials.

66. Hampshire History, accessed December 1, 2017, <http://www.hampshire-history.com/bramshott-and-the-canadians-in-wwi>.

67. "Canadian Memorial," Traces of War, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://www.tracesofwar.com/sights/24516/Canadian-Memorial.htm>.

68. Bringing Memorial Park, Wyre Council, accessed April 2, 2015. https://www.wyre.gov.uk/downloads/download/688/bringing_memorial_park_to_life.

69. Ibid.

70. "Avenue of Remembrance," *Lancashire Evening Post*, November 9, 1925.

After labelling the Horsforth avenue as novel, the same newspaper, only two days later, reported on the planting at Fleetwood, where “[p]art of the town’s intended memorial is the conversion of Warrenhurst grounds ... of which an outstanding feature will be the Avenue of Remembrance. To children of men who fell in the war was given the honour of planting the first trees”.⁷¹ Today this is Fleetwood Memorial Park.

The evidence arising from the research for this thesis is overwhelmingly contrary to Collinson’s conclusion. My research and findings for this thesis demonstrate that the concept spread from Australia to England and from there throughout North America. Whether the concept was spread in Britain by the many press releases of the Australian avenue of honour plantings or from the Roads of Remembrance Association’s promotions is not important as both had their genesis in the Australian experience as represented through the Barwell, Cockburn, Birdwood links already mentioned. It was almost certainly via the Roads of Remembrance promotion that the idea first reached North America.

6.4 Canada

With the press releases of the Roads of Remembrance Association, the word spread and in due course, partly because of this promotion and partly through those influential people already mentioned, connected to the movement, roads of remembrance ideas gained traction in Canada. With so much happening in the way of introducing the memorial avenue/roads of remembrance concept across Canada, there were still references to the example of Ballarat in Victoria, Australia. At Brandon, Manitoba, yet another North American local newspaper, the *Brandon Gazette*, used the story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.⁷²

After the war, the *Canadian Municipal Journal* advocated a national highway from the Pacific to the Atlantic seaboard as a memorial highway to those who had served, although at that time with no suggestion as to tree plantings.⁷³ Earlier however, an avenue was planted along Vining Street in front of the high school in Victoria, British Columbia (BC). This was representative of those students and staff killed but did not represent individuals with individual commemorative plaques. “During a ceremony on 20 April 1917, the second

71. “Fleetwood: Children Plant Trees in Warrenhurst Grounds,” *Lancashire Evening Post*, November 11, 1925. Warrenhurst Grounds is today Fleetwood Memorial Park.

72. *Brandon Gazette*, November 25, 1920.

73. “Roads of Remembrance,” *Canadian Municipal Journal* 18, no. 2 (1922): 42.

anniversary of the Battle of Ypres, 14 maple saplings donated by the Women's Canadian Club were planted as a tribute to the school's students and teachers who had died overseas".⁷⁴

After this, no further memorial avenues were planted in Canada until after the armistice. The first major effort to plant them occurred in November 1918 when Thomas Walker, a businessman, suggested an avenue be planted on Shelbourne Street in Victoria and Saanich, BC.⁷⁵ It can only be speculated if Walker had any direct contacts that brought the Australian story of such avenues to his notice. Walker was only one advocate however, as the Council minutes for the City of Victoria reveal, "[w]ith the announcement of the armistice, Mr Harry Dunnell put other suggestions to Council including that an avenue of memorial trees should be planted".⁷⁶

Although these and other suggestions came in 1918, it was not until 1921 that finally: "On 4 October 1921, 5000 attended the dedication of this 'Memorial Avenue' to BC's war heroes".⁷⁷ High school students at Victoria planted 14 maples in Vining Street in 1919 to the memory of students and teachers who had died serving overseas. This was followed by a more public "memorial avenue" along Shelbourne Street which was eventually dedicated in 1921 (see Figure 25). In Canada, these roads were most commonly termed "memorial avenues" and described as "[l]inear tree-lined avenues, usually in semi-rural or suburban settings. The trees were typically a single species, regularly spaced along each side of the avenue".⁷⁸

74. Gordon Fulton, *Manitoba History: Roads of Remembrance*, Manitoba Historical Society, no 31, Spring (1996): 3, accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www/http manitobahistory.com>

75. Ibid.

76. Harry Dunnell, Letter to City of Victoria re "Permanent Memorial of Greater Victoria's part in the World War," November 20, 1918. Archives, vol. 67: Letter book, 387–396.

77. "Thousands Do Honour To Fallen," *The Daily Colonist*, Victoria, October, 4 1921, cited in Harry Dunnell, Letter to City of Victoria re "Permanent Memorial of Greater Victoria's part in the World War," November 20, 1918. Archives, vol. 67: Letter book, 387–396.

78. Gordon Fulton, "Roads of Remembrance," *Manitoba History: Horticulture in Manitoba History*, no 31, Spring (1996): 3, accessed August 28, 2015, <http://www/http manitobahistory.com>.



Figure 25. Memorial Avenue on Shelbourne Street, Victoria, British Columbia.

The idea of the later public planting along Shelbourne Street can be traced to Mrs M. H. Morrison of Devonshire in Britain.⁷⁹ Mrs Morrison was, in fact, secretary of the Roads of Remembrance Association in Britain. Always promoting the aims of the association, she wrote to fellow committee member Arthur Haggard's sister, the Baroness d'Anethan, who was living in Victoria, adding: "It occurs to me that whilst you are in British Columbia, the land of big trees, you may see your way to inaugurate the movement there as a branch of, or organisation with, the society to be formed here".⁸⁰

Haggard, founder of Britain's Veterans' Association, was a committee member of the Roads of Remembrance Association and had offered his room at the Veterans' Association for a preliminary meeting of the Roads of Remembrance Association. This latter association issued a booklet, a copy of which was forwarded to the Baroness.⁸¹ This booklet outlined the Roads of Remembrance program and successfully promoted it in Britain from 1919 onwards.

As was the case in the USA and Australia, this memorial avenue at Victoria was to pass through multiple municipalities and require inter-council cooperation. In this case, the District of Saanich and the City of Victoria, through the Parks and Beaches Committee, saw Victoria

79. "Avenues of Trees in Commemoration: Movement afoot to create 'Roads of Remembrance' in Memorial of the Fallen Soldiers of the Great War," *The Daily Colonist* (Victoria), October 26, 1918.

80. Ibid.

81. Ibid.

donating the trees and Saanich providing land. It was intended that there would be “[o]ne tree to be planted for each British Columbian killed in World War I and it was thought at the time that the memorial would rival the great avenues of Europe”.⁸²

After the Lieutenant-Governor planted the first tree in Shelbourne Street at Victoria in British Columbia using a religious term, he reminded the 5000 attending that “[w]e are gathered here ... to consecrate the avenue to be constructed here to the memory of those who fought and fell”.⁸³ Not that Victoria BC had the monopoly on symbolism in Canada; Macdonald College in Montreal planted oaks in a ring all around the men’s playing field, one for each man from the college killed in the war”.⁸⁴ This was reminiscent of the planting around the oval at Walwa in Australia. (See Figure 26). Trees were popular in Canada not only as groves and single plantings but also as avenues because “[t]hey represented the promise of everlasting life”.⁸⁵



Figure 26. Avenue of Honour around oval at Walwa, Australia similar to Macdonald College, Montreal, Canada.
[plaque inset]

82. Caroline Duncan, *For Each Dear Life of Sacrifice: Post-War Commemoration*, Royal United Services Institute, accessed August 4, 2017, http://rusivicda.org/wpcontent/uploads/2012/02/For_Each_Dear_Life_of_Sacrifice.pdf.

83. “Thousands do Honour to Fallen,” *The Daily Colonist*, October 4, 1921.

84. Jonathan F. W. Vance, *Death So Noble: Memory, Meaning, and the First World War*, Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1997), 47.

85. Ibid.

Before that, however, on the other side of the Rocky Mountains in 1919, Calgary in Alberta was considering a similar memorial avenue and Council was seriously investigating the proposal. The Council's Parks Annual Report for 1919 records:

There has been a movement started in the city to plant trees in memory of those citizens who made the supreme sacrifice in the Great War. ... Each tree should be properly dedicated to a soldier, and have a tablet with name, age and other particulars.⁸⁶

Just as Canada had a vigorous forestry portfolio, so, too, across the border, did the United States. Similarly as in Australia, there had been a long-time re-forestation drive and roads beautification programs. From this it was a natural progression into arboreal memorials in these once-British settlements.

6.5 United States of America

The Roads of Remembrance program was embraced across both Canada and the United States. Not only was Mrs Morrison writing to her contacts at home in England through letters to newspapers but also to Canada and the USA. In the United States her appeal was being published in newspapers across the nation as in this example from Ogden City, Utah: "Something more is wanted to meet the craving for a memorial at once national and corporate, with a place also for the family and individual gift".⁸⁷

Given that the USA didn't enter the war until 1917, as early as November 1918, the Forestry Department in the USA was advocating roads of remembrance.⁸⁸ The earlier Arbor Day movement must also be credited with a consciousness among Americans of the significance of arboreal memorials although this called for tree planting without stipulating a particular form so as to include reforestation, groves and individual tree plantings. Until the Great War it does not seem to have included avenues. In March 1918 the *Harriesburg Telegraph* made the call:

There could be no finer compliment paid our soldiers in the service than the planting and naming of trees in their honor. If every family would plant one or more trees for

86. City of Calgary, Parks and Recreations Department, Corporate Records, Archives: RGI. File 1899

87. *The Ogden Standard*, July 10, 1919.

88. Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane*, 147.

the boys who responded to the call to the colors, there would be thousands of trees set out this year...let us have real trees – living monuments... planted all over Pennsylvania next month.⁸⁹

Clearly, as in Australia, these examples indicate a similar groundswell in the USA. However, the addition of the promotion and publicity from the Australian examples must be credited with providing added impetus to local voices as little evidence has been found for avenues of memorial trees before 1918.

It is noteworthy that United States' promotions by the president of the American Forestry Association, Charles Lathrop Pack, and United States president Warren Harding, were three years later than the early Australian examples. Also, as in Australia, the concept of beautification was called upon to strengthen the case for these avenues, the President later emphasising, “[i]t would be not only the testimony of our sentiments, the country which these heroes have served so well but a means to beautify”.⁹⁰

Australia rarely rated a mention in the press in the USA, and when it did, it was mainly in relation to its politics, sale of commodities and the Great War. As was the norm of the day, it was mainly through the British press and British spokespeople that the Australian avenue program was transmitted and then it was in terms of being British. Although as the above examples testify, similar calls were being made in the USA it was influenced by British and Australian initiatives:

Great Britain and Australia are pushing the roads of remembrance idea. ... [w]hen in Australia, the Prince of Wales approached Ballarat, the great goldmining city in the Australian colony of Victoria, by means of a magnificent broad avenue, some fifteen miles long, lined on either side by trees ...there are about 5000 of them.⁹¹

At Queens, in the heart of New York, the citizens formed the Woodhaven War Heroes Permanent Memorial Committee in 1919. The local weekly newspaper reported:

It was announced that the planting of the oak trees in Forest Park to bear the names of the half hundred Woodhaven boys who have died in the service would be commenced

89. *Harrisburg Telegraph* (Pennsylvania), March 29, 1918.

90. Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane*, 94.

91. “Memorial Tree Planting Followed by Other Nations,” *The Sunday Star* (Washington), January 2, 2012.

as soon as the weather permits, which means that the trees will be ready to receive the proper name plates.⁹²

An avenue of 73 memorial trees was eventually planted in Forest Park, now Woodhaven Boulevard, of which 50 trees still remain along Woodhaven Boulevard (see Figure 27).⁹³ The scheme was initially similar to the majority of Australian memorial avenues intended “for their purpose of honouring of our boys, dead and alive”.⁹⁴



Figure 27. Woodhaven memorial trees in Queens, New York.
Reproduced from *New York Daily News*, May 24, 2015.

There is one notable example of Ballarat being directly promoted in the USA. With the soldiers returning from the battlefields of Europe to the USA in 1919, even in the more remote southern states, Ballarat’s example was being praised and promoted: “Planting trees in honour of the soldiers is a thought that is truly inspired ... forming thus an ‘avenue of honour’.”⁹⁵ This article in the *Albuquerque Morning Journal* related the story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and concluded by advocating that New Mexico should follow suit:

92. “Honour Trees for Our Heroes to Be Planted,” *Forest Parkway Leader-Observer* (East New York), March 6, 1919.

93. *New York Daily News*, May 24, 2015. The drive was renamed Forest Park Memorial Drive in May 2017.

94. *Ibid.*

95. “The Avenue of Honour,” *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, February 28, 1919.

The little city of Ballarat, Victoria, Australia, has planted a tree for every enlisted soldier. The planting is done with public ceremony, a certain unit of troops being honoured at each ceremony ... Great advantage would arise to New Mexico from such tree-planting.⁹⁶

Prior to the enthusiasm and advocacy of the Prince of Wales for the concept after his Ballarat experience, the most obvious link to the United States memorial avenue plantings was the British Roads of Remembrance scheme. The British movement as demonstrated had almost certainly been influenced by the publicity and knowledge of the Australian avenues of honour, particularly from Ballarat. Newspapers supporting the association and other like-minded bodies were carrying the endorsements of the young and popular Prince of Wales across the United States.⁹⁷

Within a year, the United States was familiar with the Prince's experience. The story was relayed by *The London Mail*: "He approached Ballarat, the great goldmining city ... a broad avenue, some fifteen miles long lined on either side by trees, which are flourishing ... Each tree ... commemorates a Ballarat boy who gave his life for the Empire".⁹⁸

This same report was syndicated across the United States so that even second-hand news was spreading the Ballarat Avenue of Honour story across the United States, six years after the initial planting.⁹⁹ Regardless of the time lapse, the time was ripe in the USA as the Roads of Remembrance program was in full swing and the news from Australia reinforced local arguments.

During the campaign across the USA for these honour avenues or roads of remembrance, the *Washington Times* in the automotive section in 1919 reminded its readers of French President Clemenceau's admonition that "[t]he great army that has died must ever be kept in remembrance".¹⁰⁰ In Cleveland, Ohio, the decision had already been made a year earlier: "For every Cleveland son who makes the supreme sacrifice in the war against Germany, a tree will be planted on 'Liberty Row' here bearing a small bronze tablet inscribed with the name of the soldier-hero".¹⁰¹

96. Ibid.

97. Ibid.

98. "Memorial for Heroic Dead," *The Ocala Evening Star* (Florida), August 12, 1921.

99. "Memorial for Heroic Dead," *The Bemidji Daily Pioneer* (Minnesota), July 15, 1921.

100. "Roads of Remembrance Will Be Call on Cross-U.S. Convoy Trip," *The Washington Times*, July 5, 1919.

101. "Tree for Each," *Rock Island Argus*, August 12, 1918.

From 1919 onwards, the American Forestry Association carried headline banner articles of “Roads of Remembrance” in newspapers across the United States as it was in the *Washington Times*.¹⁰² The USA adopted the British roads of remembrance initiative as only the United States can – on a grand scale. With the endorsement of the American Forestry Association, newspapers across America lauded the British idea:

Roads of remembrance! ... With those words Great Britain challenges the United States, for over there plans are being put forward for the linking up in an intelligent way local memorial endeavours and the “roads of remembrance”.¹⁰³

In 1921 at the University of Alabama, the American Legion Post 34 Tuscaloosa planted 45 trees in an avenue to honour the men from the county. These trees originally had individual metal plates, which were later replaced with marble markers; all of them have disappeared over the intervening century.¹⁰⁴

In Michigan, LeRoy Barnett looks to the Roman Appian Way or *Via Appia* as a progenitor of the concept.¹⁰⁵ Liberty Highway in Michigan was put forward in August 1918 and finally planted with 110 walnut trees in 1922. Writing in 2004, Barnett observed: “First the name disappeared and the trees so that ‘today we remember those who died for this country but have forgotten the road that saluted their sacrifice’”.¹⁰⁶ He goes on to add that the brass plaques simply “disappeared over time”; a similar process occurred in Australia.¹⁰⁷ Occasionally, a plaque is valued and cared for in local historical museums (see Figure 18).

Similar battles occurred elsewhere across the United States:

In June of 1923 members of the Alma Civic Improvement League decided to plant 280 elms along both sides of the three mile highway ... on Arbor Day (May 2) of 1924 when the first trees were planted and the undertaking dedicated. A grand parade marked the occasion, stores in town closed for part of the day so everyone could join the celebration.¹⁰⁸

102. “Roads of Remembrance Will Be Call on Cross-U.S. Convoy Trip,” *The Washington Times*, July 5, 1919.

103. *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, July 3, 1919.

104. Robert O. Mellown, *The University of Alabama: A Guide to the Campus and its Architecture, West Quad Tour* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama, 1988), 105.

105. Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane*, 17.

106. *Ibid*, 135.

107. Some plaques have been removed from avenues and honoured in family homes, while others have been discovered with metal detectors, unearthed and re-attached to trees.

108. Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane*, 148.

Today there is no evidence of any of this activity outside of archival newspaper records. Similarly at Ann Arbor, Michigan, where 400 elm trees had been planted 50 feet apart on either side of the highway, “few now realize the avenue was ever a memorial”.¹⁰⁹ Such incidents highlight the personal and vernacular nature of avenues over the official memorials erected later by servicemen’s organisations and/or under more direct government auspices. An exception to this is in President Warren Harding’s advocacy for memorial avenues and his comment:

I find myself altogether responsive to a request for an appeal to the people to plant memorial trees along the important public highways and acknowledging [those lives that] were sacrificed in the [First] World War. ... A general adoption of the plan would, in the coming years, be noted as one of the useful and beautiful ideas which our soldiers brought back from France.¹¹⁰

Much like the coming together of municipalities and the Ballarat Soldiers and Sailors Avenue of Honour planted in a major city street, and the Brighton–Caulfield examples in Australia, the two counties of Saginaw and Midland in Michigan acted in unison to plant a living memorial which stretched 20 miles (32.19 kilometres) along the Tittabawssee River forming the “Soldiers’ Memorial Highway”.¹¹¹ As Barnett highlights, this avenue was planned originally to involve and pass through four counties: “There is no evidence to indicate that the two most northern counties along this route ever participated in the project”.

The two counties that did cooperate completed their section. In Saginaw, at the start of the avenue, which has now largely been lost, a monument still stands that reminds those who care to read it:

This monument erected and the road of memory established as loving memorials to the brave men from Saginaw County who gave their last full measure of devotion in the World War that government of the people by the people for the people shall not perish from the earth.¹¹²

Two weeks after the commencement of the Soldiers’ Memorial Highway plantings at Michigan, Calgary in Alberta, Canada, commenced planting its 14 kilometre avenue of trees

109. Ibid, 23.

110. Ibid, 94.

111. Ibid, 202.

112. “WW I Memorial – Veterans Memorial Plaza, Saginaw Michigan,” Waymarking.com, accessed 4 September 2017.
http://www.waymarking.com/waymarks/WM60WW_WW_I_Memorial_Veterans_Memorial_Plaza_Saginaw_Michigan.

forming Memorial Drive (11 May 1922) which was completed in 1928.¹¹³ Reporting on preparations for this event, the *Calgary Herald* advised that details of those serving “[w]ill be placed on aluminium plates which will be attached to a stake beside the tree”.¹¹⁴ Despite the reference of this as the only surviving such memorial avenue in Canada in 1997, there are memorial avenues from the Great War surviving in at least three provinces – British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba.

Memorial Drive in Calgary, planted with 3278 trees over the 14 kilometres, is today second only in length to Ballarat’s Avenue of Honour, which was originally planted with 3700 trees over 22 kilometres (see Figure 28).¹¹⁵ Tree varieties initially planted at Calgary were poplars, *Populus woodii*. As with advice as to the most appropriate trees to plant that was sought by many authorities in Australia, so, too, at Calgary, where in 1919 the Calgary Parks’ annual report maintained: “The home-grown trees are far superior to those purchased as they have thrived in the dry season where the others have failed”.¹¹⁶



Figure 28. Plaque on wall at the entry onto Memorial Drive, Calgary.

113. City of Calgary, Parks and Recreations Department, Corporate Records, Archives: Streets File. (no reference number)

114. Ibid.

115. Lucas Company, *Lucas's Staff's Appreciation of Brave Men* (Ballarat, Vic: Lucas Company, 1919), 1.

116. City of Calgary, *Parks Annual Report 1919* (Calgary, AB: City of Calgary, 1919), 10.

By the centenary of the Great War similar avenues in other centres were being recognised, albeit posthumously. Thunder Bay's trees were lost not to disease but to the exigencies of local politics and commerce. At the end of the Great War there was no Thunder Bay and the grand Remembrance Avenue linked the two towns of Port Arthur and Fort William, the former being the more socially advantaged. In this they reflect the Ballarat story where after municipal amalgamation the eastern township lost its identity to the socially and financially dominant west.

6.6 New Zealand

The question of the discrepancy between New Zealand and Australian memorials has been attributed by Inglis to New Zealand's conscription program as opposed to Australia's volunteerism.¹¹⁷ The major memorial avenue to the Great War in New Zealand was that at North Otago, which contained 400 oak trees.¹¹⁸ This is an avenue of honour, particularly notable in Severn Street, in the urban area of Otago. Initially, these trees each had a wooden cross with the serviceman's details entered on it. As it traversed rural land, the trees in the avenue were more widely spaced.

As early as 1918, there were letters to newspapers in New Zealand advocating avenues to be planted as memorials. From Invercargill it was suggested: "If it is to be a plain memorial for plain people, what could be more suitable than a stately avenue of trees leading into and out of the town, suitably named and properly cared for?"¹¹⁹

As elsewhere around the globe, the newspapers in New Zealand carried the story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour. Generally, however, despite the reporting of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour in the newspapers and endorsement of the concept by locals, there was a reticence to the idea. While the war was still staggering along at the start of November 1918, some in New Zealand who had picked up on the idea were promoting it in their local areas:

The proposal of Dr Douglas to plant trees as memorials to fallen soldiers finds endorsement far beyond North Otago, as witness the following extract from a

117. Kenneth Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 183.

118. "North Otago Memorial Oaks," New Zealand History, accessed November 28, 2017, <http://nzhistory.govt.nz/media/photo/north-otago-memorial-oaks>.

119. *Southland Times*, letter to the editor, June 26, 1918.

Victorian paper: A living growing monument of honour to the brave boys who have gone forth from their city is the Avenue of Honour at Ballarat.¹²⁰

The next day at nearby Ashburton a similar message was published, which included a copy of the same article cited at Oamaru. Here, again, the article referred to the initiatives in Australia at Ballarat, concluding: “An extract from a Victorian paper backs up the action of the Waitaki County Council in the matter of planting trees in honour of fallen soldiers”.¹²¹ After the Great War other memorial avenues were planted, in Dunedin that at Green Island was commenced a year after the Treaty of Versailles in 1921 “[a]s a living memorial to the boys from the district who fell in the Great War.”¹²² Of the avenue at Wanganui in 1938 the *Evening Post*, Wellington reported, “[t]he living avenue of trees planted in memory of New Zealand men, made a perfect, permanent and growing memorial.”¹²³ Apart from demography and the different geographical landscape a difference in outlook can also be attributed in part to the fact that New Zealanders were New Zealanders before and after Australia federated and this identification did not change as it had done for those Victorians, New South Welshmen and others in the Australian colonies with Federation in 1901.

6.7 Concluding Linkages, Comparisons and Development

In Australia, as Edward Price’s letter of May 1918 reveals, it was not until that time that it was decided to extend today’s Ballarat Avenue of Honour to take in additional memorial trees in lieu of those represented at Ballarat East. This attempt to include all of Ballarat’s volunteers in the one avenue came at the expense of the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour. It also detracted from those honoured elsewhere around the city and negated efforts to commemorate their volunteers by several other organisations’.¹²⁴

The grand Ballarat avenue failed to represent all the local volunteers. This became obvious when the service records of those commemorated were examined. Many in the avenue were not from Ballarat, although they may have been born there or had family there. Few of the

120. *Oamaru Mail*, November 5, 1918.

121. “Trees as Memorials,” *Ashburton Guardian* (New Zealand), November 6, 1918.

122. “Arbor Day at Green Island,” *Otago Daily Times*, June 7, 1921.

123. “Rifle Brigade: Memorial Unveiled,” *Evening Post*, February 22, 1938.

124. Letter from Edward Price to the Secretary, Avenue of Honour Control Committee Ballarat, May, 24 1918, Inwards Correspondence, City of Ballarat, PROV, VPRS 2500/P0 Unit 114.

Ballarat Orphanage volunteers are honoured and many others remain unrepresented despite claims of the total representation of locals. While interesting, this is an area awaiting further research as some of these samples are represented by virtue of Lucas's having later appropriated names on the Ballarat East avenue for the western avenue, which is now the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.

A century later in 2016, the descendants of the Buchanan boys, who were Roman Catholics from nearby Bungaree and who attended school in Ballarat, were lobbying for their inclusion in the Ballarat Avenue of Honour.¹²⁵ This situation contrasts with that at Saskatoon in Saskatchewan, Canada, where later inclusions meant the avenue became more inclusive so that family were included in memorial plantings in its Next of Kin Memorial Avenue.

In Calgary, Canada, where later additions have contributed to the involvement of many groups across the city, there has been much public input into rejuvenating the avenue and creating a new memorial park to mark the entrance to the avenue (Figure 29).¹²⁶

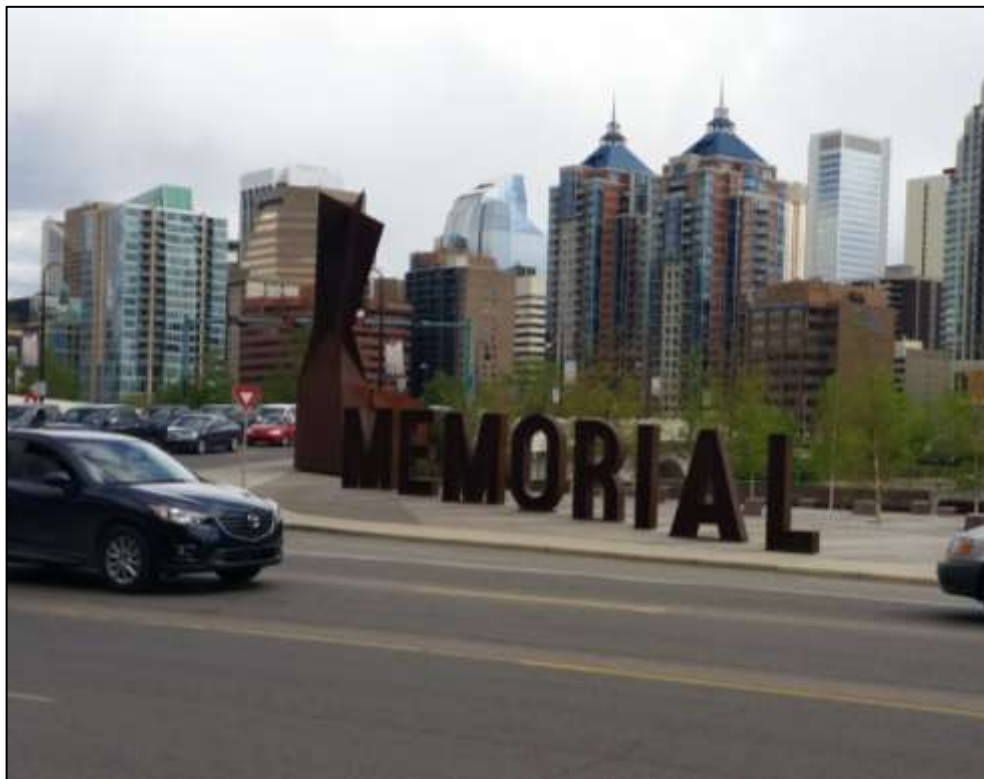


Figure 29. Memorial sculpture 2005, gateway to Memorial Drive, Calgary.

125. Caleb Cluff, "Give Them Their Due," *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 30, 2016.

126. "Poppy Plaza War Memorial Officially Opens," *Calgary Herald*, June 9, 2013. City of Calgary, Corporate Archives, Parks and Recreation Department: Streets File.

In 2002, the City of Calgary set about restoring the dignity and the significance of the memorial nature of its Memorial Drive. In June 2005, the city had finalised a design development plan, “Memorial Drive: The Landscape of Memory”.¹²⁷ Reporting on the project two years later, the Calgary Herald noted: “Memorial Drive and Memorial Park are symbols within our community ... They speak to the heritage and history of Canada’s military and connect it back to Calgary”.¹²⁸

Canada was certainly influenced, although in a secondary way, by Australia’s avenues of honour. This connection to the Australian movement to create memorial avenues does not appear to have been recognised previously due to the circuitous perambulations of such a link. Linking Canada’s avenue inspiration to England does not take into account the Australian involvement and influence in the committee of the English Roads of Remembrance Association. Neither does it factor in the effect of the constant retelling of the story of Australian memorial avenue plantings as broadcast through the British newspapers on people in various parts of Britain. This in turn regularly reinforced the concept on roads of remembrance advocates for the memorial avenue concept around Britain.

On first investigating the Canadian movement to roads of remembrance, as they, too, became known after the British initiative, there seemed to be little or no connection to Australia. However, following the sequence of events in Australia – Birdwood and other correspondence, newspaper references to Australia by the Roads of Remembrance Association in England, and representation on the committee followed by Canadian referencing the British scheme and in the United States evidence of the same – the links are compelling.

As early as 1918, the *Washington Times*, citing a letter from Robert Conklin, commissioner of forestry for Pennsylvania endorsing the American Forestry Association’s plans for planting memorial trees and that of an “avenue of the allies”, suggested:

There is no more suitable method of commemorating the deeds of heroism of our soldiers and sailors The value of memorial trees over stone or bronze lies in the fact it is a living thing and a more potent agency in keeping afresh the memory.¹²⁹

127. City of Calgary, Parks and Recreations Department, Corporate Records, Archives: Streets File. (no reference number).

128. “Upgrades Will Restore Legacy,” *Calgary Herald*, November 12, 2007. City of Calgary, Corporate Archives, Cuttings File. (no reference number)

129. “Memorial Trees Plan is Indorsed,” *The Washington Times*, November 25, 1918.

However, just as Mrs Morrison had broadcast the concept across Britain and Canada, so, too, was she being quoted in the newspapers across the USA as in Bridgeport, Connecticut, when addressing the matter of memorials: “Something more is wanted to meet the craving for a memorial at once national and corporate, with a place also for the family and individual gift”.¹³⁰ Following on from this admonition, she warmed to her subject: “The road of remembrance, a commemorative avenue”.¹³¹

The American Forestry Association embraced this support for a concept that it had been promoting “along the great transcontinental highways”.¹³² Reporting on the many avenues being planted across the United States, including those at Macon, Georgia, the Bridgeport newspaper finished: “A regulation marker placed on each growing monument will tell the name of the man it memorialises and show the branch of the service in which he was engaged”.¹³³

In concluding this article, the report included mention of two 25-mile-long avenues being planted – one at Hillsboro County in Florida and another at York in Pennsylvania: “What could be more appropriate than these long line of trees serving the living and honouring the dead. How much finer the noble tree than merely the name on a formal tablet”.¹³⁴ These were planted by the Rotary Club at Hillsboro and the women’s clubs together with the Chamber of Commerce at York. As early as 1919, Charles Lathrop Pack, president of the American Forestry Association, was advocating for a memorial avenue in Washington DC. In doing this he emphasised the need for each tree to be a memorial with individual plaques: “These trees should be marked with the man’s name and military identification”.¹³⁵

In keeping with many Australian avenues, those in the United States were often planted for all who served and the syndicated report from the *Indianapolis Star* appearing in Iowa indicated that the message was also being broadcast across the nation: “The trees planted at the technical high school were in honour of former pupils in the service and not for the dead”.¹³⁶

130. “Roads in Time of War or Peace,” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer*, July 3, 1919.

131. *Ibid.*

132. “Plant Trees,” *The Bemidji Daily Pioneer* (Minnesota), March 11, 1919.

133. “Roads of Remembrance,” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer* (Connecticut), November 26, 1920.

134. “Roads of Remembrance,” *The Bridgeport Times and Evening Farmer* (Connecticut), November 26, 1920.

135. “Chance for Model Memory Highway,” *Evening Star* (Washington), July 3, 1919.

136. “Roads of Remembrance,” *Audubon County Journal*, October 14, 1920.

After 1920, the newspapers in both Britain and the USA were broadcasting the enthusiasm of the Prince of Wales for memorial avenues following his return from officially opening the completed Arch of Victory and the grand Ballarat Avenue of Honour in Australia. The *Idaho Recorder* reported that “[t]he Prince of Wales has brought back with him from the Antipodes a very beautiful conception of a form of memorial for the soldiers who have fallen in the great war”.¹³⁷

The Australians’ commemoration of their Great War heroes with memorial avenues was not followed to any great extent in New Zealand, the best known example being in North Otago. With the federation of the Australian colonies the citizens of the separate colonies became citizens of the new nation, Australia. New Zealand, however, remained a colony of Britain and retained a continuous identity as New Zealanders. Hoadley succinctly stated:

A Royal Commission on Federation, established in 1900 to inquire into the issue, [of joining the Australian federation] concluded that there were few benefits for New Zealand in joining the Commonwealth of Australia, and advised: “New Zealand should not sacrifice her independence.”¹³⁸

Following the Gallipoli campaign and the events of 25 April 1915, the emphasis in the former mainland colonies now constituting Australia began to change, producing a new awareness and sense of nationality as Australians. While New Zealanders retained their identity as New Zealanders the country remained a colony of Britain, not receiving dominion status until 1947.¹³⁹

In all these nations, the surviving avenues of honour and their remnants are memorials to the connectedness of communities and to the lives and memories that sustain them. They are, in most cases, legacies of communities and lives lived; not simply of lives lost. They all reveal an historical landscape in which lies “a history of achievement, available to the public so that it can grasp the past roots of community life, and is available to historians as a valuable source of evidence for interpreting the past”.¹⁴⁰

137. “Memorial for Heroic Dead,” *The Idaho Recorder*, July 15, 1921. (Citing the *London Mail*.)

138. Steve Hoadley, *The New Zealand Foreign Affairs Handbook* (Auckland, NZ: Oxford University Press, 1992), 17.

139. Philip A. Joseph, *Constitutional and Administrative Law in New Zealand* (Wellington, NZ: Brookers Ltd, 2001), 445–446.

140. Dennis N. Jeans and Peter Spearitt, *The Open Air Museum: The cultural landscape of New South Wales*, 32.

At Ballarat in Australia, however, despite the veracity or otherwise of some claims, newspaper reports indicate that it was definitely the intention of those on both the Ballarat East Town Council and the Avenue of Honour Control Committee to take the concept further than Ballarat. Presidents of the adjoining shires of Bungaree and Buninyong also joined in planting trees and supporting this goal. Edward Price of the Lucas company had already made his idea in this regard well known. Had such a concept come to fruition, Ballarat's Avenue of Honour may have matched the 30 miles and more of some of those in the United States and been able to lay claim to being the longest avenue. Despite its failure in this regard 100 years ago, the efforts to protect it over the intervening century have seen it survive while others have fallen by the wayside so that it can now make such a claim. In 1918 the mayor could boast:

Ballarat had the credit of starting the idea, and when they had completed their sections the trees would extend from Burrumbeet to Bungaree, a distance of about 30 miles. His desire was that the example of Ballarat would be everywhere copied, and that the planting of avenues of honour would be extended throughout the land.¹⁴¹

Extend it did throughout the land. However, even the most ambitious proponents could not have foreseen how it would spread to England, the centre of the British Empire, then to other Commonwealth countries and the United States.

6.8 Conclusion

Chapter Six has argued that, having spread across Australia, the movement to honour those serving by creating memorial avenues with plaques on individual trees was promoted overseas. It briefly told the story of the Ballarat influence across Australia and the enthusiasm engendered in cities and small rural communities. It developed this enthusiasm initially with reference to Ballarat and followed the development of the concept overseas. This occurred through personal initiatives, letters, and the influence of community leaders like Barwell and Cockburn in Britain, and visitors the calibre of Mr J. J. Virgo, national field secretary of the YMCA, cited earlier in the chapter. The influence of the press is most powerful throughout, whether generated from Ballarat or elsewhere. It demonstrated that the press was often responsible for spreading the memorial avenue concept using examples from Britain, USA, Canada and New Zealand.

141. "East Avenue of Honour: Melbourne Road Section Extended," *Ballarat Star*, July 8, 1918.

Chapter Seven argues that later, other influences from natural disasters to international human migration took attention away from this form of living memorial. These influences, whether natural or otherwise, were usually outside the ambit of those originally responsible for local treed memorial avenues.

Chapter Seven

After the Fighting

*If ye break faith with us who die
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow
In Flanders fields.*
(“In Flanders Fields” by John McCrae)

7.1 Introduction

Ever since it was written, this stanza by John McCrae has influenced the focus on a nation’s debt to those at the battlefield against those on the home front and subsequently the wartime narrative. In seeking reasons for the loss of these memorial avenues, the context of the post WW1 period is often overlooked. This has led to a forgetting of the history associated with wartime plantings to honour those who served.

This chapter argues that other factors, including the Spanish flu, population movements, the Roaring Twenties, the Great Depression, the rise of Nazism and the events that led up to World War II also occupied the psychological space previously taken up with wartime events. Following the Great War, the world experienced these waves of tribulation before resuming its global war again. All of these events impacted on the avenues of honour. WWII brought about worldwide relocation of millions who influenced cultures other than their own and brought about a new world culture often seen today as internationalism or expressed in terms of forming the global village.

7.2 Nature

In Australia, the cause of the first loss of avenues was due to nature. Two avenues subjected to flooding were the Kiewa Valley Avenue of Honour and the early avenue at Gundagai in 1918. Of Gundagai, one of the nation’s earlier avenues planted for Anzac Day 1916, the local newspaper reported

A little over two years ago the public were appealed to for money to plant an avenue of trees. The appeal was answered, and the avenue planted, but, owing to three successive floods destroying some of the trees, it was decided to remove the avenue to the park where it now was.¹

1. “Anzac Celebration,” *Gundagai Independent and Pastoral, Agricultural and Mining Advocate*, April 29, 1918.

Again, both Gundagai and the Kiewa Valley erected memorials and the old arboreal memorials were simply allowed to languish and be forgotten. The avenue of honour at Red Bluff near the Kiewa Valley avenue was partly destroyed by fire and has been left with its surviving avenue trees of swamp mahoganies, *Eucalyptus robusta*, some with their original guards embedded in their bark. Similarly, in Canada, issues of climate and disease affected trees at Winnipeg and Calgary, and Barnett records similar problems in the USA.²

The Roaring Twenties may have driven the city wild, but in the country farmers had to struggle emotionally and physically with a greatly diminished labour force. In Australia, this sometimes consisted of returned servicemen on soldiers' settlement allocations. With falling yields and holdings too small for sustainable farms, many were forced to leave their farms and move into the towns and cities resulting in avenues remaining to be enveloped by scrub or withering by roadsides and forgotten.

7.3 The Spanish Flu

Almost encapsulated into the story of the Great War, even if as a footnote, was the pandemic known as the Spanish flu. This pandemic decimated populations and hit combatant nations before the end of the war. With the armistice, this shadow dominated for another year until after the Treaty of Versailles was signed. In Australia, the majority of the memorial avenues of honour had been planted. Overseas, however, although knowing of Australia's memorial plantings, communities were still dealing with either the nearer impacts and the effects of war, as in Britain, or the pandemic.

The Spanish flu is estimated to have accounted for 13,000 Australian, 6000 New Zealand, 50,000 Canadian and 500,000 American lives.³ Stories of heartbreak were repeated around the world and the memorial avenue planted at Bramshott in Britain previously noted, recorded those Canadians who had died there with the flu. In Australia, the transcontinental train was quarantined and the state governments tried, with limited success, to close the borders between New South Wales and Victoria. Because the disease occurred before the close of the Great War, it is included here in the story of that war.

2. LeRoy Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane* (Detroit, MI: Priscilla Press, 2004), 147, 151, 185. Record memorial avenues with plaques that had "succumbed to Dutch Elm disease".

3. Anne Rasmussen, "The Spanish Flu," in *The Cambridge History of the First World War*, vol. 3: *Civil Society*, ed. Jay Winter (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 355.

However, combined with the acrimonious meetings trying to establish a permanent peace in 1919, the effect of the pandemic contributed to the delay of many commemorations until the 1920s. Also, as outlined in appropriate places throughout this thesis, service personnel were counted as victims of war when the flu took their lives, and they were honoured as war dead in memorials including the avenues of honour. Of the 3000 victims reported in Victoria in the first fortnight of 1919, like Les Ray from Warrion, some were honoured in local avenues of honour. Ray had arrived back in Victoria after the war was over and peace had returned to the ravaged psyche of Australians. However, he died in Melbourne from the Spanish flu before he could return home to Warrion.

The devastation caused by the Spanish flu pandemic affected many communities that had been previously physically remote from the war, and it eventually claimed 13,000 lives in Australia.⁴ This pandemic also resulted in the transcontinental train being held in quarantine and the border closed between north-eastern Victoria and NSW, another way in which “disorganisation also affected the economic and social fabric”.⁵

Victoria was declared an infected state at the end of January 1919. The border with New South Wales was closed, schools were shut down, public meetings and gatherings were restricted and quarantine regulations were introduced.⁶ The influenza epidemic was over by the end of 1919 and the war memorial survey undertaken in 1920 and cited by Haddow apparently completely overlooked or disregarded hundreds of avenues of honour, and this led to the record being skewed for another century. The 1920 There were other priorities in everyday community lives, and with the war behind it, one must question whether or not the reporting agency had its own agenda for memorialisation.

7.4 The Roaring Twenties

In the eight years between the Treaty of Versailles and the Wall Street Crash, Australians flocked to the new American picture palaces such as Melbourne’s Capitol Theatre. With crystal sets, gramophones and new dance crazes, Australians had some distractions from the short period of war-hero weariness that had set in until they became caught up in the Roaring

4. Rasmussen, “The Spanish Flu,” 351.

5. John McQuilton, *Rural Australia and the Great War: From Tarrawingee to Tangambalanga* (Melbourne, Vic: Melbourne University Press, 2001), 195.

6. Ibid, 195.

Twenties. By the mid-1920s, life for some had become a strain when “the thrill of having the hero back began to wear off”.⁷

In the USA, projects like the 100,000 trees that were to be planted as a memorial along Liberty Highway never eventuated: “The country was absorbed in enjoying the Roaring Twenties, and public attention was diverted to things more pleasurable than remembering a tribute to the senseless death of thousands of soldiers”.⁸ Equally caught up to some extent in the new and novel music and dance crazes, a growing number of urban Australians had begun to focus their gaze on the future.

The slide into oblivion for most of Victoria’s avenues of honour commenced as soon as the soldiers returned home from the Great War. By that time Payton states that the RS&SIL in South Australia saw itself as the guardian of the memory of those who died in the service of the Empire and was:

mindful of its comrades’ sacrifice and the mourning omnipresent in the community, took the lead in local Commemoration – administering war trophies, erecting war memorials, organising Anzac Day events – and in so doing became a voice of authority in the locality.⁹

Similarly across Australia, the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia (RSSILA) exercised guardianship over war memorials by becoming the controlling agency of memorialisation, which resulted in the sidelining of the memorial work of the majority civil community of the war years. The social history of Australia between 1914 and 1919 has almost exclusively, been the history of the 330,000 who enlisted and their families to the exclusion of the achievements of the more than four million working and living at home. In reflecting on the ban on memorial structures Inglis again highlighted the political aims of the RSSILA, as “Leaders of an organisation whose first purpose was to make politicians recognize the rights of men returning to the country they had served.”¹⁰

History is constantly being revised to keep up with historical events and in the process is always being reinterpreted and even re-constructed: “Whenever new knowledge appears,

7. Tony Stephens and Annette O’Neill, *Larrikin Days: 100 Years of Growing Up in an Australian Suburb* (Sydney, NSW: Nicholson Street Public School Parent and Citizens Association, 1983), 53.

8. Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane*, 135.

9. Philip Payton, *Regional Australia and the Great War: “The Boys from Old Kio”* (Exeter, UK: University of Exeter Press, 2012), 220.

10. Inglis, *Sacred Places*, 122.

something old will have been rejected. Knowledge ... has practical and social bases".¹¹ Following this idea, in Australia, the effects of the war effectively eradicated the 1890s sense of nationalism and its ongoing enthusiasm witnessed at the time of Federation. The 1920s witnessed another era as people became more preoccupied with the milieu of the day and a move away from the earlier vocal patriotism and sense of nationalism.

7.5 The Great Depression

Between the catastrophe that was the influenza pandemic and the onset of the Great Depression, rural dwellers on unproductive, poorly allocated soldiers' settlement farms, and earlier closer settlement holdings, were forced to leave their farms and relocate elsewhere, often into towns and regional centres. This dispersion not only devastated rural communities but saw the closure of towns and the further loss of memory of those early war memorials planted in the form of avenues of honour.

When the Great Depression hit Australia, hundreds of men left families and wandered the country in search of basic sustenance. The concomitant breakup in families did not preserve this vector of memory or the former hero status bestowed on many of these men. Anzac Day came and went throughout the Depression era with the same sanctity that it had been endowed with in the earliest days; however, even this passionately born young tradition suffered. At one stage it was suggested that the major Melbourne Anzac commemoration be staged every three years.¹² Soldier settlers and their families in Victoria were hit particularly hard:

Victoria had incurred a liability of £20,000,000 for the 12,000 returned men who had been placed on the land. Primary industries were now faced with disaster, but a millstone could not lie left round the soldiers' necks, nor could it be transferred to the taxpayer.¹³

By the end of the Great Depression, Australia and the world was moving towards another world war, or perhaps, the final episode in the unsatisfactorily concluded war of 1914–1918. Communities, while still honouring their loved ones, were dealing with new challenges and the memorial trees were quietly watching over all as time moved on.

11. Mary Douglas, "Forgotten Knowledge," in *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge*, ed. Marilyn Strathern (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), 16.

12. "Returned Soldiers' League: Suggested Triennial Melbourne Celebration," *Shepparton Advertiser*, July 18, 1932.

13. "Soldiers' Congress Opens," *The Age*, November 4, 1932.

7.6 The Twilight of Memory

The changes and loss of Australia's memorial avenues is also applicable to the avenues of honour around the world:

The power of these memorials to arouse feelings and arguments drains away with the passage of time. All those memorials to the Great War, which so often seem lost in the clutter and movement of towns or scattered inconsequentially in parks, originally had a resonance which is not readily apparent to us now.¹⁴

Far from England, Normanville in South Australia is an example of this "draining away". Of the original 19 trees planted over a century ago, those that remain as a magnificent testament are now "lost in the clutter and movement of the town", little regarded and "not readily apparent" as to their true history and heritage value to the nation. This is the first example of the avenue of honour in Australia and the country's first privately funded and donated war memorial to the Great War.

In Lydiard Street, Ballarat North, the Ballarat Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Avenue of Honour, which was to have lasted "as long as Ballarat", had its plaques removed in the 1920s.¹⁵ Not far from Ballarat, at Mortchup, a double row of *Pinus insignis* (now *Pinus radiata*) was planted leading up to the school (see Figure 30). The names of those honoured in the avenue were entered on the school honour board, which has subsequently disappeared. Here, as elsewhere, following the planting it was intended that "when the trees have grown large enough to put a plate on each bearing the name of the soldier in whose honour the tree was planted".¹⁶

14. Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: The Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1998), 1.

15. The manuscript record of this avenue at the Ballarat City Library is prefaced with the words "[o]ther plates may be at Mr Dawson's".

16. "Honour Avenue," *Grenville Standard*, July 28, 1917.



Figure 30. Former Mortchup Avenue of Honour.

After the World War II, the Woodlawn Memorial Avenue at Saskatoon was extended and changed to include others from World War II, the Korean War and also family members of those who had died so that it became very much “[t]he Next of Kin Memorial Avenue”. With these inclusions, the trees and the avenue have come to include and embrace others who never served their country during the Great War, which was the reason that these roads of remembrance, memorial avenues and avenues of honour were originally created. Such a move, however, was not uncommon and certainly saved the avenue from the fate of oblivion like many others across the world. Many other avenues were similarly extended to become more inclusive.

In Australia, other avenues, such as in the Kiewa Valley and at Rupanyup, were lost to memory by the end of World War II. There is a scale from sanctification through obliteration to rectification which is apparent when examining any sample of the avenues. Foote explores this phenomenon and coins it the “invention of tradition and the land-shape of memory”.¹⁷ This “land-shape of memory” is very fragile as Foote notes:

A site’s treatment and interpretation may change through time, sometimes radically. Sanctified sites may be deconsecrated, defaced or effaced. Obliterated sites may be brought back to life. ... People look back on the past and reinterpret events and ideas.

17. Kenneth E. Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America’s Landscapes of Violence and Tragedy*, (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2003), 27.

... Often this debate focuses on place ... and whether it deserves to be remembered or forgotten.¹⁸

Such a land-shape of memory was demonstrated by the objection posted in Ballarat's *The Courier* as to the poor state of the Ballarat East Avenue of Honour in 1948.¹⁹ Although the condition of the avenue was important to the writer, Council saw it otherwise and the problem was solved by the eventual removal of the signage and with it the reminder of what had been. A little over a decade later, the avenue trees were being swept aside for a new highway access road.

After World War II, Australia witnessed a great influx of refugees and migrants from Europe with little understanding of the significance of these trees to the generations of Anglo-Australians who planted and nurtured them as monuments to their heroes. In their homelands the newcomers had valued the produce of the trees and the gathering of the nuts as an occasion for family outings to harvest it. In April and May of 1952, *The Age* newspaper carried two reports on the chestnuts at Anzac Avenue in Sassafras. Planted in 1916, this was one of Victoria's earliest avenues of honour, and also one of the state's earliest to be named "Anzac Avenue".

The first report praised the beauty of the chestnut trees and the abundance of fruit they produced. The second report went on to detail the depredations and damage caused to the trees by day-trippers: "This week several thousands [*sic*] visited the area. They flocked to Sassafras and collected all the nuts on the ground. Many climbed on branches stripping the trees and broke many limbs".²⁰ The report goes on to highlight the upset caused by this action to the locals whose memorial this was, but the damage had been done.

With increased visitor numbers to the area and changing demographics, few families of the early 1900s remained and the avenue gradually became the Mount Dandenong tourist road. This was the beginning of the end of the old Anzac Avenue at Sassafras, where only the monument with the names listed against the tree plantings remain to remind people of its earlier significance. With increased visitor numbers and traffic, the road had to be widened to accommodate these factors and the chestnuts continued to be stripped until they were no longer able to withstand the depredations. The meaning of the roadside plantations, the memorial aspects, were subsumed in the drive for other tourist attractions in the hills such as

18. Ibid, 27–28.

19. "That Unkempt Honour Avenue," *The Courier* (Ballarat), 16 April 1948.

20. "Thoughtless," *The Age*, May 20, 1952.

estate gardens, eucalyptus forests, fern gullies, nurseries and dining venues. Even a later replacement avenue of flowering cherries was lost.

The decline in regard towards Australia's Anzac Day in the late 1950s saw a corresponding decline in attendance at ANZAC Day commemorations. The regard held for all memorials, including avenues, was also affected by "the essential hollowness of the Anzac Day maunderings".²¹ Alan Seymour's play, *The One Day of The Year*, highlights the abyss into which the ANZAC legend had fallen throughout the nation. Instead of a day of pride and remembrance bound with mateship as held by an older generation, one of whom was Alf, it was interpreted by his son, Hughie, as a day wasted by stupid, drunken no-hopers in "a great big meaningless booze-up".²²

Two of Victoria's avenues of honour to the Great War were dedicated to orphanage children that had served – those from the Geelong Protestant Orphanage and those from the Ballarat Orphanage. The Ballarat Orphanage Avenue of Honour, known as Kenny Avenue, situated on the Mt Xavier Reserve (Fussell Street, Ballarat East) had disappeared physically, emotionally and totally from the local community memory by 2004.²³ However, with attention on the institutions of the era, this lost avenue has now been replaced with a new avenue (adjacent to Mt Xavier Reserve), which was dedicated in 2015. The research surrounding the event revealed that "[a]long the celebrated Ballarat Avenue of Honour ... only one in every three of the Orphanage soldiers had a tree planted in their name".²⁴

Another contributing factor in the loss of memory of these memorial avenues are the changes in local government that have occurred in the interval. If the newly created municipal government does not preserve its predecessor's records, the memory is lost. In Australia, this can be seen at Ballarat, Mildura, Adelaide and elsewhere where avenues have been forgotten and their stories lost.

21. Alan Seymour, *The One Day of the Year* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1962). 3.

22. *Ibid*, 78.

23. Michael Taffe, "Victoria's Avenues of Honour to the Great War Lost to the Landscape" (Honours thesis, University of Melbourne, 2006), 24.

24. Lynne Sheedy, *Arthur Kenny Avenue of Honour Re-creation* (Ballarat, Vic: Children and Family Services, 2015), 4.

The 1917 avenue planted at the high school in Victoria, British Columbia, two years after the Battle of Ypres was for those who had died in the conflict and was dedicated in the belief that the trees would:

uplift the future generations by the memory of their sacrifice These trees now being planted would grow up a living memorial to the gallant young men who had passed through the high school and gone on to death in championing so great a cause.²⁵

Not an avenue of honour in the sense of carrying individual plaques, the trees represented 53 students and three teachers from the school who had died in the Great War. They were replaced with another set of maples in 2011 after “the thirteen surviving maple trees were felled and disposed of”.²⁶ In all the countries focused on in this study, it was the returned service organisations that set the agenda for commemorative memorials and events. Earlier in the Australian story, civic organisations and councils were often the drivers of these memorial avenues so that the “public retained the right to ensure its preservation that overrode the owner’s right to alter or destroy it”.²⁷

Prior to World War II, railway stations and state schools dotted the Victorian rural countryside. With the increase in car ownership and transport developments the stations were reduced and schools increasingly closed down. By 1942, former settlements, such as Mulcra, Cowangie North and Paignie, were simply described in directories as “agricultural districts”; they no longer existed as townships or school communities. At places like Eldorado and Tangambalanga, the connection with the Great War generation had been lost through events such as flooding and re-routing roads, the demographic changes brought about by the construction of major engineering projects such as the Kiewa Valley hydro-electric scheme, social drift and demographic change over the generations.

The forces that brought about these changes to the social and environmental landscape also brought about political changes and a more powerful federal government with a growing emphasis on central power, and big business. Following on from this skewing of relationships, family members and extended family members who, having left for overseas

25. Barry M. Gough, *From Classroom to Battlefield: Victoria High School and the First World* (Victoria, BC: Heritage House Publishing Co, 2014), 110.

26. *Ibid*, 110.

27. Graeme Davison, *The Use and Abuse of Australian History* (Sydney, NSW: Allen & Unwin, 2000), 121.

service earlier, never came back to their rural homes but settled in the cities for better work opportunities.

By the 1930s at Ballarat, the organising Committee of Control of the Avenues of Honour had looked to other organisations to take over the burden of maintenance. However, the need to control was very much in evidence and no other organisation was permitted to have representation on the committee. The Ballarat Horticultural Society had already been approached, but in view of this inability to be represented on the committee, it declined to assist further.²⁸

Australia was not alone in this post-war reversal; the influenza pandemic had affected lives on every continent. Similarly in Canada, where the grand scheme of planting a memorial avenue from Victoria, stretching almost six kilometres through to Mt Douglas in Saanich, saw each end completed but a lapse of several kilometres in the middle section: “By this time public attention was focusing more on the memorial cenotaph planned for the grounds of the legislative buildings and interest in the avenue decreased”.²⁹

In Ontario, the towns of Fort Arthur and Port William were amalgamated to become what is today the city of Thunder Bay. As a result, the memorial avenue there succumbed to the new politics and the post-war development of the 1960s.³⁰ In the light of the centenary, the Canadian role in the Great War and more specifically of Vimy Ridge and its place in the story of Canadian nationhood, such memorial avenues as remain are again being re-examined and re-assessed. As is happening elsewhere, a small committee is currently working on this vision of linking and thereby completing the Shelbourne Street Memorial Avenue in Victoria, British Columbia, as originally envisioned.³¹

One great change that affected roadside memorials throughout the world between the wars was the proliferation of motor vehicle traffic and the development of highways to meet this new transport demand. By 1937 at St Peters in South Australia, there were protests at trees

28. Minutes of Meeting, August 3, 1932, Ballarat Horticultural Society, Sovereign Hill Museums Association, Gold Museum File Ref: 90.0712.

29. U. Jupp, “Second Dream Fell Short,” *Daily Colonist* (Victoria, BC), November 2, 1968.

30. Dane Lanken, “Memory Lanes,” *Canadian Geographic* 116, no. 6 (1997): 52.

31. iHeartRADIO, accessed November 24, 2017, <http://www.iheartradio.ca>. Podcast audio of the Memorial Avenue Committee’s aim to restore the avenue.

being removed that had been planted “in 1915 as a memorial to soldiers”.³² In response, the mayor advised that “[t]he decision to remove the trees had been made because some of them were irregular and deteriorating ... The trees are being removed under the £3,100 scheme for reconstructing the road”.³³

The establishment of Sun Avenue in Sunshine, Victoria, came to a sad demise by the World War II. None of the trees had survived and Sun Avenue is today bereft of its memorial trees. By 1926, controversy surrounding them brought about public meetings to have them removed.³⁴ Frustration by shoppers or business houses continued and in 1930 “[d]uring Saturday night, at Sunshine, three trees in the Avenue of Honour, planted in memory of men killed in the Great War, were cut down ... they had been cut close to the ground with a saw”.³⁵

Most of the trees were removed in 1934 and the avenue replanted into Anderson Street, whereby “[s]hopkeepers and motorists [have] expressed satisfaction at the action of the council”.³⁶ The Sunshine story continued until the last trees were removed in 1939. The flow of articles and letters in the local newspaper provides a record of the gradual shift in sentiment and changing traffic and demography in a way seldom observed elsewhere.

A decade after the World War II, with the huge influx of migrants, the introduction of television, expansion in vehicle numbers and road development, there was a gradual loss of focus on what Australians had held dear a generation earlier. In prefixing his controversial *One Day of the Year* play in 1958, Alan Seymour reminds the reader that the play is set “in the social, theatrical and even geographical context of its time”.³⁷

The avenues were by this time standing silent, unnoticed and often forgotten by a post-World War II generation. There were also many newly arrived refugees from another social milieu; all were part of this social and geographical context. While many of the plantings are metaphors for the resurrection of life as expressed in Christian beliefs, such references have faded since World War II. However, since then references at dedication ceremonies like that

32. *The News* (Adelaide), July 30, 1937.

33. *Ibid.*

34. “Trees to Remain,” *Sunshine Advocate*, September 25, 1926.

35. “Avenue of Honour: Sunshine Trees Damaged,” *The Argus*, September 1, 1930.

36. “Dangerous Trees Removed,” *Sunshine Advocate*, September 14, 1934.

37. Alan Seymour, *The One Day of the Year* (Sydney, NSW: Angus & Robertson, 1962). 4.

at Grafton in 1949, expressed that the avenues are living symbols: “A memorial of living trees, something that you can cultivate and look after”.³⁸

By then the rush to become modern had begun and time was precious, often dictating strict management principles. Such symbols as gothic arches and ethereal values as birds singing in trees gave way to more pragmatic issues. As with statues which have no life-denoting elements, the remnant stumps are carved into other representations.³⁹ (See Figure 31).



Figure 31. Dead avenue tree sculptured into light horseman, Corindhap Avenue of Honour.

7.7 Official Sanction – Official Neglect

In all the focus on commemoration, such sentiments as those of McCrae, so poignantly expressed at the beginning of this chapter, ensured that only officially approved built memorials would suitably remember those who sacrificed all. This factor also contributed in some way to the official dismissal of avenues as an acceptable form of memorial. “A

38. “Grafton Memorial Avenue Dedicated,” *Daily Examiner* (Grafton), June 14, 1949. Quoting Sir Earle Paige at the dedication of the Grafton Avenue of Honour.

39. Examples exist at Corryong, Lakes Entrance and Corindhap in Victoria and Ledgerwood in Tasmania.

government survey conducted in 1919 and 1920 of war memorials around Australia found 123 avenues had been planted around the country, with 92 of those to be found in Victoria.⁴⁰

The spate of commemorative events relating to the Great War that have been taking place across Australia since 2014 has placed a spotlight on many avenues of honour. Those such as Ballarat's Avenue of Honour have been the subject of major commemorations and expenditures. The same may be said of some lesser avenues but the reverse is also true. Because of a century of negligence by authorities and often ignorance by emigrant communities, some of these significant sites of memory have fallen by the wayside.

What had become fractured avenues were simply not part of the memory of the newly revived towns and newly created municipal regions. Similar changes occurred in North America, where municipal amalgamations have occurred such as previously mentioned at Thunder Bay.

7.8 The New Millennium

As early as 2003 due to the initiative of local historian John Waghorn, the long lost 1920s avenue at Thomastown was "re-established ... and restored, thanks to a joint project involving Whittlesea Council, Epping RSL and Thomastown Primary".⁴¹

With the focus on the centenary of the Great War, rededication ceremonies in 2014–15 were held from Ballarat to Trentham and in the Mallee settlements of Tutye, Cowangie, Boinka and Danyo in Victoria with the plantings of entirely new avenues in other places. Again, such events bring to light missing places and memorials such as Mulcra and Paiguie where, in 1918, an avenue of honour, in fact a memorial row of sugar gums, was planted "one each for the heroes who enlisted from Paiguie for the Great War".⁴²

At a rededication ceremony in 2015, several hundred people standing beside the avenue of century-old trees at Cowangie remembered:

These avenues are monuments to the people in the Mallee who looked to create a living link with those who were no longer with them, some to return, some never to

40. Sarah Cockerell, *Avenues of Honour: Location, Assessment and Management of War Memorial Tree Avenues in Australia*. Accessed August 12, 2014. <https://www.treenet.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/2008-Avenues-Of-Honour-Location-Assessment-And-Management-Of-War-Memorial-Tree-Avenues-In-Australia-Sarah-Cockerell.pdf>.

41. "Leafy Memorial Rises Anew," *Whittlesea Leader*, November 18, 2003.

42. "Paiguie Points," *Ouyen Mail*, June 19, 1918.

return. ... That living symbol, that link, thanks to the people here today, almost 100 years later, remains.⁴³

Very few Victorians today would know of Cowangie, Danyo, Tuttye or Boinka, but except for Cowangie, which hangs onto life, their existence is now marked only by their memorial trees and plaques. Here are avenues of honour planted to memorialise their volunteers of the Great War before that war had ended. With the shift away from these areas, which is still occurring, the earlier history is being lost because it does not connect so strongly to community memory in the twenty-first century, if, indeed, a living community presence remains.

Socially and geographically, the history of the Mallee and the Murray River irrigation settlements prior to the 1960s was vastly different. With modern roads and transport, the distance today is measured in time not kilometres. There is also regular contact between the irrigation areas around Mildura and the Riverland with the rest of the Mallee. In the major centre of Ouyen, three avenues of honour were planted at the high school in 1918. Not satisfied with this, the community also planted a major avenue of honour in Gregory Street so that:

Monday next should be a big day at Ouyen. As will be seen by advt ... the business people have agreed to close their premises at 1 o'clock, so that all hands may engage in planting avenues of honour. This is the practical outcome of the work of the newly formed Progress Association, and more good work is to follow.⁴⁴

Ouyen, however, maintained its status but, with little reflection or recollection of the origins of the trees eventually removed its major avenue of honour enthusiastically once described as: “memorial gum trees [were] planted in Gregory Street in memory of Great War soldiers”.⁴⁵

In the case of Victoria's Mallee region, when railway development was progressing, as well as the rural workers, there were teams of gangers working and living in these areas. The new settlers post-World War II to the northern Victorian regions around Sunraysia and the Murray River have been of Italian and Vietnamese background and have brought their own vibrant cultural contributions. The re-designation of municipal boundaries has ensured the demise of

43. Michael Taffe, “Mallee Avenues of Honour 1917 – 1918,” (Author's Notes). Speech given at rededication ceremony at Danyo, 2015.

44. *Ouyen Mail*, July 31, 1918.

45. Merle Pole, *Who Were They? The Naming of Ouyen's Streets and Parks* (Ouyen, Vic: The Sunnyland Press, 2006), 41.

earlier memories and today's local government authority, the City of Mildura, has no corporate memory of its own to fall back on, although it is working to rectify this. Cooperation for the 2015 rededications in the former Walpeup Shire between Mildura, Ouyen and Murrayville along the Mallee Highway testify to the dedication of council staff.

Two of Ouyen's plantations were just that and were renamed, but by 21 August 1918 it was reported that "[o]ne of the avenues in Gregory street is fully planted".⁴⁶ These avenues have previously gone unrecorded by either official efforts in the 1920s or historians dealing with Australian memorials or war events.

Navigators, 10 kilometres east of Ballarat, is a community proud to have demonstrated its loyalty by having all of its eligible sons enlist by 1916.⁴⁷ For the first time, a memorial in the form of an avenue of honour with a memorial booklet listing all the local volunteers was planted and dedicated in 2015. This form of memorial reinforced the strong tradition of avenues across the Ballarat region, the nearest and arguably the earliest being only 10 kilometres away at Lal Lal.

The difference in the two communities rests on the loss of local connections, governmental and personal on the one hand, and the maintenance of those connections on the other. The Mallee had many small communities in 1915 and many avenues planted, while at Navigators there was never an avenue, but the community of today has strong personal and local government connections still with that of 1915 and very little influx of other cultures in the interim.

All the attrition was not in remote areas and the mining regions lost communities due to the number who left for the war and never returned. This, coupled with downturns in mining, left communities such as Rokewood Junction and Barry's Reef with drastically reduced populations. Today, the avenue of honour at Barry's Reef, which originally boasted 39 trees has no town, and the remaining 12 trees slumber peacefully in a bushland setting.

The avenues of honour envelop different aspects of Australian's attitudes during the war so that there are contradictions, changes to meanings and simple misinformation from the outset. In 1917, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour was used by a powerful corporate body that apart

46. *Ouyen Mail*, August 21, 1918.

47. *Navigators Community Avenue of Honour for Those Who Served WWI*, Souvenir Booklet, 2015.

from the laudable and public purpose of honouring those who had served was determined to mark its own territory by making the memorial significant above all others.

As with Australia's avenues to the Great War, so, too, with those overseas; the removal of the old trees in the avenue at the University of Manitoba brought about much soul searching. In 1966, *The Manitoban* argued: "In faith and gratitude this avenue of elms is dedicated to the men of Manitoba Agriculture College ... [c]onvenience and progress have replaced faith and gratitude".⁴⁸ This brought about a storm of protest that resulted in the avenue being replanted and several of the original trees removed and replanted in the quadrangle in front of the main administration building.

7.9 The Future

Prior to the Navigators experience in 2015, another avenue was planted in North Queensland at Yungaburra in 2013. This commemoration particularly highlighted the re-enlightened emphasis on the environment and carries the earlier traditions of these memorial avenues into the twenty-first century and Australia's involvement and losses in the Afghanistan conflict. While it commemorates local soldier Ben Chuck, it is holistic in its approach and is a memorial inclusive of all Australians killed in Afghanistan:

The avenue follows the path of fallen commando Ben Chuck's Gun Carriage, July 1, 2010, and symbolises the "final journey home" of the Fallen. A plaque representing each fallen soldier is placed on an "Honour Board" in close proximity to the Memorial. The landscape surrounds give visitors the opportunity to pause and reflect and a place to pay their respects. The emphasis of the Avenue is directed to the living, natural, free, open aspects of the trees.⁴⁹

With commemorations surrounding the centenary of the Great War taking place between 2014 and 2018, and the focus on the memory and meaning of those events of a century ago, there has been a re-examination and a re-evaluation of these memorial avenues. In the UK at Yorkshire, this has resulted in replacement plaques being affixed to the trees in the avenue at East Keswick so that they have received the imprimatur to go forth into the new millennium with their message and a revived civic memory.

Those at Scholes and Horsforth have not yet regained their status with the replacement of plaques, but the placing of crosses with poppies on the trees in the Horsforth Avenue indicate

48. "Elms Cut for Progress," *The Manitoban* 53, no 10 (1966): 1.

49. The Afghanistan Avenue of Honour, accessed July 3, 2015, <http://www.yungaburra.com/the-afghanistan-avenue-of-honour>.

that recent years have seen a re-emergence and need to seek out those vague memories and pay tribute to those who left home to defend the Empire.

Not only avenues of honour, but plantings such as the National Memorial Arboretum in Britain illustrate the shift back to the dedication of spaces dominated or embraced by nature and the environment. The arboretum was dedicated at Alrewas, near Lichfield, Staffordshire, in 2001 and in 2017 boasts having 330,000 trees. The spirit and memory embodied through nature cannot be expressed adequately, or in statuary and built monuments alone, but the combination must be accepted in the twenty-first century as it is a very different world in which the events of 1914–18 are commemorated.

All of this is despite the fact that post-World War I Britain was also a nation where the Australian people still identified with the British Empire, social class and divisions and the perception that such memorials and monuments should be of the imperial type the country was familiar with, remembering always: “A memorial should be one which the public could not fail to associate with the Great War and its object, from this point of view, should be unmistakable”.⁵⁰

This is further demonstrated in the vast number of discussions reported in newspapers of the deliberations of memorial committees across the nation. Many of the fundraising bodies across Britain raised up to and beyond £10,000 for their memorials, far more than the avenues cost.

At Barnsley in West Yorkshire, its aim for £10,000 had to be modified as only £5000 could be raised.⁵¹ Such situations occurred across the country as cities and villages still had a Victorian vision of monumentality. By 1923, Sheffield still had not been able to raise over £2500, less than half what was needed.⁵² Many towns and villages established modest memorials in the form of stained-glass church windows and lychgates, while some, as mentioned, planted trees and avenues. However, memorial avenues of the type that fit the description of an avenue of honour were indeed novel.

50. *Hackney Gazette*, May 23, 1919, cited in David Lambert, *Introduction to Heritage Assets: War Memorial Parks and Gardens* (Swindon, UK: Historic England, 2014). <https://content.historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/iha-war-memorial-parks-gardens/heag076-war-memorial-parks-gardens-iha.pdf>

51. “Barnsley’s War Memorial to Cost £5,000,” *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, June 17, 1922.

52. “The War Memorial,” *Sheffield Independent*, May 9, 1923.

At the beginning of this thesis, I discussed Inglis's apparent dismissive attitude towards the avenues of honour in terms of their significance as war memorials. As he noted, the term "war memorial" evolved post-World War I and in that context most of these wartime memorials were rarely seen as war memorials when created. This has been a problem in relation to the official attitude in Australia ever since. In Britain, however, with the centenary of the Great War, all such plantings that the Imperial War Museum has been able to locate and identify have now been listed as war memorials. As war memorials these avenues, where known, have the same statutory protection as built memorials.

In his introduction to Historic England's, *Heritage Assets: War Memorials Parks and Gardens*, David Lambert draws arboreal memorial projects together: "The typology should also include memorial avenues and bigger planting schemes such as the Whipsnade Tree Cathedral (Bedfordshire) and the National Arboretum at Alrewas (Staffordshire)".⁵³ In Britain, the Imperial War Museum (IWM) does list many arboreal memorials without defining them specifically as avenues, groves or other such as that at Downham, Essex. The IWM listing describes them as:

tree, avenue or grove. Planted at Downham in 1922, these oak trees were labelled as tree cenotaphs and noted as being "[a]n original idea ... [a] tablet inscribed with the name, regiment and place of death of the soldier, is attached to his commemoration oak by a piece of telephone cable used in the war."⁵⁴

Just as strong promotions and lobbying brought about knowledge of the Ballarat avenue story to a wider audience, a counterbalance became apparent elsewhere. Strong lobbying might be traced to the situation in Britain, where a representative of the Sculptors Association sat on the Roads of Remembrance Committee. It was not in the interests of sculptors to see the country planted with remembrance avenues after the Australian model. Apart from any cynicism in this regard, Britain, and its sculptors, still saw themselves in terms of Empire and the decision-making class still conceived of memorials in terms of imperial monuments.

Such a move in Australia, which saw the initial plantings of avenues of honour to those serving in the Great War, is long overdue. As the nation that introduced what was to become an international form of war memorial, such a status is internationally significant and recognition is incumbent upon the heritage and service bodies throughout the nation. Sacred groves are guarded appropriately in the United States. That the highly mobile consumer

53. David Lambert, *Introduction to Heritage Assets: War Memorial Parks and Gardens* (Swindon, UK: Historic England, 2015), accessed November 12, 2015, <https://www.historicengland.org.au>.

54. "Tree Cenotaphs," *Chelmsford Chronicle*, October 27, 1922.

society there has swept away most traces of their memorial avenue plantings is no reason Australia should step back from a more honourable option, especially given its premier place in the history of these avenues.

Previous studies have tended to discount incomplete avenues. This strict demarcation has created the official attitude that they should not be considered of heritage value today. Such an attitude led to the Ballarat City Council parks and gardens officers removing this researcher's family memorial tree from an avenue 45 per cent intact with its original plantings. No other avenue in the city honoured the family member to which this tree commemorated. The same disregard can be claimed of others commemorated in this and other avenues in Ballarat but not in the Lucas-sponsored avenue on the Burrumbeet road.

As each tree is a memorial of itself, such actions disregard the personal memorialisation involved and the fact that in many cases trees were paid for by family members. With the re-awakening of awareness for the avenues across the Mallee following research in 2006 and listed in this current research, plaques have been set in place by the avenues. Such actions bring the story of the avenues to the front of the community's mind and also to the mind of distant authorities carrying this community story forward to another generation.

The new millennium has brought other challenges, and the transfer of rail goods onto the highway system has led to significant investment and development of highway infrastructure as has happened overseas. A marked victim of these devolutions in transport was the long Ripon Shire Avenue of Honour in Victoria comprising two sections that started at Trawalla and ended 11 kilometres near Beaufort. The newly created highway has cut through the avenue of honour without any signage to indicate that it was formerly a memorial and what the remaining trees still signify (see Figure 32).



Figure 32. Section of former Ripon Shire Avenue of Honour, Trawalla, 2006.

Many of Victoria's avenues were returned from community management to the RSL in a gesture towards those who had earned the honour. In the case of Bass in Gippsland, Victoria, this took the form of an official handover from the local avenue of honour committee, who "[t]ransferred to the returned soldiers of the Bass district the avenue of honour planted on the main Melbourne road, each tree of which commemorates a soldier of the district who fought overseas".⁵⁵

For Australia, however, the avenues of honour planted nationally throughout the Great War remain a unique memorial and wartime heritage in a nation a world away from the battlefronts. This was a nation that sent a volunteer army to that war while at the same time marking its "volunteer heroes" with living memorials across the nation during the conflict. These avenues are Australia's in-country war heritage sites. As such, they are, collectively and individually, Australia's only living in-country sites of war heritage surviving from the period of the conflict.

With the proliferation of built memorials commissioned by official bodies – those given authority under legislative processes – the avenues of honour have been sidelined and have passed into a state of non-existence. This was nowhere better demonstrated than in the official responses to Janine Haddow's questionnaires in the 1970s and more recently to Sarah Cockerell's questionnaire.

Then there is the very significant Australian Great War I memorial avenue at Normanville, South Australia. Normanville's Avenue of Honour with almost half its trees remaining in 2017 is home to a community apparently ignorant of its existence or that it represented the first move to create a new form of memorial to the war, not only for Australia but also for the world. Here, as elsewhere, the town has been stripped of its earlier traditional local government and official corporate memory.

These inactions, or acts of official neglect, are the corollary of the strong unqualified nationalism that arose out of the Great War and the influential attitudes of figures such as Hughes, Bean, Monash and the leaders of the returned servicemen and the burgeoning RSL that was busy consolidating and serving its members in obtaining their rights in the extremely hard times following the war.

55. "Provincial Cities and Towns," *The Age*, August 31, 1926.

Fewer monuments exist that demonstrate the graphic change in attitudes to this new nationalism and empirical stance more so than Ballarat's Arch of Victory emblazoned with the word "victory". The events surrounding avenue plantings that drew together small rural communities during the war are far removed from centenary events of the war sponsored by political military-focused nationalism.⁵⁶

While looking far from Australia to Canada, the avenue plantings at Calgary suffered the depredations of time and the everyday struggles of the populace as had those in Australia. During debates over the future of the avenue in 1970, former city police chief Malcolm Boyd reported:

At first only the trees on the north side of the drive were memorials, but at the instigation of Bob Parkyn, a Labor alderman, memorial trees were planted on the south side also ... The name plates have been removed by vandals and kids.⁵⁷

This reflects similar events in Australia such as the axing of trees at Sunshine and the damage to trees in Sassafras noted in section 7.5 of this chapter.

7.10 Renewal and Rebirth

With changes in Western culture and the perceived loss of the old spiritual values, heritage is becoming a cultural reinterpretation of those values and of the links to those values. Much of this re-evaluation relies on the dependence of government and commerce on the tourism dollar such that heritage is now a major industry force. This, however, may be a prejudicial judgement as civic interest and community identity still come into play in the tourism push as in Calgary in Alberta, Canada.

Here the city took the initiative in regenerating the memorial drive in that city. The municipal government involved the original stakeholder groups and other interest groups. Calgary commenced replanting and restoring the original surviving trees of this avenue in 2005 by tissue-culturing the survivors of the 1920s plantings: "Calgary soldiers killed

56. Shanti Sumartojo, *Commemorative Atmospheres: Memorial Sites, Collective Events and the Experience of National Identity*, accessed November 23, 2017, <http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com> "The Anzac narrative places war memory at the heart of a mainstream way of thinking about Australian identity". While nationalism was certainly present in 1917 it was on a far more personal and small community scale than blockbuster military weighted presentations 2014–2017.

57. "Calgarians Recall Memorial Trees," *Calgary Herald*, October 26, 1970.

during the First World War were remembered on Thursday as the city planted clones of the poplars originally planted in their memory in the 1920s along Memorial Drive”.⁵⁸

Outlooks and perceptions have changed over time: “Popular culture has changed; today, it is less intimately bound up with local customs”.⁵⁹ The suggestion to clear away the remaining trees on Memorial Drive in Calgary testified to how local customs still have an important residual impact and “[w]hen the trees were removed, the community reacted with grief”.⁶⁰

At Ballarat in Australia even before its completion, the Avenue of Honour was used as a tourist attraction and an essential inclusion on the itinerary of visitors to the city. By the 1920s, brochures, postcards, porcelain and glass souvenirs promoted the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and its entrance arch. Today, the Avenue of Honour is sometimes overshadowed by a visit to the Arch and its more recent attendant memorials. Despite this, the avenue has retained its status and importance to community and identity. Because of this, visitors are still brought to experience its enormity as well as visits by those families who make regular pilgrimages to “their tree”.

Here, too, there are resonances with this practice of tree visiting a world away in Canada in 1970 where, when their avenue was threatened, Calgarians were reminiscing that “it was common to see people walking along the boulevard looking for trees commemorating soldiers they had known”.⁶¹ No more, would one expect to hear a politician, military officer or academic publicly compare a tree to a cathedral honouring God or reaching to heaven. To admire its length and its role in memorialising those who volunteered for the Great War is usually recast and understood in modern politically correct terms. As such, with its complementary modern memorials to flesh and blood, it is being recycled with an eye to another generation, another century, just as is its counterpart at Ballarat.

So in Australia today there are memorial avenues that have been planted in the twentieth century and the twenty-first century for those who served in the Boer War, the Great War, World War II, Vietnam and Afghanistan. This continuity speaks of ordinary people still

58. “Memorial Tree Clones Planted,” *Calgary Herald*, June 22, 2007.

59. Pierre Nora, *Realms of Memory, The Construction of the French Past* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1997), 2: 489.

60. “Memorial Tree Clones Planted,” *Calgary Herald*, June 22, 2007.

61. “Calgarians Recall Memorial Trees,” *Calgary Herald*, October 26, 1970.

wishing to honour their loved ones in a way that comes from the local community and has a deeper and more personal meaning than central politics or purely military interests. This recent avenue is also accompanied by a built memorial, which the 70 flame trees lead up to. Mr Gordon Chuck described the meaning he saw in the avenue in terms that would resonate with those planting out the avenues for the Great War:

Although dedicated to the fallen in Afghanistan, I guess it's a representation of the commitment and courage of the Australian digger over generations, ... It's here to remind people that the freedoms and liberties we seem to hold so dearly, and yet often tend to take for granted, come at a terrible price – we mustn't forget that. ... The Avenue of Honour over the years will constantly remind generations of that fact.⁶²

The meanings the Great War avenues carry have changed over time. Some, such as at Calgary's or Ballarat's monumental avenues of honour have reached the status of sanctification for reasons of local fervour and strong generational ties. This, in turn, has translated also into expressing a wider sense of nationalism, whereby the local community has a tangible link to their identity with others across the nation. In Canada, this has happened despite Calgary's Memorial Drive being relegated to a memory only 20 years ago, when it was generally believed "only in Saskatoon does the original vision still flourish".⁶³

By 2003, however, a new dawn was approaching and having removed the last of the original trees from its Memorial Drive because the trees only had a life span of 80 years, Calgary organised the cloning of 500 trees as replacements.⁶⁴ Calgary commenced the process of restoring its memorial avenue despite the grief expressed by citizens in the 1970s.

Today's Ballarat Avenue of Honour is an exemplary heritage site in Lowenthal's terms in that it is "credible only by continual invention and revision, often in defiance of known facts".⁶⁵ In relating "facts" passed on by succeeding generations, the surviving Lucas Girls retell fond memories, oblivious of the archival records demonstrating that their predecessors' corporate bosses tried to shrug off maintenance after the avenue had fulfilled its promotional purpose.

62. Australian Broadcasting Corporation, accessed March 23, 2015, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2013-06-22/avenue-of-honour-remembers-fallen-diggers/4773592>

63. Dane Lancken, "Memory Lanes," *Canadian Geographic* 116, no. 6 (1997): 52.

64. "Memorial Tree Clones Planted," *Calgary Herald*, June 22, 2007. Cuttings file, City of Calgary Archives. (no file reference number)

65. David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 143.

They were never to know that their own body and their employers had requested other organisations to “lift this burden” from them.⁶⁶

Also in Michigan, the *Chicago Tribune* was advancing the idea of planting trees along highways in memory of those who fought in the Great War. By 1926, the town of Sault St Marie adopted the idea and set about to plant a “road of remembrance” to its veterans, an avenue lined with trees that would stretch for 29 miles.⁶⁷ The project ended after only two years, terminating when the avenue had reached only two miles, which is where it still stands as a tribute not only to those who died but also to the higher ambitions of a community that had moved on.



Figure 33. Figures of forgetting. The first avenue of honour trees to WWI soldiers in Australia. Normanville, South Australia, planted 1915. (Image © Digital Globe)

Some memorials stand “as figures of forgetting, their meaning and original purpose eroded by the passage of time”.⁶⁸ Ware uses similar concepts in her 1999 examination of the more

66. Minutes of Meeting, 3 August 1932, Ballarat Horticultural Society, Sovereign Hill Museums, Gold Museum Ballarat ref: 90.0712.

67. Barnett, *A Drive Down Memory Lane*, 189.

68. Nancy Wood, *Vectors of Memory: Legacies of Trauma in Postwar Europe*, (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1999), 280.

intimate roadside memorials, adding that avenues of honour and similar spatial memorials “influence the way in which the public engages with memorials”.⁶⁹

However, Lowenthal posits that “[u]nwilling or unable to incorporate the legacy of the past into our own creative acts, we concentrate instead on saving its remaining vestiges”.⁷⁰ This is evident throughout the world, whether in reclaiming Soldiers Walk in Hobart’s Domain or the restoration of the Calgary Remembrance Drive. However, the changes incorporated in the new work constitute a creative act of a new generation reinterpreting an old, historic site and taking ownership of it as heritage and projecting it into the future. Similarly at Calgary in Canada, when Memorial Avenue was rejuvenated and replanted in 2011 it contained no individual memorial plaques. Instead, a memorial park and a large modern entrance way announced that this was a memorial. The *Calgary Sun*, when interviewing locals, received such responses as “[i]t is so public compared to some of the other memorials in the city”.⁷¹

The twenty-first century was heralded with a new wave of conflict with a shadowy enemy labelled “terror”. After September 11, 2001, when the New York skyscrapers, the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre, were destroyed, people gave more licence to governments to wage this invisible war. At the same time, the centenary of the events of the Great War came more in focus and the sense of an ever-present war gave added motivation to the people in the street.

If, as Nora argued 20 years ago, traditional forms of national and civic commemoration were swallowed up by politics, people have increasingly taken the initiative in commemorative events since 2011. He also asserts that “[n]o event since World War II has been fully assumable to a unified national memory”.⁷² While contextualising his thesis in the French experience, the death of Britain’s Diana, Princess of Wales, produced a spontaneous response from a populace that demonstrated the power of people over politics in relation to national memory. Unlike commissioned and built memorials, these avenues are not simple linear constructs from design to fulfilment of a commission; they have developed from the level of

69. Sue-Anne Ware, “The Road-as-Shrine and Other Anti-Memorials in Australia,” in *Roadside Memorials A Multidisciplinary Approach*, ed. Jennifer Clark (Armidale, NSW: Emu Press, 2007), 70.

70. David Lowenthal, *The Past Is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 384.

71. *Calgary Sun*, March 6, 2010, accessed August 22, 2017, <http://www.calgarysun.com/news/memorial/2010/03/06>.

72. Nora, *Realms of Memory*, 2: 616.

the community. They are reflexive and have often grown to their present state slowly over many years and have involved multiple plantings and/or replacements.

This has brought about the contempt of developers and even the rigidity of bureaucracy in overseeing the destruction of some memorial avenues such as the Anzac avenue that was planted at the former East Bendigo State School.⁷³ This Anzac avenue was originally planted leading up to the school in 1916, the year the school was established.⁷⁴

In Canada, Caroline Duncan observed three main purposes for these memorials: “to remember the impact of war on those left behind; celebrate surviving veterans; and educate each new generation about conflict and peace”.⁷⁵ Today in Calgary, Canada, locals are proud and aware of the story and significance of Memorial Drive with its trees. Accompanying memorials and activities are growing up in relation to it, with initiatives taken by the city authorities and supported by its citizens. In Canada’s far west at Victoria in Vancouver Island, British Columbia, efforts were made to complete the avenue plantings in the 1950s and a rededication ceremony was held in 1961, but no further progress had been made and it was reported: “It now seems that the once admired Memorial Avenue must finally be obliterated in the name of progress”.⁷⁶

Once more moves are underway to complete the avenue. The Memorial Avenue Committee has been formed to restore and complete the original vision for the Memorial Avenue on Shelbourne Street for its centenary in 2021. The committee placed a Draft Action Plan before Council in June 2017.⁷⁷ Duncan, a member of this committee, is a strong believer that each new generation inherits the responsibility of this legacy passed on by those who went before as a solemn duty. She is actively involved with the Memorial Avenue Committee, a body working to reinstate and complete the memorial avenue commenced in 1921.

73. Gemma Star, “Campaign for an Avenue of Honour,” *Australian Garden History* 28, no. 4 (2017): 4–7.

74. “Arbour Day: Bendigo East School,” *Bendigo Independent*, June 17, 1916.

75. Caroline Duncan, *For Each Dear Life of Sacrifice: Post-War Commemoration*, Royal United Services Institute, accessed August 4, 2017, http://rusiviccda.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/For_Each_Dear_Life_of_Sacrifice.pdf.

76. *The Saanich Review*, January 20, 1971, cited in Caroline Duncan, *For Each Dear Life of Sacrifice: Post-War Commemoration*, accessed August 4, 2017, http://rusiviccda.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/For_Each_Dear_Life_of_Sacrifice.pdf, 9.

77. Saanich Heritage Foundation, *Draft Action Plan: Shelbourne, Street of Unfinished Dreams*, accessed December 14, 2017, <http://www.saanich.ca/assets/Local~Government/Documents/Committees~and~Boards/Saanich~Heritage~Foundation~Agendas~minutes/Agendas/2017/2017-09-12-shf-agenda..pdf>

In the 1960s, some of the avenue trees were removed and the road widened. Duncan claimed “The memorial of trees was never completed and the street name has remained as Shelbourne Street despite efforts over the decades to officially rename it Memorial Avenue”.⁷⁸ All of this points towards a future where there will be a renewed awareness for the living memorial that these avenues constitute.

In rural Australia, the process of discovery, rededication and often replanting of many Great War avenues of honour, has had a similar source. Small local communities have banded together to ensure the survival of an avenue and helped focus political attention on them. In 2008, in Victoria’s north-east where the Kiewa Valley Avenue of Honour had been lost to memory, one of the last of the trees was saved and a story board erected.⁷⁹ In Victoria’s Mallee region, apart from those already mentioned, plaques were installed at Murrayville, during centenary events to the Great War..

At Ballarat, the focal point of this study, the city’s longest avenue is being re-examined and looked upon with a renewed reverence. The Ballarat Orphanage Avenue of Honour, which represented so many who left the institution and went to fight, has been recognised. While only the path delineated by the original avenue remained, and none of the avenue trees was standing, it has been given due civic status and replanted in the same neighbourhood precinct:

The opening was held exactly 98 years after the governor-general of the time, Sir Ronald Munro Ferguson, planted the first tree. . . . The re-creation of the avenue was driven by Child and Family Services Ballarat in conjunction with the City of Ballarat, the Ballarat Historical Society, Conservation Volunteers Australia, the Ballarat RSL sub-branch and the Mount Xavier Golf Club.⁸⁰

These growing memorials, these avenues of memories, stand silent witnesses in towns and cities across the world. Unlike built memorials, statues, buildings, fountains and the like they are rarely the site of military parades or political and returned service functions. They remain “of the people” and are surrounded by the life of the community on a daily basis. People move through them and they continue to live and breathe; they have a symbiotic relationship with the descendants of those they represent, whether they be replacement trees or avenues, or the original witnesses to local events a century ago.

78. Duncan, *For Each Dear Life of Sacrifice*, 6.

79. “Australian Heroes: Sign to tell story again,” *The Border Mail* (Albury), November 12, 2008.

80. K. Irving, “Ballarat heroes plaque unveiled,” *The Courier*, (Ballarat), August 4, 2015.

Silent but living, a pair of survivors or an avenue, they are memorials and that alone will help them take their message into the future. They need caring for to keep living and in time to come, a person or community representative will be called to account for their demise or preservation. This accountability is assured with the vogue for genealogical research at the individual level. More than the monumental militaristic symbol of war, no matter how well intentioned, these avenues appeal at a grassroots level and will continue to do so. This has been demonstrated on the three continents featured in this study.

While not avenues of honour as such, other typological memorial tree plantings are still being undertaken as witnessed in the avenues and memorial plantings in Britain's National Arboretum that commenced in 2014. Such endeavours will take the concept of memorial avenues with individual plaques – individual memorials to those serving their countries – into the future. History is always being reinterpreted, contested and reconstructed and the history of memorialisation is no exception. When other monuments have been lost including these memorial avenues, the Great War may well cease to be great and the social milieu will have other monuments to emphasise.

In the 1950s, the proposal to create a road of remembrance to be called Remembrance Driveway from Sydney faltered. This latter-day avenue was officially opened in 1954 when the Queen and Prince Philip each planted a plane tree in Macquarie Place, Sydney. It was proposed that this memorial driveway would extend from Sydney to Canberra; however, as with so much relating to war causes, the project languished in the 1960s and one of the trees was ringbarked.

This was essentially a sign of the times and, again, was representative of the attitude of Australians to the Great War and Anzac Day as much as was the play *The One Day of the Year*. Moves to revive this memorial road arose in the 1990s, with a committee formed under the direction of the New South Wales Main Roads Department. In 2011, this became the Road Transport Authority within the Department of Roads and Maritime Services. In 2017, the Memorial Driveway Committee is still working to establish this drive with memorial wayside stops for Victoria Cross recipients and other persons of significance in Australia's legend of the Great War.

But the impact of trees is more than simply metaphorical or symbolic. Their presence has created a new landscape or habitat and their seasonal changes and scale create a new significance to those who live with them. It is in these relationships that the future of the avenues of honour depend. Often those people and the descendants of those for and by whom

they were planted are long gone from the locale. It is those living with the now significant historic and living giants that will determine the future of the avenues that “are the product of the relationships in which they are placed”.⁸¹

The Lucas promotions created a great avenue for tourism visits and ongoing prestige for the City of Ballarat. At the same time, it created a gap in the memorial story of the Great War and its effect and responses from small local communities within urban Ballarat. In the Lucas drive for credit and ownership of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour, it used its power on the Avenue of Honour Control Committee (after 1931, the Avenue of Honour Committee). Due largely to this powerful influence, other local avenues fell into neglect and ultimate oblivion. This loss of avenues and loss of memory of what were small community cells around the urban areas was exacerbated with municipal amalgamations firstly in the 1920s and later in the 1990s.

Today, however, at Ballarat, the Avenue of Honour Committee is working to ensure the legacy continues to be passed down in the story of the Ballarat Avenue of Honour. To this end, a ceremony commemorating the first plantings was held at the entrance to the avenue on 4 June 2017, exactly 100 years later.⁸² It is only by keeping such memories alive in the minds of each generation that the stories will live on and subsequently the avenues will live on. Similarly, an even more impressive ceremony was held at the nearby township of Buninyong, which is now being swallowed by the burgeoning conurbation of Ballarat.

The centenary of Buninyong’s major avenue of honour was celebrated with a community service, a march involving returned servicemen and servicewomen and other community groups, with a flyover by the Royal Australian Air Force.⁸³ A booklet was also produced, *Buninyong Remembers*, with the program for the centenary together with historical information relating to the war, local enlistment and major battles. The booklet also lists all those commemorated against their trees in the avenue.⁸⁴ As is occurring frequently elsewhere

81. Paul Cloke and Eric Pawson, “Memorial Trees and Treescape Memories”, *Environment and Planning Department: Society and Space* 26 no. 1 (2008): 109.

82. “Avenue Marks Centenary,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), June 3, 2017.

83. Brendan Wrigley, “Hundreds Gather to Mark 100 years of Buninyong Avenue of Honour,” *The Courier* (Ballarat), July 3, 2017.

84. Buninyong RSL, *Buninyong Remembers: World War I Memorial Avenue of Honour Centenary Project*, souvenir booklet 2017 (Buninyong, Vic: Buninyong RSL, 2017).

across Victoria, there is a very active avenue restoration group working in Buninyong to ensure the preservation of the avenue, its message and its legacy.



Figure 34. Navigators Avenue of Honour Anzac Day, 2015.

Just as the Navigators avenue planted in 2015 is a symbol of the continued desire to create living memorials (see Figure 34) so, too, the Yungaburra Avenue of Honour that opened in 2013 and the repeated efforts to plant an avenue as a memorial drive from Sydney to Canberra. These ongoing plantings demonstrate the changed attitude to this form of memorial to that of 60 years ago. With such efforts, the avenue of honour is assured a future, at least into another generation.

The actions of individuals and communities regarding the creation and destruction of avenues of honour and memorial avenues to the Great War that is evident in this thesis demonstrates that they are social constructions and as society changes such constructions may change. If there were no such thing as a war memorial before the twentieth century, so, too, there may be no such thing as a war memorial after the twenty-first century. Modern life is not the problem, as Mc Naughton concludes: “Trees are also signifiers in modern society, playing a crucial role

in social relations. ... The seasonality and longevity of trees become potent symbols of a nature under threat from modern, urban society”.⁸⁵

In 2017 a photographic exhibition of Australia’s avenues of honour was mounted in France at the Victoria School in Villers-Bretonneux. This featured the work of Australian photographer Sarah Wood, who has spent many years developing a portfolio of images of avenues of honour in her home state of Victoria (see Figure 35).

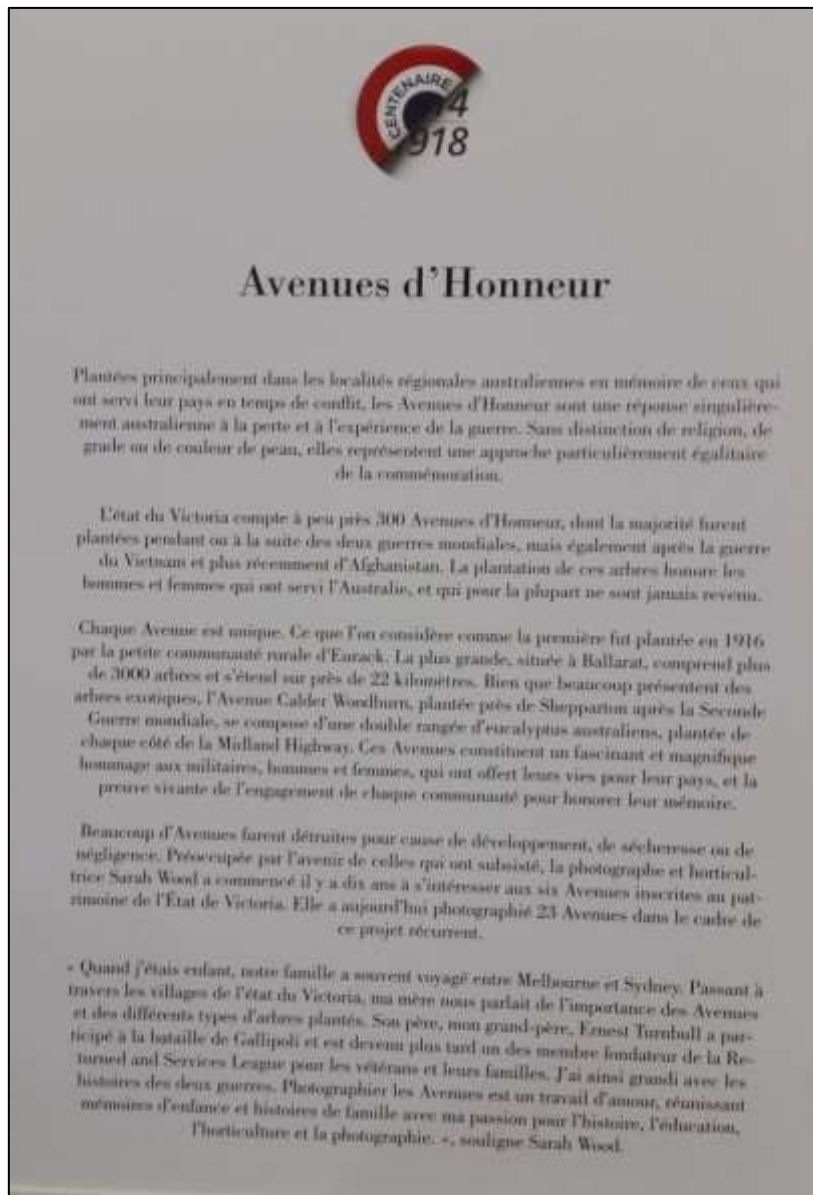


Figure 35. Introduction to photographic exhibition, Avenues of Honour at Villers-Bretonneux, 2017

85. P. McNaughton, "Trees," in *Patterned Ground: Entanglements of Nature and Culture*, eds. Stephan Harrison, Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift, (London, UK: Reaktion Books Ltd, 2004), 232.

Such exhibitions and the exposure of the significance of these memorials contribute to their ongoing story and preservation. In doing this they also promote ongoing concepts and projects for using trees in memorialisation into the future, not only of the avenues that represent past wartime memories. They carry that contextualisation to a new group, sharing with them their relationship to the story, thereby staving off the day when that relational context might disappear.

Beyond a generation, maybe two, it is impossible to accurately predict the future for these avenues of honour. However, given the interwoven relationship between humanity and trees, it is reasonable to expect the relationship to continue. Forms may change, sometimes suddenly, as has been seen with environmental issues such as Dutch Elm disease and global warming. There could be some further loss of avenues due to demographic and other change as in the past when coupled with these natural phenomena contributing to the fact that “knowledge is always being forgotten”.⁸⁶ However, in Strathern’s words, she is contextualising her argument in terms of “Euro-American” trans-Atlantic culture and not completely in a global context.

Taking examples of iconoclasm in Iraq, Iran and Afghanistan over recent decades, this global view has demonstrated how culture differentiates between people. Strathern’s Euro-American society must be understood in terms of local contexts. The social relations that create and nurture such forms as these memorial avenues may change in the global village: “What is likely to disappear nowadays is that relational contextualisation”.⁸⁷

Given all these circumstances, the remaining avenues of honour to the Great War will be maintained by those connected with them as has been demonstrated from time to time over the past century. Other avenues may be re-created as has been happening around the world with the growing awareness of their place in the story of the Great War. Most importantly, as demonstrated at Britain’s National Memorial Arboretum at Alweras and other related memorial plantings, there will continue to be similar arboreal projects planted that reflect the general typology as memorials and historical markers over time.

86. Mary Douglas, “Forgotten Knowledge,” in *Shifting Contexts: Transformations in Anthropological Knowledge*, ed. Marilyn Strathern (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), 16.

87. Marilyn Strathern, “The nice thing about culture is that everyone has it,” in *Shifting Contexts*, ed. Marilyn Strathern (London, UK: Routledge, 1995), 156.

7.11 Conclusion

Chapter Seven has investigated the general loss of interest and in many cases the loss of the avenues of honour that started almost with the signing of the armistice. It demonstrated how natural disasters, disease, ageing trees and later neglect, official scorn and population shift all impacted on the local memory of 1914–18. In Australia, post-World War II migration and the failing interest in the old Anzac practices brought about further disinterest in memorials. However, by the 1990s, with the re-birth of interest in Anzac following Australia's bi-centenary there was a growing awareness of the significance of these century-old trees as memorials and as heritage. It has argued that these memorials are significant historically and as heritage markers, and has asserted through examples such as Yungaburra in Australia and the National Memorial Arboretum in Britain that arboreal memorials will continue as a type for much the same reason they won appeal over a century ago; they are of the people.

Conclusion

*Everything that man esteems
Endures a moment or a day.*
(“Two Songs From a Play II” by W. B. Yeats)

This thesis has examined the argument that Australia’s avenues of honour were the premier memorials to the Great War from 1915 onwards. They were the first significant, living memorials in the world to commemorate those who served in that war. In undertaking this thesis, the themes of war memorialisation, community and heritage have been drawn upon.

Chapter One of this thesis supported the central argument in reviewing the literature and found that the majority of writings about memorialising the Great War neglected tree-plantings on the home front. It doing so it argued that despite some research into memorials and Australia’s avenues of honour, the historiography of arboreal memorials had been lacking in breadth and depth. This in turn created an inadequate understanding of the significance of this form of memorialisation in the Australian historical context.

The paucity of evidence of research and material about these memorials and their role in the community memory were so limited in the literature that a gulf existed in comprehending social changes beginning to emerge during the war. This core issue became evident in examining the central theme of understanding community often celebratory responses and memories to avenues of honour through the politics, culture and meanings that surrounded the reasons for the avenues being planted. In doing this, the thesis has demonstrated that in Australia the premier memorials to the Great War were its avenues of honour.

Chapter Two supported the key argument of this thesis by examining undercurrents within Australia that brought individuals and communities to plant living avenues of honour in distinct contrast to officially sanctioned built memorials deploying the generous resources of the panoply of the state. It also examined key factors in the symbolism of arboreal memorials that contributed to an international desire to create such memorial avenues. This chapter also interrogated the argument that the avenues continued, and throughout the war enhanced and the earlier Arbour Day programs.

In addition, Chapter Two explored the relationship between these plantings, the memorial avenues, and the role of state education departments and other organisations in popularising these plantings. The leadership of individuals in education as well as corporate managers underpinned the strong community involvement. This chapter also argued the case of

vernacular societies, drawing on the symbolism that contributed to this form of memorialisation and religious representation that had been inherent in the preferences given to living memorials instead of the cold, hard stone that both government and ex-service officials, tended to favour. In pursuing this argument, the chapter provided examples of the forces behind the seemingly coherent desire to commemorate the Great War as early as 1915.

In Chapter Three, the thesis examined political influences in Australia upon which the preferences for memorial avenues over other forms of memorial were contingent. It examined the establishment of the Commonwealth and the political exigencies placed on it by the outbreak of the Great War. It argued that after 14 years as a federation, people were seeing themselves as Australians rather than belonging to an earlier colony. This chapter not only examined the implications of the draconian *War Precautions Act 1914* that influenced the citizens and the news reporting of the era but also the influence it had on the interpretation of Australian history of the time for the following century.

Supporting the argument that this form of memorial was a first, this chapter examined the Australian character and the sense of optimism in the lead-up to the Great War. This chapter interpreted the influences that demographic changes and home front achievements had on Australians over and above the grief and anxiety brought about by the casualty lists and losses incurred in that war. It revealed a people, who despite their grief, were ready to celebrate achievements and the heroism of husbands, sons and daughters, friends and associates. In analysing these elements, this chapter also examined the planting of memorial avenues between 1915 and 1917. Ballarat's role as a catalyst in promoting the planting of memorial avenues was then examined in the following chapter.

Chapter Four provided a case study of events at Ballarat and examined its rich past as a city of trees, with particular reference to early avenues, its many World War One memorial avenues, and the politics behind them. In the analysis, the chapter also provided the background to those who influenced the avenue plantings in the city, the local politics involved, and some of the more direct outcomes at a regional level.

It examined Ballarat war history and heritage from a social perspective and how the Avenue of Honour and the Arch of Victory underpinned the highly successful Lucas manufacturing story. It argued that this was done through marshalling Lucas employees into patriotic service that subsequently became a tradition with elements of invention and remains one of Ballarat's great industrial, Anzac memorial and social legends that continues into the present day. This

chapter also argues that other factors and personalities from Ballarat were important in promoting the memorial avenue concept.

Chapter Five, more closely examined the role of Ballarat in taking the idea further afield using a detailed exploration of the extant primary source historical documentation. It explored this expansion, while demonstrating that it was also a conscious effort on behalf of municipal authorities and community organisations. This chapter argued that through astute marketing, the Ballarat Avenue of Honour took on mythic proportions and became a legend that was important to a town that had once been the second city of an important colony. In demonstrating the manner in which the avenue of honour concept spread from Ballarat throughout Australia, the chapter argued that newspaper reports and correspondence both private and public had been the key to the popularity of avenues across Australia – first, through the nearer areas and then across the continent. It concluded by introducing relationships that helped carry the idea overseas.

Chapter Six then used the correspondence of figures such as General Birdwood and the influence of expatriate Australians in circulating and encouraging the idea of perpetuating living memorials in Britain. These chapters revealed the wide circle of correspondents who promoted and circulated the significance of the avenues of honour as well as their own understandings of the symbolism and significance they saw in such plantings.

This chapter also explored memorial avenues that had been created elsewhere in the world. The greatest influence of Britain's Roads of Remembrance Association relative to the avenue of honour type seems to have been across the Atlantic in North America. Demonstrating less direct links to the Australian movement, the chapter argues that these memorial avenues could, in large part, be traced to the activities of the Australian movement. It demonstrated how the Australian experience inspired laudable imitations and revivals of roadside plantings in other parts of the world.

Chapter Seven considered what happened to avenues of honour following the Great War. This included the fate of different avenues of honour and sought to understand the enshrinement of some avenues and the neglect of others following the wartime era. It also reviewed subsequent uses of memorial avenues and the typology of trees in memorialisation more generally. In viewing the confusion today in how to recognise or deal with the original survivors of World War One avenues of honour in Australia, it also referenced overseas examples.

It argued that much of the loss of interest in this form of memorialisation had been due to other events from the Spanish flu pandemic to the post-World War II immigration of the 1940s and 1950s. Finally, this chapter demonstrated how another key theme – heritage – influenced a new generation to a new awareness of the significance of this form of memorial and had it re-introduced in recent decades, particularly with the centenary of the Great War.

Limitations on Findings

Further research remains out-standing. With the exception of LeRoy Barnett's insightful research into Michigan's memorial roads, little has been done across North America to identify such roadside living memorials to the Great War. This would be a prohibitive task given the results in Michigan, where Barnett identified at least 12 memorial avenues planted to commemorate those who served in the Great War. Extrapolating the Michigan findings across America could potentially uncover more than another 600 avenues of honour, and in Canada more wait to be discovered.

In Australia, new discoveries of avenues of honour planted to those who served in the Great War are still being made. Even at Ballarat, the celebration and dedication of the Avenue of Honour at the Ballarat Golf Club by the mayor of the day in 1922 had gone from public knowledge until research for this thesis revealed it. In Victoria, even small corporate stone memorials have been recorded; however, many memorial avenues had been passed over. No social history analysis of the avenues of honour had been undertaken prior to this thesis, which quite deliberately addressed this gap in the historical record in the Australian context, using Ballarat as a key thematic example and contextualising the phenomenon of avenues of honour in terms of Australasia, North America and Britain.

Despite a wealth of primary records available for analysis existing in both private and public repositories (a feature of this PhD study), researchers have rarely availed themselves of them. Limitations have also existed in relation to the secondary sources available on avenues of honour as they are rarely identified as such or even as memorials in archival records. Many of the historical primary source materials includes ephemeral pamphlets, articles and brochures. Due to their transient purpose, verifying their claims remains difficult as they are unreferenced and often without provenance. Ballarat newspaper articles about the Lucas Girls by those a generation removed from events are often based on nostalgic hearsay posing as received local wisdom and oral history, often with no bibliography, citations or, indeed, claims of familial connection of standing within the community.

Conclusion

This thesis has argued the significance of Ballarat in creating a movement of living memorials to the Great War and drawn international comparisons. In discussing themes of community, memorialisation and heritage, it has demonstrated that these avenues are legitimate war memorials. In analysing archival correspondence and contemporary newspaper letters and reports, this thesis has demonstrated an important nexus between the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and others throughout Australia, other Commonwealth countries and the USA. In doing so, this thesis has demonstrated that the concept of an avenue of honour movement related to World War One may be argued on the basis of the available research to have had its genesis in Ballarat in 1917.

Archival and contemporary newspaper evidence has confirmed that the avenues planted at Ballarat led to significant correspondence and media coverage nationally and internationally. This thesis has argued that although the title 'avenue of honour', coined in Ballarat did not translate to overseas examples by name, the physical presence of an avenue of honour did together with the attributes of plaques on trees so that they represented individuals and communal memorials.

This thesis has examined why the avenues were planted as well as the extent, character and sequence of their plantings. By doing this, it has demonstrated that the treed memorial avenues to honour those who served in the First World are their communities' living heritage. Australia's avenues of honour form a national wartime heritage and remain the only living survivors that witnessed and are evidence of what was created in the country during the Great War. The thesis has also demonstrated that the Ballarat Avenue of Honour's heritage significance still remains in its length despite not always having been the longest, and that, measured by its influence and evidenced by the research in the preceding pages was the first major memorial avenue to the Great War planted by any community.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – First World War Avenue Plantings Victoria

A broad selection from newspaper records into plantings of avenues of honour to the Great War in Victoria.

1915

Warrion 15-19 (Oak – *Quercus*)

Lal Lal 15-18 (*Cupressus*)

1916

Eurack 1 6/16 (shrubs – unknown)

Eurack 2 6/16 (Elm – *Ulmus*)

Melbourne 25/4

Myers Creek 16/6

Nanneela West

Raywood 8/6

Sassafras 7/16

1917

Addington 7/6

Amphitheatre, 7/6.

Ballarat 4/6 – /19 (mixed deciduous)

Ballarat Canadian (*Pinus*)

Ballarat Orphanage (cypress – *Cupressus*)

Ballarat High School (" ")

Ballarat South/Hill St (Elm)

Ballarat Lydiard Street (Elm)

Ballarat North 27/10

Ballarat East (Elm –

Ballarat East: Eureka 30/6 (*Cupressus* -)

Beeac

Bentleigh 13/10

Blakeville 6/7

Buninyong, 30/6/17

Cambrian Hill (Elm – *Ulmus*)

Chelsea

Cheltenham 28/7

Creswick/Kingston (Oak and Elm)

1917 cont'd

Eltham 15/9

Evansford

Gisborne

Hamilton (Palm)

Hamilton 22/6

Hamilton

Koroit 15/9

Lexton 3/8

McKinnon 1/9

Maldon 3/11

Melbourne 25/4

Mortchup, 14/7 (*Pinus*) Mooroopna
26/9

Mt Macedon (Oak –

Northcote

Orbost

Ouyen S School (Eucalypts)

Pakenham Upper 25/8

Port Fairy /8

Queenscliff (*Cupressus*)

Rainbow 18/8

Richmond

Ross Creek

Sandringham 18/8

Sebastopol, 4/8

Seymour /17

Smythesdale

Snake Valley (Golden Cyprus
Cupressus)

Somerville

Sorrento 1/9 (Sheoaks)

Sunshine 25/8 (*Cupressus*)

Daylesford (Elm)
Digby 11/8
Eldorado (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)

1918

Allan's Flat
Avoca 19/6
Avon
Bacchus Marsh, (*Ulmus*)
Barnawatha
Beaufort
Benalla 18 (Queensland Silky Oak)
BerryBank
Berrys Creek 28/6
Booroopee 28/8
Brighton, 3/8 (Eucalypts)
Buninyong
Buangor
Bullarook
Byadac
Carisbrook
Casterton 17/8
Caulfield, 3/8 (Eucalypts)
Chewton
Clayton 15/6
Coburg
Cohuna
Coimadai 26/6
Coldstream

Corryong (Cedar – *Cedrus atlanticus*)
Cowangie (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
Cowangie North 21/6 (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
Cudgewa (Elm and Oak)
Cressy
Danyo (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
Dartmoor
Dean
Dimboola (Eucalypts)
Dockers Plains (Eucalypts)

Violet Town, 1/9
Waubra 11/8 (*Cupressus*)

1918 cont'd

Dutson
Eganstown
Ellerslie (*Cupressus*)
Epping 7/9
Euroa
Frankston (Eucalypts)
Garibaldi
Geelong Protestant Orphanage
Gellibrand
Glenarona
Glendaural (*Cupressus*)
Glenpatrick (*Pinus*)
Greenwald 29/8
Grenville
Guildford
Hampton
Happy Valley
Harkaway
Harrow
Hopetoun
Hotspur 2/6
Hurstbridge 1/9
Kangaroo Ground 5/7
Kiewa Valley (Eucalypts and
Walnuts)
Kongwak
Koorooman 5/7
Kyneton
Landsborough
Leigh Creek (*Cupressus*)
Leongatha 22/6
Linton (Elms & Oaks)
Little River
Lismore (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
Macedon (Nth American Red Oak)

Drik Drik 8/8 (Moreton Bay Figs)
 Drummond (Swamp Mahogany)
 Dunolly 25/4
1918 cont'd
 Meenyan
 Merrigum
 Metung (Moreton Bay Figs)
 Merino
 Millgrove
 Modewarre
 Moonambel
 Mooroopna
 Mortlake (*Cupressus*)
 Moyston
 Mt Evelyn 29/4
 Mulcra (Eucalypts)
 Mulgrave 10/8
 Murrayville (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)

 Myrniong
 Narre Warren North
 Nathalia (Kurrajong)
 Neerim South
 Newlyn
 Nhill
 Northcote
 Oakleigh
 Omeo
 Ouyen (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
 Paignie 7/6 (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
 Porcupine Ridge
 Portsea (Sheoaks)
 Redbank 19/6
 Richmond
 Rokewood (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
 Rokewood Junction
 Ruffy
 Rupanyup (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)

Macleod (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
 Maffra 3/10
 Maroona (*Cupressus*)
1918 cont'd
 Shepparton
 Skipton
 Sommerville
 Stockyard Hill (Mixed deciduous)
 Stratford 2/8
 Strathdownie (*Cupressus*)
 Talbot
 Tallangatta 18/8
 Tambo Upper
 Tatyoon
 The Heart
 Thomastown
 Trawalla
 Trentham (plantings began 1918–
 1920 but no official dedication
 took place until 2015)
 Tourello (Walnuts)
 Turriff East 29/6
 Tuttye (*Eucalyptus cladocalyx*)
 Ullina 3/8
 Waaia 20/8
 Wallan 31/8
 Walwa
 Welshpool
 Werribee 7/8
 Whittlesea
 Williamstown
 Woodend
 Wooreen 20/7
 Woomelang (Eucalypts)
 Yan Yean
 Yarra Junction

Sale 3/8 (opened 15/12)

Scarsdale

Seville

Post War

1919

Ararat

Barry's Reef

Beaconsfield Upper

Blackwood 30/12 (*Pinus*)

Branxholme

Bungaree 5/9 (*Ulmus*)

Cheviot

Darnum 7/5

Emerald 19/7

Shirley (Near Beaufort)

Staghorn Flat

Yelta (West Merbein) 22/10

1920s

Ballarat Golf Club 1922

Browns Plains 2/7/20

Buchan South

Lakes Entrance (*Cupressus*)

Yendon 21/8/20

St Arnaud 11/ 8/22.

N.B: Over 200 avenues were planted in Victoria before the Armistice. I have not continued listing at this stage but there are indications of many more.

Appendix 2 – Disparate Early Australian First World War Memorial Avenues

These avenues pre-dated Ballarat but had little influence outside their own locality.

South Australia 1915

Normanville

Renmark

Tantanoola

Victoria 1915

Warrion

Lal Lal

South Australia 1916

St Peters

Stirling

Walkerville

Houghton

Smeaton

Victoria 1916

East Bendigo

Raywood

Myers Creek

Eurack

New South Wales 2016

Gundagai

Laurieton

**Appendix 3 – The Courier (Ballarat), Letter to the Editor,
“Wattle”, 12 June 1917. p. 4**

Sir,

Whilst not attempting to detract from nor throw cold water on the laudable efforts of Lucas and Co.'s girls in connection with tree planting in commemoration of the Ballarat boys at the Front, I think the public should be acquainted with one or two things that transpired at the preliminary meeting in connection with the celebration of Arbour Day.

In the first place, the Newington ANA, through its representative (Insp Nicholson) suggested that the ANA and kindred societies should plant an avenue on Burrumbeet Road to be called Bullecourt Avenue. Not until this suggestion had been made had anything been brought before the meeting re the planting of an avenue of honour. Then Messrs Lucas and Co.'s representative rose and said the scheme suggested by Insp Nicholson was almost identical with the one he had in mind, but instead of favoring [*sic*] Burrumbeet Road he favored [*sic*] the Melbourne road as being a better site.

However, that difference of opinion was overcome by Insp Nicholson agreeing to fall in with Lucas and Co.'s scheme, at the same time assuring them that they would have the whole-hearted support and assistance of the ANA and other societies. Later it was decided to carry out the planting on Burrumbeet Road. Lucas and Co. to plant 500 trees on 4th June, and at a subsequent date the ANA and other bodies were to follow on.

Now Lucas and Co. (after appropriating the site of the other organisation's proposed plantation) have announced their intention of planting another 500 trees this year and to finance the project by appealing to the public of Ballarat and district for funds. This, too, was part of the ANA and other associations' scheme. This latest move has practically upset the whole arrangements of the bodies mentioned, who were considerate enough in the first place to forego their scheme and assist Lucas and Co. with theirs, satisfied of course that their opportunity would come when Lucas and Co had planted their 500; but who now, unfortunately, have to go elsewhere to plant.

I write this in fairness to the ANA bodies who are at all times willing to assist in anything pertaining to perpetuating the memory of those brave boys at the Front.

Yours, etc.

WATTLE

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