

Monuments and Statues of Ballaarat

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It is with good reason that Ballaarat citizens are proud of the many monuments and statues which have been presented at different times to this Municipality by its generous residents.

The first gift was made in 1856, by James Leggett, Esqr., a sculptor living in Geelong. It is a simple, but artistic monolith placed over the graves of the Diggers killed in the tragic affair at Eureka on the 3rd December, 1854.

In 1861 a Committee was formed to collect funds to erect a monument in honor of Burke and Wills expedition, all the members of which perished in its attempt to cross Australia from south to north. J. W. Wills, the second-in-command of the party, had been a resident of Ballaarat. Canute Anderson, architect, of Melbourne, submitted a design for a memorial which was acceptable to the Committee. It took the form of a tall campanile with a large clock at the head and a drinking fountain at the foot. On the 3rd February, 1863, Sir Henry Barkly laid the foundation stone, but the completion of the monument was not possible owing to the public subscriptions not being forthcoming. For many months the big basalt foundation stone stood blank and bare. The Committee then decided to spend the money in hand on a simpler monument, and to-day there stands the unusual but attractive structure with its large ornamental lights at the junction of Lydiard and Sturt Streets.

In 1870, the working men of Ballaarat subscribed enough money to erect at the eastern end of Sturt Street, and present to the City Council, a monument to do honor to Thomas Galloway, who had devoted all of his energies to secure for all workers the benefits of an eight-hour working day.

Until the Eighties there grew at the top of the Gardens in Sturt Street, and below Lydiard Street, a widespread willow tree known as "The Loafers' Tree," so named because of the seats around it. On fine afternoons would gather many idle men to argue about politics and politicians.

In 1884, the Scotch residents collected £1000, and on the place where "The Loafers' Tree" had grown, erected a fine marble statue of their national poet, Robert Burns.

In the same year, a wealthy bachelor sharebroker, Thomas Stoddart, while on a pleasure tour in Europe, bought in Genoa twelve marble statues which he presented to the City Council, and these were erected in the idyllic surroundings of the Botanical Gardens.

In 1886, Mr. A. T. Morrison, Mayor of the City, moved to have a monument erected on the place where the fight had taken place at Eureka. There was much



The Flight from Pompeii.

opposition to his scheme from the people who deemed it wrong to honor men whom they considered to be traitors and rebels. In spite of this opposition, £300 was raised, and a monument was erected. This has been improved since then with surrounding lawns and gardens.

In 1886, Russell Thomson died. He had been a wealthy mining speculator, and remembering he had made his money in Ballarat, willed £3000 with which to buy more statues for the Botanical Gardens. The Trustees of his will, Messrs. J. Noble Wilson and H. A. Nevett, bought Benzoni's "Flight from Pompeii" group, Summers' "Ruth," "Rebekah," "Susannah," and "Modesty." With the remainder of the money Percival Ball made the heroic statue of William Wallace. This bequest gave Ballarat one of the finest collections of statues to be found in Australia.

In 1886, the Irish citizens of Ballarat collected £1500 for a marble statue of their national poet, Thomas Moore. All the stone in the pedestal was imported from Ireland.

On the 26th January, 1893, Premier Duncan Gillies unveiled a bronze statue of Peter Lalor the hero of Eureka who had become Speaker of the Legislative Assembly. The whole of the £2400 being the cost of the statue, was borne by James Oddie, the Father of Ballarat, and a close friend of Peter Lalor.

The next few years were times of hardship because of the closing down of most of the banks, and the City had no more statues erected for some time.

On the 24th May, 1900, 20,000 people assembled in front of the City Hall to watch Sir John Madden unveil a statue of Queen Victoria, the cost of which was £2300 and had been raised by public subscription.

In 1901, the Prince of Wales, who later became King George V, visited Ballarat and laid the foundation stone of the statue to commemorate the memory of the soldiers who had died during the Boer War. This stone was laid at the bottom of Sturt Street, East of Galloway's monument. Later on, it was considered an unsuitable place, and it was moved into Queen Victoria Square where, in November, 1906, Lord Northcote, Governor-General of Australia, unveiled this fine bronze group. It is interesting to know that on the side of this monument are the names of all the Victorian soldiers who were killed during the Boer War.

In 1899, John Permewan, a worthy citizen of the time, presented to the City Council, to be placed amongst the flowers in Shoppee Square, a statue of Hebe, the reputed cup-bearer of the gods. Hebe stands with her cup outstretched.

In the same year, 30 shopkeepers of Sturt Street subscribed enough money to purchase two small statues of Ruth and Flora to be placed among the flowers in the same block.

In 1902, the members of the Ballarat Branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union presented to the City a charming small marble statue with a drinking

fountain below, in honor of the lamented Queen Victoria.

On the 9th June, 1919, the Lucas' girls finished planting 3728 trees in the Avenue of Honor, and then began to collect money to erect the Arch of Victory. On the 2nd June, 1920, the Prince of Wales, now the Duke of Windsor, unveiled this fine tribute to the men who fought and died during the first global war.

In 1922, Christian Hans Peterson, a veteran citizen of the City, died. He bequeathed to the Municipality a sum of money to erect a statue in Sturt Street gardens in front of the place where he had kept a shop. This bequest produced a very dainty piece of sculpture in the form of an ornamental fountain in the block between Drummond and Windermere Streets and opposite the Hospital. It is one of our street treasures.

In 1937, funds were raised by the citizens to erect a statue of King George V at the corner of Sturt and Doveton Streets. This is particularly interesting, because it is the work of a Ballarat native, Mr. Victor Greenhalgh.

A recent addition to Ballarat's street embellishments is a Cenotaph erected in the central garden plot in Sturt Street, between Dawson and Lyons Streets, and between St. Patrick's Cathedral and St. Andrew's Kirk. The funds for this Cenotaph were raised by public subscription, which was greatly assisted by a Radio Drive for funds on Anzac Day of 1948 through Station 3BA. The monument itself was the result of competitive designs and was executed by Mr. John P. Shimmin. It is constructed of stone brought from the Hawkesbury River Quarries near Sydney. It cost £2064. The memorial is 27 feet high and was officially unveiled on the 24th November, 1949, by the Governor of Victoria, General Sir Dallas Brooks.

Besides the monuments mentioned here, there are several smaller ones. There are granite obelisks at the corner of Mair and Humffray Streets, where the Welcome Nugget was found; in Wendouree Parade, near Pleasant Street, where William Cross Yuille built the first home in Ballarat; and at Poverty Point, where gold was first found in Ballarat.

In August, 1951, there was unveiled at the corner of Sturt and Albert Streets, a monument in honor of the Pioneers of Ballarat. This is built of boulders from the quartz mines of the district and was erected by the present Mayor, Cr. W. E. Roff and a body of young members associated with the Ballarat Historical Society. The cost of this monument was financed without any appeal to the public.

A further piece of statuary is at present being finished off in Melbourne by Mr. George H. Allen. It will cost £3000 and will be paid for from the "Pinkerton" Bequest. It will take its place in Sturt Street, opposite the City Fire Station. At the time of writing this report, the foundations are being excavated.

Yes, Ballarat has a right to be called "The City of Statues."