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25 Years of MELBOURNE LEGACY

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Extract from

A SPEECH BY THE
FORMER GOVERNOR-GENERAL,
THE LATE SIR ISAAC ISAACS
at Canberra



"Out of the war has come to Australia's Digger sons a brotherhood in very truth; it is a union of hearts and sympathies and of loyalties, not only to King and country, but also to each other that nothing but death can sever.

"And there has come also Legacy, with an ideal of supreme worth. Among the names that deserve immortal remembrance are those whose hearts conceived and whose brains devised this association. I do not know them. I wish I did. All honour to them and to those who so faithfully uphold the splendid structure. The ideal is that death, so far from ending the story of comradeship, opens a new and brilliant chapter. It creates in those who remain a trust. It is a trust to care for any helpless widows and children that former comrades have left. It is a trust that is at once a burden and a joy, a responsibility and an opportunity, a duty and a privilege. It is a high and honourable obligation regarded as a precious legacy voluntarily and proudly assumed by those happily surviving to step in and adopt, protect, nurture, guide and settle in life, the widows and the little ones who spiritually represent the men who once stood and marched and fought beside the more fortunate Legatees, and who, like themselves, pledged not only their own earthly hopes, but all they held dear to their country's cause.

"And so, for their sakes, for the common welfare of our country, in reverent memory of the past, and farsightedly visioning the future, Legacy sees to it that the dear ones of their old comrades are safe, that they do not suffer want, that they do not fail for lack of helping hands and loving hearts to have the opportunity that is the birthright of every Australian."

1923



1948

MELBOURNE LEGACY

Why was it founded? . . . who are its members?

. . . what does it do? . . . how is it financed?

In 1923 a small body of ex-servicemen of the 1914-18 War decided to band together to perpetuate the comradeship of the trenches. These pioneers of the Legacy movement held the belief that comradeship was the best thing that came out of the War and they considered that benefit would accrue to themselves, to their ex-comrades, and to the whole community if this spirit of mutual help and fellowship were maintained in civilian life. The decision to form a club was made on 25th September, 1923, and the name "Legacy" selected, the members being known as "Legatees".

Legacy Girls' Camp at Mt. Evelyn.



The zeal of these early "torch bearers" was so infectious that recruits for the Club were quickly attracted and it became necessary to install a selective system of membership. The first qualification for membership was — and still is — honourable overseas service in the armed forces of the British Empire; the second, character and a record of good citizenship; the third, capacity and willingness to render personal service on the Club's behalf. From the very beginning the successive Boards of Management have insisted that all members must be sincere workers who will take pride in their membership; there is no place for drones, no matter how decorative, in Melbourne Legacy! In addition, members are selected on a percentage basis from classified occupational groups, which ensures for the Club a wide range of influence and interests. At no time have rank, creed, political alliances, or personal interest been allowed to influence selection to the Club or appointment to office.

Today, membership of Melbourne Legacy is limited to 200 and the roll of members is practically full. New membership, while still maintaining the proportionate balance of occupational groups, is limited to men with an honourable record of overseas service in the second World War. Thus Melbourne Legacy has prepared itself for the added liabilities of the 1939-45 struggle by balancing the experience and wisdom of its first World War members with an infusion of young, keen blood.

It is sometimes felt that some members of the public regard Legacy as "merely another luncheon club". This, of course, is far from being the case. Although the weekly luncheon plays an important part in promoting comradeship amongst members — and without this spirit, Legacy would be poor indeed! — this meeting is largely the facade of the movement. The real work of Legacy is done behind the scenes by the various committees, the majority of which meet during luncheon hour at the permanent club rooms, and by the Board of Management. Last year, for example, more than 500 separate committee meetings were held, and a perusal of the minutes of these meetings would reveal how much preparatory thought individual legatees had given to the subjects on the agenda.

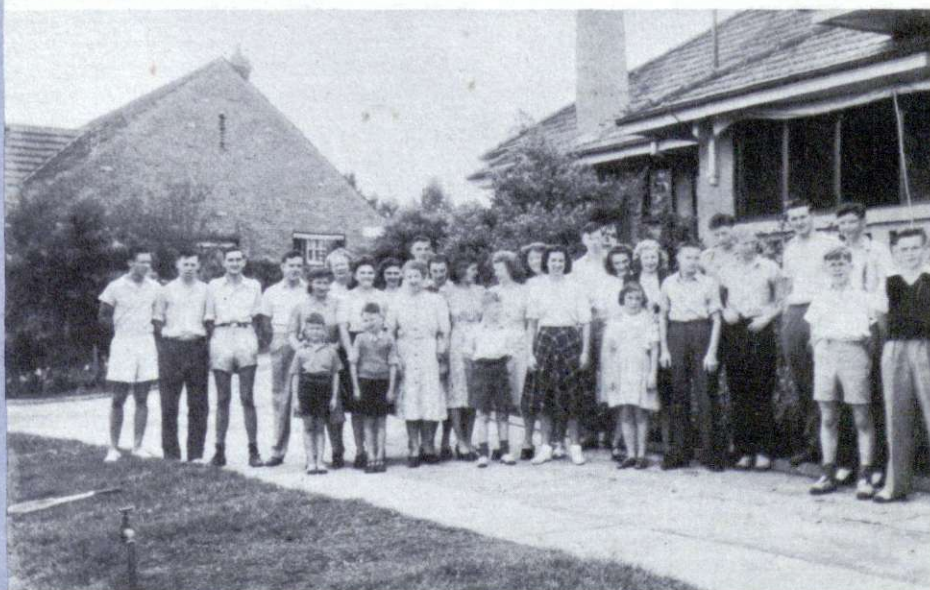
WHY "LEGACY"?

Perhaps the best understanding of Legacy's attitude towards its well-loved work may be obtained from an explanation of how the name came to be adopted. The original founders of the movement conceived the idea that their legacy from World War I was the comradeship of their fellow servicemen. In the early days, therefore, the policy of Legacy was mainly one of mutual helpfulness . . . of encouraging reciprocity in business amongst returned men, fighting the case of preference for returned soldiers, and so on. But it was soon apparent to these idealists that a wider and more altruistic policy must be adopted if Legacy were to achieve its maximum usefulness to the community. The answer did not come at once, but it *did* come within two years of the foundation of the Club, when a suggestion was made that the most comradely act of all to the cobbers who had made the supreme sacrifice, was to look after, what Kipling calls, "the little things they left behind them". Perhaps the Legatee responsible for the idea had read the famous lines of Colonel John McCrae.

*"If ye break faith with us who die,
We shall not sleep, though poppies grow,
In Flanders' fields."*

On 1st October, 1925, the idea was submitted to the Board of Management. Statistics and problems relating to the care of war orphans were obtained from the Repatriation Department; pros and cons were debated, ways and means thrashed out, and finally it was decided that here was Legacy's *real* bequest from the War — the privilege and honour of caring for the children of deceased comrades.

Legacy Residents at "Holmbush".



THE WORK.

Any child in the area of Victoria for which Melbourne Legacy is responsible, whose father served in the Defence Forces or the Merchant Navy of the British Empire during World Wars I or II, and was killed in action or has since died, is welcomed as a member of Junior Legacy. Regardless of the cause of death or the circumstances of the deceased's family, Legacy stands by to render advice or assistance in any or all of its spheres of activity and influence.

When notification is received of a family whose father was killed in action or has since died, a Legatee visits the widow and offers the assistance of Legacy. Advice is given on matters of Repatriation benefits, law and business, and where the mother requires assistance in guiding her children, a Legatee is deputed to act as permanent adviser to the family. He visits the home regularly and discusses the family's circumstances, health, education and the children's ambitions for the future. In cases of hardship, clothing and financial assistance are provided by the Welfare Committee, and, if circumstances permit the mother undertaking part-time work, Legacy assists her to find suitable employment. . . . Free medical examination is arranged for every junior whose mother desires it. . . . The Legacy Dental Clinic gives free treatment to all children between the ages of 5 and 17; children under 6 are examined and treatment arranged at the pre-School Clinic. . . . Every child is optically examined at an early age and where necessary spectacles are provided free of charge. . . . Special training is provided for those children who are mentally subnormal or physically defective. . . . Thus everything possible is done to ensure that conditions in the home are favourable and that the child is in good physical shape to face life.

Very great attention is paid to the education of all juniors, and Melbourne Legacy provides financial assistance for those children who are not eligible for Repatriation benefits. This work is linked up with the Baillieu Education Trust, and financial help may take the form of grants for maintenance, books, fares, tuition fees, and/or school clothing.



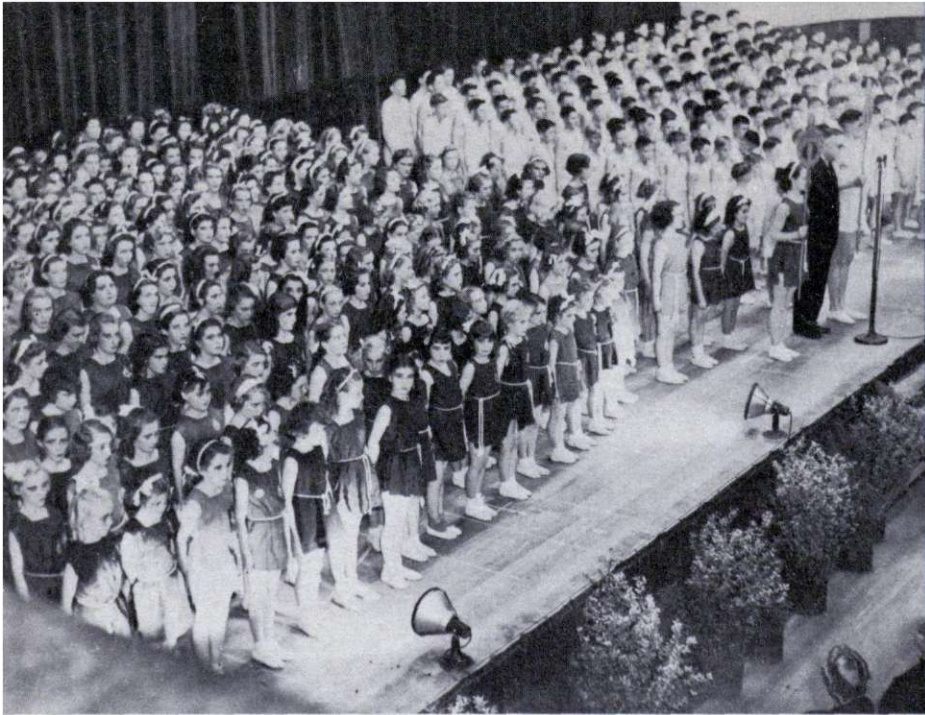
Some of the Legacy Residents at "Stanhope".

Assistance is given under this scheme for post-primary education only — that is above the 6th Grade. In addition, evening tuition is arranged free for children who are working and who are unable to pay fees. The present annual cost of this work to Legacy is £6,000, towards which £1,500 is received from the Baillieu Trust.

Perhaps the most spectacular part of Legacy's work amongst the children is the training they receive at classes which are conducted at the Central Club rooms and in various suburban centres. Every week more than 700 boys and girls receive instruction in physical culture by qualified experts, and 130 girls are given tuition in voice production and speech training. Swimming is taught at the Y.M.C.A. pool, and basketball teams are organised. A first-class library is available to both boys and girls, and a special service ensures that children in the suburban centres secure the same advantages and attention as those in the city.

The climax of the year's class work is the demonstration of physical culture, dancing and eurhythmics held annually in the Melbourne Town Hall. So great is the demand for seats at this function that it has now been extended to two nights, without fully satisfying the demand.

Just before Christmas, each class holds a breaking-up party, at which prizes are distributed. But since only children over 9 years are accepted into class work, a special Christmas party is arranged for all younger children; the average attendance at this function is 500, each child receiving a gift.



General Assembly, Town Hall Demonstration.

In addition to the benefits to body and mind which juniors receive at these classes, they benefit also by contact with each other and with the Legatees who act as organisers and leaders. Pleasant manners and good behaviour are insisted upon at all times, and mothers frequently remark on the improved conduct in the home which follows attendance at Legacy. This training in social conduct is also an important part of the life in the permanent camp which Legacy has established at Somers, on Westernport Bay. This camp accommodates 100, and during the Christmas holidays, 200 boys and 100 girls are enabled to enjoy a happy 10 days' holiday by the sea. In addition, during the May holidays, a camp for 75 girls is held at Mt. Evelyn. All these camps are supervised by Legatees who are experienced in the management of children and adolescents. They are free of cost to the children, except for a nominal charge of 5/- to cover transport.

Another feature of Legacy activity is the annual Anzac Eve service at the Shrine of Remembrance, St. Kilda Road, which is attended by representatives from all State, Secondary and Public Schools in the Metropolitan area. This ceremony is broadcast by the A.B.C. for reception at synchronized services which are arranged in schools throughout the State.

All the foregoing may be said to deal with the upbringing and training of the child. He (or she) has now reached the stage where life becomes real and earnest — where, in other words, he (or she) must now commence work. This, of course, has been foreseen some years previously, and the child's education has been adapted to the vocation which he wishes — and is fitted — to follow. Melbourne Legacy maintains a permanent organisation to assist in obtaining suitable employment and apprenticeships, and during the past twenty-five years no fewer than 10,819 boys and girls have been placed. Here the wisdom of selective membership of the Club becomes apparent.

A high proportion of Melbourne Legacy members are senior executives in a wide variety of commercial and industrial groups, and these contacts greatly facilitate the placing of juniors. In addition, a large circle of employers has now experienced the advantages of dealing with an Employment Agency which knows its charges intimately and which is always concerned about placing them in positions for which they are fitted. They know that if they want a boy or girl with certain attributes of personality or character, or special technical qualifications, an intelligent attempt will be made to provide the right type. These employers have learned, too, that Legacy maintains an interest in its placements; that if any trouble arises they can discuss the matter in a

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The Spider Dance, Town Hall Demonstration.



businesslike way with business men. For things *do* go wrong sometimes; round pegs get into square holes; the employee, like a spirited young horse, is sometimes liable to get "collar proud" and fed up with the job; also, of course, some employers lack the happy knack of handling adolescents. When anything like this occurs the employer can discuss the problem in a cool, level-headed manner with men who know children and who also know what commerce or industry have a right to demand of their employees.

Another branch of Legacy work worthy of mention is the provision of accommodation for the sons and daughters of deceased servicemen who, for any reason whatever, require lodging in Melbourne. Sometimes a boy or girl has no home, both mother and father being dead; or perhaps the home atmosphere is unsuitable. Frequently, too, a deceased serviceman's child from the country has to live in Melbourne for purposes of education or employment. So much difficulty had been experienced by the Club in catering for these cases that it was decided the only solution was to establish residences for juniors. Accordingly, "Holmbush", a spacious house and grounds in Burke Road, East Kew, was acquired and furnished and a competent matron installed. Later, "Stanhope", at the corner of Burke and Cotham Roads was handed over to Legacy, fully furnished, by the Victorian Division of the Australian Red Cross Society for use as long as required for its present purposes. Today nearly 60 boys and girls are accommodated in these beautiful residences, living a happy home life under ideal conditions of surroundings and kindly care. Normally, the age of the occupants is from 9 to 19 years, and if in receipt of a Repatriation pension or employment wage the child pays what he or she can afford. Although these buildings carry no burden of capital costs, it will be realised that the annual upkeep cost is very considerable and this must be met out of current funds.

The final aspect of Legacy activity we shall mention deals with the treatment of delinquents. Several Legatees are gazetted as Probationary Officers to the general and children's courts, and these receive notification from police

and other sources when a transgressor who is the child of a deceased ex-serviceman and below the age of 21 is to appear in the court. All necessary arrangements for adequate representation are made and close personal contact is maintained for a considerable period afterwards. It must be explained that by no means all the cases dealt with by this committee actually come before the courts. An extremely high percentage of success has been achieved in re-establishing these young people in the straight and narrow path, and though little known, this work must be regarded as not least in importance amongst Legacy's efforts in creating good citizens.

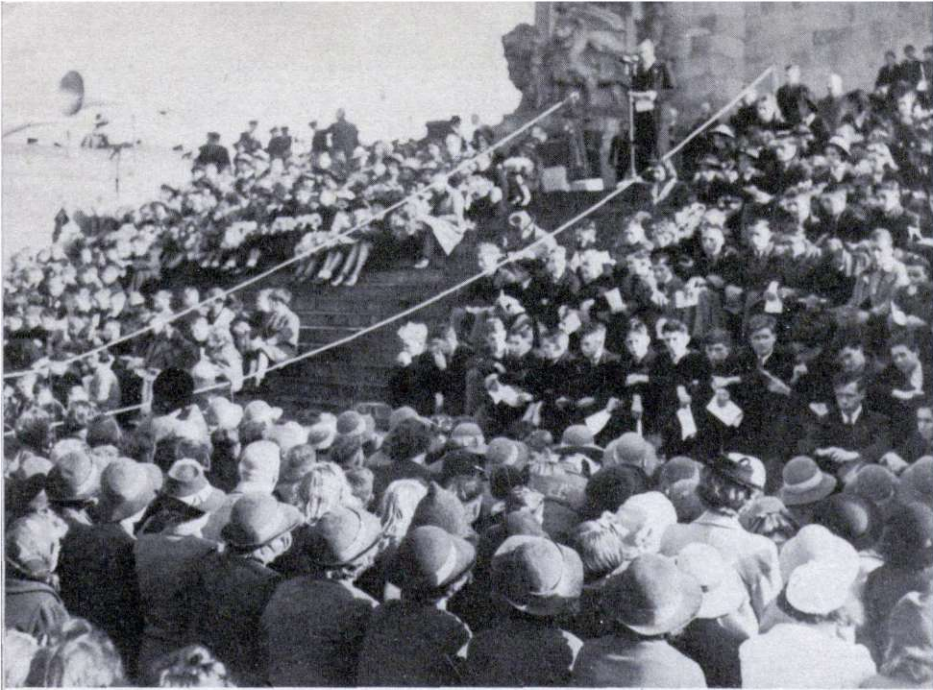
FINANCE.

As can well be imagined, the Finance Committee has had its share of money-raising problems, for Melbourne Legacy expenditure today is in the region of £25,000 per annum. Nor does this expenditure look like decreasing. In the area of Victoria, for which Melbourne Legacy is responsible, more than 3,000 children of servicemen who died during or since the recent war are eligible for Legacy benefits, and of these more than half are below the age of 9.

No public appeal for funds has ever been made, for the many friends of Legacy have made this unnecessary. We trust this desirable state of affairs will continue, for the publicity required for such an appeal would tend to brand

Senior Girls' Group.





Legacy Anzac Eve Service at Shrine of Remembrance.

the work of Legacy as a charity, and this must be avoided at all costs. The relationship between Legatees and children is a subtle blend of fatherliness and comradeship, and this attitude would be marred by the slightest suggestion — from whatever quarter — of charity or patronage. Moreover, it is feared that the public conception of Legacy as a charity would endanger the relationship of the Club with the proud, sensitive type of widow it is particularly desirous of assisting.

Money received for any particular aspect of Legacy activities goes to these specific tasks only; donations for the Club's general objects go as directed by the Board of Management. It is hardly necessary to add that no member of Melbourne Legacy receives any remuneration whatever for work done for the Club; this includes those Legatee doctors, dentists, oculists and lawyers who provide professional advice and treatment for Legacy families.

CONCLUSION.

It is a matter of pride for Melbourne Legacy that its work has never stood still; progress is continuous, both in the inauguration of new projects and the development and extension of existing services. The immediate objective

of the Club is to ensure that every eligible child is brought into the family. The Repatriation Commission gives invaluable assistance by notifying Legacy of eligibles as a result of the recent war, but this does not entirely cover the field; a surprising number of young families have been left by ex-servicemen of the 1914-18 War who have died recently, and Legacy can only learn of these through its friends, who are requested to keep a lookout and advise the Club of any such cases which come to their notice.

One other request we in Legacy make of our friends . . . that they bear always in mind our financial obligations and lose no opportunity of bringing our needs to the notice of individuals, companies or financial institutions who control funds for allocation to work such as ours. Donations to Junior Legacy work are allowable as deductions for Income Tax.

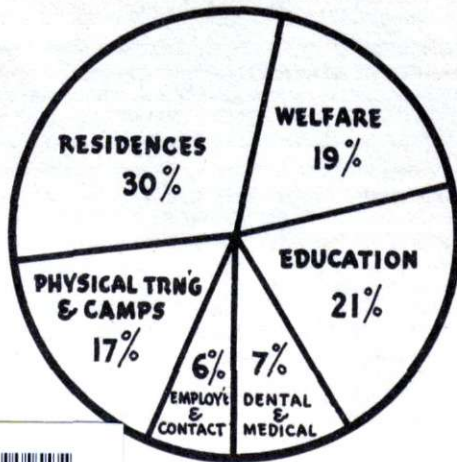


SOME STATISTICS
OF THE 25 YEARS' WORK
OF MELBOURNE LEGACY

Number of families assisted	11,255
Number of children assisted	27,747
Medical examinations	16,693
Number of children at present receiving regular dental treatment	2,139
Total camp attendances (boys and girls)	3,917
Total employment placings	10,819
Total expenditure, 1923-1947	£97,955
Expenditure during 1947	£19,280

THE APPORTIONMENT OF LEGACY
EXPENDITURE DURING 1948

The diagram below shows the comparative allocation of Melbourne Legacy funds.



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MELBOURNE LEGACY

Patron

General Sir THOMAS BLAMEY, G.B.E., K.C.B., C.M.G., D.S.O., E.D.

Past Presidents

1923-24 — H. E. Cohen.	1930-31 — C. B. W. Smith.	1939 — E. Russell.
1924-25 — J. H. P. Eller.	1931-32 — J. R. Hall.	1940 — R. G. Heley.
1925-26 — T. W. White.	1932-33 — A. N. Kemsley.	1941 — S. T. Parkes.
1926-27 — M. C. Gardner.	1933-34 — R. M. Hall.	1942 — H. M. James.
1927-28 — P. E. Potts & C. H. Peters.	1935 — H. G. Brain.	1943 — O. Gawler.
1928-29 — E. F. Serman.	1936 — W. E. Cremor.	1944 — T. M. Cosh.
1929-30 — S. G. Savage.	1937 — J. H. B. Armstrong.	1945 — W. A. Perrin.
	1938 — J. G. Gillespie.	1946 — D. N. Craig.
		1947 — C. R. Carleton.

Board of Management 1948

President: E. Sherwen.

Vice-Presidents:

(J.L.C.) — W. G. Lake. (Personnel) — N. Quail.
(I.L.C.) — G. I. Malloch.

Immediate Past President: C. R. Carleton.

Liaison Officer: N. J. Bedford.

Elected Members: H. D. Stewart, W. R. G. Hiscock.

Hon. Treasurer: A. J. Court. Hon. Secretary: G. B. S. Hart.

The following is the organisation for dealing with Melbourne Legacy's work amongst the children of deceased ex-servicemen

Junior Legacy Committee — 14 members.

Sub-Committees of Junior Legacy

Boys' Group (7 sub-committees)	34 members	Education	5 members
Camp	6 "	Employment	14 "
Contact Group	13 "	Girls' Group (2 sub-committees)	20 "
Consisting of three Sections—First Contact, Visiting Contact, Advisers.		Residences	9 "
Demonstration	14 "	Library	7 "
		Medical	13 "
		Dental	5 "
		Welfare	23 "
		Probation	8 "

Baillieu Education Trust .. 4 members

MELBOURNE LEGACY

45 MARKET STREET, MELBOURNE

TELEPHONE: MU 5110

*Photo-Litho,
McLaren & Co, Pty. Ltd.,
Melbourne*