THE BULLETIN

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The Legacy Club of Melbourne Inc.

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FOUNDATION DAY ADDRESS
BY PAST PRESIDENT, LEGATEE GEORGE WOODWARD

Legatee President, Guests, Fellow Legatees. Today we celebrate the Foundation of Melbourne Legacy - indeed Legacy - 79 years ago on 25th September, 1923. It was on that date that the formal decision was taken to establish Legacy, following a number of informal meetings. For many years, it has been our tradition that the next Past President in line should present this Foundation Day Address.

In deciding an appropriate Legacy subject, I took up a suggestion by Legatee Ron Foskett to consider the Bulletins. Fortunately, in the President's Office are 70 bound volumes of past Bulletins, over 3,000 of them; he readily gave me access to them. I scan read from Book No. 1 to Book No. 21 (1948) and called it a day - that's over 1,000 Bulletins!

After a while I realised I was reading a sort of family history, I became completed immersed in it. I guess if you wanted the official history of Melbourne Legacy, you would go to the official minutes, which are also available in bound form, but they could never convey the sense of belonging, of fun, sadness, enthusiasm and activity that the Bulletins do. But the amount of material available is immense. So I settled for a "browsing through-the-Bullies approach; and will try to give you some sense of the warmth and energy of those early Legatees. I will throw in some of the vital statistics as an introduction - so here goes. I call it ***"Bully for you".***

THE STATISTICS

The first Bulletin appeared on 17th August, 1926. Legacy was nearly three years old, and was firmly based on this our weekly luncheon, attendance at which was mandatory. Formal approval was necessary not to attend lunch, and for quite some time a fine of sixpence was imposed, and collected, for non-attendance.

Remember, there were no Clubrooms, no office, no regular communications with the 70 or 80 members - other than through lunch at which business was formally discussed and for which skeletal minutes were maintained.

That first Bulletin was produced on a Gestetner - a very messy process in the private office of the Honorary Secretary.

The Bulletin remained a weekly production until 1979 (53 years) until it turned fortnightly "because of cost considerations." Enough of the vital statistics.

HISTORIC REFERENCES

Over the years, many worthwhile features came and went. One that particularly caught my imagination was a series of one-line references to Australian military history, included at the top of page one, and on the nearest date to the actual anniversary. It started on 23rd July, 1929 with "19th July was the 13th Anniversary of FLEUXBAIX, the first battle the A.I.F. was engaged in, in France." Similar references then appeared weekly. For instance, 21st September, 1929 saw "21st September, 1914 surrender of German and native forces at Herbert Shohe, NG, and the occupation of Madang by Australian forces." How many of us who served in New Guinea in WWII still remember that our fathers, grandfathers or their friends might have served there in 1914?

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GUEST SPEAKER – TUESDAY, 22nd OCTOBER, 2002
Mr Kevin Bailey
Managing Director, The Money Managers
(Honorary Consul. General for Australia for East Timor)

"EAST TIMOR - OUR NEWEST NEIGHBOUR"

FOUNDATION DAY ADDRESS Continued...

The Bulletin of 17th December, 1929 saw "20th December, 1915 - evacuation of ANZAC complete." There were often four or five such one-line historical references.

The last WWI historic reference was on 20th December, 1938, with "The Capture of Magdhaba by the 1st and 3rd Light Horse Brigades and the Imperial Camel Brigade on 23rd December, 1916." What pictures of action this conjures up in the imagination!

A year after the close of WWII, the practice recommenced, recording the anniversaries of WWII. Bulletin No. 968 of 16th August, 1946, recorded "Withdrawal from Kokoda on 10th August, 1942." The last such reference was made a year later. During that year, references were made to all campaigns - ME, Greece, NG etc, but not to the extent of the earlier WWI anniversaries.

May I suggest to our editor, Legatee Ian Goy that he considers recruiting a keen Legatee amateur historian to re-instate the practice - for a while at least. WWI and WWII are all there - the task would be to incorporate Korea, Malaya, Vietnam, Gulf, East Timor, Afghanistan and other appropriate events.

THE PEOPLE

In reading those early Bulletins, many of the founding Legatees of whom I had heard over the past 16 years came alive to me. For instance, in the Board Room, we see a rather severe portrait of a middle-aged Stan Savige: in the bar a bald, ageing Donovan Joynt, VC - they emerged from the Bulletin as young men, full of energy and enthusiasm.

I had had in mind our founding Legatees as older men, serious, settled fatherly and grandfatherly types. There may have been some of these, but the majority seemed to have been quite the contrary.

In those early Bulletins, there was a constant stream of congratulations to Legatees on engagements (Donovan Joynt's for instance), marriages and progeny arriving.

There is a very good example. In the first Bulletin, it was announced that the Legacy President, Dr Mark Gardiner, was to be married that very day. Certainly young man's stuff! In No. 6, six weeks later, it was announced that the lunch time speaker the following week would be the President who would speak on his recent trip to New Caledonia - his honeymoon! And then, in Bulletin No. 11, the President is reported as telling the Junior Legacy Club of his recent travels "illustrated by lantern slides."

Anyway, it all turned out very well for in Bulletin No. 38 of 7th June, 1929, we have congratulations to the President on the birth of a son - causing him to again miss the luncheon.

After a string of Bulletins containing congratulatory messages on the continual deliveries of the stork, the famous Kem Kemsley is congratulated on the birth of a son in June 1930. Sadly in Bulletin No. 496 in May 1943, we learn of the death of Kem's other son killed while on service overseas with the RAAF.

Kemsley had quite a career, which can be traced through the Bulletins. President Melbourne Legacy in 1932 - 33, he was Manager of radio station 3UZ from 1934 and there are reports of many Legacy functions there - both on and off the air. He became Business Adviser to the Minister for the Army during WWII, and received a CBE for his efforts, all celebrated in Bulletins.

Many of you will have read "Legacy", the story of Melbourne Legacy - commonly known as "Blatchford". A copy is handed to each Melbourne President on his installation. It was written by Legatee Claude Blatchford, and published in 1932 by the Joynt publishing company (yes, Donovan's). For the next year, news of Blatchford's declining health appeared in Bulletins and his obituary appeared in Bulletin No. 334 of July 1933 - within a year of the publication of his book. His son Fred became an active Junior Legatee. In Bulletin No. 804 of February 1942, it was reported that Sgt Observer Fred Blatchford was killed while serving with the RAAF.

Legatees will readily understand when I say I received a terrific sense of family in reading through these early Bulletins.

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FOUNDATION DAY ADDRESS Continued...

Legatee Stan Savige is of course a legend in Melbourne Legacy - indeed in Legacy. Savige served in the Militia between WWI and WWII and by 1939 was a Brigadier. The Bulletin quoted the Argus of 11th October, 1939 thusly:

> *"Cheers and applause greeted the announcement at the Legacy Club luncheon yesterday that Brigadier S.G. Savige had been appointed Commander of the Victorian Brigade of the new A.I.F."*

Incidentally, Bulletins of the day always listed approvals for leaves of absence. I could find no record of Savige's name among those approvals. By war's end, he would have owed a lot of money if the 6' fine had still applied.

Bill Cremor, President in 1936, was another who became delightfully alive in my ramblings through the Bulletins. He was of course a WWI digger, also served in the Militia between the wars, and was given leave from Legacy on 31st October, 1939 to serve as an Artillery Major. (Also given leave in that same Bulletin was Donovan Joynt who became CO of the Army establishment at Queenscliff). Bill Cremor's eventual escape from Greece was reported with real joy in the Bulletin, as was his award of the DSO and his eventual promotion to Brigadier.

An interesting event in the Militia soldiering days of Savige and Cremor was reported in Bulletin No. 613 of April 1939:

> *"11. FROM OUR MILITARY CORRESPONDENT:*
> *The Gentlemen of the Artillery Salute a Soldier. At Seymour Camp last week, a Legatee named Cremor, masquerading as a Lieutenant-Colonel, was pretending to command a brigade of artillery.*
>
> *By invitation arrived Legatee Savige, disguised as a Brigadier of infantry i.e. real soldiers.*
>
> *On Sunday morning, the gunner colonel staged a ceremonial parade for his rough cobber, and afterwards marched his brigade past the strange brigadier. The significance of it all was that as the artillery are being mechanised, Stan probably will have the honour of being the last Victorian Brigadier to take the salute of a horsed brigade of artillery. But apart from the official "Sir", and formal saluting, we can't report what they said, sotto voce, to one another so that the troops could not hear."*

I suspect that our recently departed comrade Legatee Bertie Baglin would have been part of that parade. He often spoke of his days in the horse-drawn artillery.

Diverting for a moment, in 1935, the Bulletin reported a new policy for Junior Legatees - instead of being treated only as a group in the classes, each JL was also to have a personal adviser. Birthdays of the J.L's were regularly published in the Bulletin, along with the names of the Legatee advisers - to make sure the Legatee would contact the JL on that day. Past President, Legatee Geoff Swan was such a JL, as was his brother Viernon, and the Bulletins tell us, Legatee President, that their adviser was Stan Parkes, your grandfather. Legacy is a family in more ways than one!

Stan Parkes character also emerged from the pages of the Bulletin - not always treated with the greatest respect. His installation as President is described in Bulletin No. 694 of 6th December, 1940, and in the following Bulletin this appeared:

> *"The fact that a fellow named Parkes,*
> *can be President, gives us full marks*
> *for broadness of mind.*
> *Though often you'll find*
> *people treat such selections as larks."*

Hugh Brain who wrote that was a much larger-than-life character, President in 1935, he remained active for many years. He is worthy of mention here for two main reasons. Firstly, because of a speech reported verbatim in Bulletin No. 940 of 15th January, 1946 in which he reviewed the activities of the outgoing Board of Management.

> *"Ten days ago, amid the artificial sentiment of the Annual Meeting we heard of the overpowering virtues of past and incoming Presidents and their gangs. Now, in the day-light, we face realities, as a bridegroom awakened by the early morning halitosis of the partner of his joys.*
>
> *Commencing the first year of peace, we should give the newcomers from World War II the low-down on our system of control - i.e., a combination of Indonesia, Hiroshima and Belsen.*

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FOUNDATION DAY ADDRESS Continued...

First, we have a President. Why? This is one of those unanswerable questions like "What shall we do with the drunken sailor"……..

The result of a Gallop Poll on the functions of a President was:

(1) he fills a chair at the top table, 47%;
(2) he completes a bridge four with the Vice Presidents, 39%;
(3) he takes the blame for the B.O.M's. gutzers, 14%."

No wonder he was referred to as the "Lord of Misrule."

Secondly, Hugh Brain is worthy of mention for the following extract from his own installation speech in December 1934:

"I have many flights to my credit, in the hot-air balloon of theory - but rarely the parachute of practice."

There are of course numerous other references to Legatees whose off-spring are with us in Legacy today. Names like Simonson (Don's father and his Uncle Eric), Heathcote, Prohasky, Cohen, Gawler and many more.

JUNIOR LEGATEES

In Bulletin No. 14 of 23rd November, 1926, the first camp was announced - 30 boys at Balnarring, under canvas and in the charge of Stan Savige upon whose land the camp was located.

Jumping forward 10 years to 1938, the camp was well established in permanent buildings and in the Bulletin of the day a call was made for old telephone books for the camp - new telephone books having just been issued throughout Melbourne. The Legatee camp director is quoted as saying, apparently quite seriously, that from his experience thirty directories would be needed over the Christmas camp, and that "covers are not essential." No end use for the telephone directories was specified!

On a much more serious note, a moving entry in Bulletin No. 832 of 10th December, 1943, records that President Os Gawler - father of Alan Gawler - had presented the usual Junior Legatee badges at Fitzroy Boys Class. Five brothers of the Johnson family received their JL badges. A yet younger brother was there to watch, together with the mother and "two little daughters". Nine of them in all. There are a lot of potential follow-up stories in our Bulletins.

EMPLOYMENT

Let me now hark back a little. Finding employment for returned soldiers down on their luck was a major activity for Legacy in its earlier years. This later extended to jobs for JL's and Employment was a major section of the Bulletins until the forties.

It is of course impossible to speak in detail of this activity, but let me give you just one example culled from the early Bulletins.

> *"8. AN UNEMPLOYMENT CASE: Ex-Sgt. A. Simpson, 60th Battalion and A.I.F. Head Quarters wants work as clerk or salesman. Has had experience as both. Has good appearance and address. Has wife with T.B. and has two children aged 4 and 2 years. He has had nerve treatment at Caulfield Military Hospital but was finally discharged in August last. Has had pension of 16/9 which was discontinued in 1921. Has tried to keep going by selling goods from door to door but finds it impossible to make a living out of it. Anyone able to obtain work for this man please see a Member of the Unemployment Committee or Legatee Serman."*

Many similar cases appear in Bulletins of the day, both for Returned Soldiers and increasingly for JL's.

In Bulletin No. 375 of 22nd May, 1934, there was an almost emotional plea for an extra job finding effort by Legatees. For the eleven months of 1933/34, 960 job placements had been made and Chairman Employment seemed to be prepared to beg to make it 1,000 for the year - against 450 job placements the previous year. Sadly the total for 1933/34 reported later was 970 - missed by 30 - but what a wonderful effort!

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FOUNDATION DAY ADDRESS Continued...

VERSE

When I first considered using the Bulletin as a basis for this address, one of the items I envisaged was the introduction of personalised verse into the Bulletins in the 1970's and 1980's with the wonderful verses of Leigh Johns. How wrong I was in thinking poetry in the Bulletin was something new.

About 1928, poetry became a feature of the Bulletin and was constantly used to report on Legacy activities, comment on the doings of individual Legatees and to advertise events of the day.

On 14th May, 1935, the Bulletin seemed to descend into the depths. Someone sent a limerick about Legatee Hugh Brain - himself a humourist and poet.

"A sprightly young fellow name Brain
Declaimed 'bon mots' and wisecracks inane
Till all Legatees
Got down on their knees
And prayed to be put out of pain."

Worse yet, the editor invited Legatees to "do better than that." The habit, perhaps I should call it a disease, caught on, with poems of varying quality and length, mainly featuring Legatees.

I thought the bottom of the pit had been reached when in January, 1941, Bulletin No. 695 contained 29 limericks (including the one about Stan Parkes I mentioned earlier), followed by 150 in the next nine Bulletins all about Legatees. There is no record of what happened to the editor - perhaps they shot him!

It was not all humourous, of course. I would love to discuss it in detail but time does not permit. But consider this rather delicate comment on Melbourne's weather from Bulletin No. 447 of 15th October, 1935:

"Hark to the wind as it whistles around -
To the rain as it beats on the pane -
To the chatter of teeth as they play a tattoo -
Hurray! Melbourne's Spring's here again!"

There is some lovely verse in the old Bulletins.

EDITORS

May I close in paying a tribute to the editors of the Bulletins over the years?

Legatee Louis Lothian was kind enough to provide me with a list of editors over the past fifty years - Louis has copies of all of these Bulletins at his home. It was interesting to find that from 1960 to 1984 - 25 years - the then equivalent of our General Manager edited the Bulletin. Something to fill in your spare time, Terry, when Ian Goy packs it in.

With us today, are Merv Tickell, editor in 1985, Legatee John Crooks 1986-91, Legatee Louis Lothian 1992-2002, and our present editor, Legatee Ian Goy. What a wonderful job they have done and are doing.

STAFF

And at this time may I mention the work of our staff, who produce our excellent publications today - a very stylish and professional document, a far cry from the one page Gestetner duplicated Bulletin of 1926. I will pass your applause on to Lisa Bennett.

CONCLUSION

I started my personal journey through the early Bulletins with some trepidation, but I finished enjoying it thoroughly. I hope I have been able to convey to you the treasure we own in those 3,000 plus editions, in our President's Office and perhaps a better idea of the life and times of our Legacy forbears.

I wish Legacy well for the next 79 years.

Thank you.