

PRIME MINISTERS AVENUE TOUR by Peter Freund

Tuesday April 27th. (Notes by Beth Dixon)

Ballarat was a place built on gold, was a place that had a grand vision. Eg. Art Gallery, Miners' Exchange, Her Majesty's Theatre etc and this even continues today with the Prisoners War Memorial.

Colonel Richard Crouch had the vision regarding the PM Avenue, and he had the resources. Richard was born in Ballarat. His father was an early miner, but realizing more money could be made above ground he became a boot maker, providing boots to the miners. This set the family up financially. Richard trained as a lawyer, and worked in Melbourne. Became interested in politics, served at Gallipoli, and achieved the rank of Colonel. After the war he was against conscription, and joined the Labour Party serving under Scullin. Interested in the arts, and in writing. In 1940 the first 12 busts of PM's was opened by the Prime Minister of the day. A bequest of £1,000 was given to the Council to continue with busts of future PMs.

William Anderson was the sculptor chosen. He had trained in Ballarat at the School of Mines, and did the first batch of PMs 1901 - 1940 in one batch taken from photos.

To do the tour of the Prime Ministers' Avenue Peter suggested we broke it up into 3 stages.

1. Up to 1st World War (Australia becoming a Nation)
2. Between the two World Wars.
3. From 2nd World War till today

Up to the time of Federation thinking was split and divided politics. 1. Free traders. Squatting interests and minimal regulations. 2. Protectionists driving industry and agriculture. 3. Radical labour interests.

Deakin and Fisher were remarkable achievers for reforms.

BARTON was a protectionist. Often to be found in a pub at times of parliament divisions.

DEAKIN was the driving force behind Federation. He became increasingly protectionist, and formed the Fusion Party.(Protectionists and Freetraders).

WATSON 1st Labour PM. Short term in office

REID A big man, and know as a big eater. Later ended up in parliament in Britain.

FISHER Established the first party to have a majority in Parliament, and made many social reforms. (A war time parliament).

COOK A labour member, lay preacher and became more conservative. Known to be humourless. A conservative government

From 1st World War to 2nd World War, rise of Nazism and Fascism.

HUGHES Billy strong character in politics. Involved in 3 different political parties, and expelled from all of them. Popular with the troops

Country Party started in 1920

BRUCE Part of Melbourne establishment. Attended Cambridge. A lawyer. Country very divided, and lots of strikes, and strike breaking

SCULLIN A man of conscience. Had to deal with the depression. Labour party divided.

LYONS United Australian Party 1932. Small party approach. Died in office. His wife Dame Enid Lyons entered parliament. The first woman in parliament

PAGE Earle In a caretaker role. Leader of the CP. Trained as a doctor, and worked as a GP in Grafton

MENZIES Robert seen as the elder statesman of Australian Politics. Lacked the confidence in his first term of the United Australian Party. Menzies had a few things to overcome such as selling all the scrap iron to Japan, and became known as "pig iron Bob". Also he didn't volunteer for the war! His family decided they wanted one of their four sons to survive the war, and the lot fell to Bob.

FADDEN Leader of the Country Party. Note a change in the style of sculptured busts. Now done from life.

CURTIN Born in Creswick. Known by many as a great Prime Minister, as he held the country together in time of crisis. Died in office.

FORDE Last of the busts sculptured by Wallace Anderson

Col. Richard Crouch still alive, and he chose Ken Palmer to be the sculpture. Palmer trained in Ballarat.

CHIEFLEY bust sculptured by Palmer

Peter Freund said that with the latter part of the tour, many people now familiar with the Prime Ministers. He tries to engage the people more with what they remember, and how they feel about the sculptured image. Does it reflect something in the character of the person? What is the sculptor trying to say?

HOLT died in office. Drowned. A new sculptor. Greenhaulgh. Ballarat born.

GORTON Bust a challenge for the sculptor, as badly disfigured when burned as a fighter pilot during World War 2. Had facial reconstruction

MC EWEN Came into office after Holt was lost while swimming. Leader of the Country Party.

MC MAHON Liberal Party.

WHITLAM Bust probably a poor representation. Sits in a shady spot which doesn't help

FRASER The last of the busts done by Greenhaulgh. Fraser never liked it. The bust went missing, and another one was done by new sculptor Peter Nicholson. When the Wendouree Lake went dry, the first bust was found in the dry lake bed.

Peter Nicholson a very different artist and sculptor. He draws caricatures for "The Australian" newspaper as well as sculpting.

HAWKE A very direct gaze

KEATING Seems to signify a reflective mood, and renaissance.

HOWARD A nuggetty figure. Determined.

RUDD Most people do not seem to like this bust, and comment on the size. A diplomat and bureaucrat.