

Arch of Victory and Avenue of Honour.

LUCAS BOOKLET.1921.Souvenir.

“ 1917 Suggestion re planting of trees in honour of the men of Ballarat who enlisted in the A.I.F. This was enthusiastically taken up by the girls and carried to a successful finish; the first planting taking place on 3/6/17 and the last on 16/8/19. There was a tree planted in honour of every Ballarat soldier who enlisted. The trees were planted in order of enlistment, a plate bearing each soldier's name and battalion was attached to every tree guard.

The Avenue is 14 miles long and contains 3912 trees, each being protected by a substantial guard, the whole costing 2,000 pounds.

Having completed this tribute to the soldiers they set to work to erect a suitable entrance to the Avenue”

Costs involved-see insert for photocopying.

Foundation stone Sir W.R.Birdwood 7/2/1920

Opening H.R.H.Prince of Wales 2/6/20

Pyjama suit presented to Prince of Wales completed by 500 girls, “Satin Chanteuse, elaborately embroidered”

The Lucas Girls loaded the bricks from Selkirks “the only way they could be procured at that time” to complete the Arch in time for the opening.

The souvenir records that at the time of production there was a maintenance fund for upkeep of the Avenue “the cost of which was very heavy” A returned soldier was permanently employed attending the trees. (subsequently council records indicate that the Ballarat Council undertook responsibility for Avenue[s] of Honour in about 1932)

Dimensions. Height 57 feet

Width 64 feet.

Cost 2,129 pounds, eleven shillings and eleven pence.

A CENTURY OF COUNTRY CLAY. Selkirk-the first 100 years 1883-1983 (N.Haughton.)

Page 10 “One public-spirited gesture of the Company at this time was to donate the bricks for the core of the Ballarat Arch of Victory. Robert Selkirk was approached by the Lucas Girls (who were responsible for the project), asking for the bricks. At the time Selkirks had no transport of their own, so Robert told the girls they could have the bricks provided they carted them. A few days later the girls returned with adequate transport and personally loaded the bricks. The burly Selkirk setters and drawers looked on with benevolent amusement as the girls stacked the bricks onto the carts”.

BALLARAT-a brief history A.W.Strange. 1971

Page 61 “After the end of the 1st.world war the Lucas girls raised the money and planted the trees in the now famed Avenue of Honor which extends for fourteen miles along the Western Highway. A tree in memory of every soldier who enlisted from Ballarat and a bronze plate giving the name, number and unit.

Among the many fund raising methods used the girls had tiny miniature bricks made which sold for a

shilling each. The profit from each one was sufficient to purchase a brick for the building of the Arch of Victory. These small tokens are rare historical relics today. The Arch of Victory and Avenue was opened by His Royal Highness Prince of Wales, now Duke of Windsor, on 2/6/1920. As a memento the girls presented the Prince with a magnificent suit of silk pyjamas made by them in the factory”

“The Royal Pyjamas” Wyn Hunter (one of the Lucas Girls) (see Thomas Hood, 1799-1845, poet, “Song of the Shirt”)

Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! in poverty, hunger and dirt -
Hood has told us of the poor old Girl who sang the “Song of the Shirt” **-
But Stitch! Stitch! Stitch! with laughter and rollicking glee,
Inch by inch in satin and silk the Royal Pyjamas make we.

An Inch! Inch! Inch! by Nancy, Nell and the Rest,
Fancy-Stitchers, with dainty grace, work Kookaburras on the breast.
Click! Click! Click! Dorothy, Olive and Vi,
The clippings, too, as souvenirs, the public will want to buy.

Smile! Smile! Smile when His Highness opens the arch,
We’ll sing with them all, as the Bonnie Prince goes past.
Think! Think! Think as each silken stitch we ply,
A gentleman worthy of England’s crown will wear them bye and bye.

Talk! Talk! Talk! snowy heads and shoulders bowed down,
Grandchildren’s eyes will open wide as we talk of the ship “Renown”
And Pride! Pride! Pride in our dim old eyes will shine,
As we tell of the Prince in Ballarat town and the pyjamas we made so fine.

[The reference to the “Renown” suggests that a representation of the ship was included in the embroidery-The “Renown “ was the Battle Cruiser that transported him.]

The poem is a parody of the famous poem by Thomas Hood “ The song of the shirt” which portrayed the poor conditions in the English factories in the 19th century. Undoubtedly the Lucas Girls had a far better workplace and under Tilly Thompson's leadership became a very cohesive and enthusiastic workforce.

Recently (2008) controversy has occurred as to the whereabouts of the pyjamas and the Palace has been approached concerning this. In the light of the Prince’s many affairs including his notorious liaison and subsequent marriage to Mrs Simpson which caused his abdication when Edward VII th., it seems to me to be very unlikely that they will be found or returned.(But, - maybe in someone’s bottom drawer .???)
!!!)

The Royal Presence in Australia 1867-1986 P.W.Pike

“In Ballarat he was presented with the extraordinary gift of a pair of yellow silk pyjamas which had been made by a group of girls each of whom had contributed one stitch.”

jpg 7/09.